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THE BUFFALOES AMONG THE WIGWAMS.

# BEAR-HUNTERS

## THE WINDY MOUNTAINS.

BY

E. BOWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "THE RANGEROO-HUNTERS,"  
"THE WINDY MOUNTAINS," "ESPERANZA," ETC., ETC.

The story of the hunt for the bear in the  
The story of the hunt for the bear in the  
And the story of the hunt for the bear in the  
That is the story of the hunt for the bear in the woods."  
BRAINARD.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY CROSBY AND NICHOLS.

1862.



THE BUFFALOES ALONG THE WISWAM.

THE  
BEAR-HUNTERS

OF  
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

BY  
ANNE BOWMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY VOYAGERS," "THE KANGAROO-HUNTERS,"  
"THE YOUNG EXILES," "ESPERANZA," ETC., ETC.

"The leaf shall be greener, the sky shall be purer,  
The eyes shall be clearer, the rifle be surer,  
And stronger the arm of the fearless endurer,  
That trusts nought but Heaven in his way through the woods."

BRAINARD.

BOSTON:  
PUBLISHED BY CROSBY AND NICHOLS.  
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# THE BEAR-HUNTERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

The Tutor and Pupil.—On Board the *Nugget*.—The Education Question.—The Plans of the Emigrants.—William Arncliffe.—A fall into a Tar-bucket, and the consequences.

Two gentlemen were walking together through the pleasant gardens of —— College; one, a tall, handsome, animated youth of twenty, the other of more mature years, of a mild, calm, intellectual countenance, who wore an air of dignity consistent with his position. In university parlance, they stood in the situation of tutor and pupil.

“I do not object, my dear Harold,” said the tutor, “to accompany you through the known and unknown regions of the Western world; but I feel a strong reluctance to commence our expedition in such rough style. Why, in the name of comfort and repose, do you choose to take your passage in a common emigrant ship, when you can command the conveniences of home by sailing in a first-rate steamer?”

“Because, Rodney, I am a whimsical fellow,” answered Harold. “What do I care for comfort and repose? I am young and healthy, and full of

curiosity ; I desire novelty, adventure, even trial, or a little adversity, if such a spoiled child of fortune as I am, can safely bear the descent. Do you love me well enough, my dear guardian and friend, to overlook my selfishness, and rough it with me for the next ten or twelve months? I am nearly twenty, and must then return to celebrate my majority, and release you from your troublesome responsibility."

"I have had you in my charge, my dear boy," answered Mr. Rodney, "since the death of your parents, and I shall not suffer you to undertake this Quixotic expedition without me. I am aware that I shall be laughed at by my grave brethren of —— for this middle-aged frolic ; but, defying ridicule, I consent to be Sancho Panza."

"No such thing, Rodney," said Harold ; "John Carter, my groom, is to be my Sancho ; he would be no hero in the field of battle, but he is a keen sportsman, a good shot, and once on the hunting-grounds, I would advise the bears and buffaloes to look about them ; John will not spare them."

"Very well," replied Mr. Rodney ; "then let John look after a ship that can be warranted not to come to pieces and scatter its passengers amidst the billows of the turbulent Pacific. I affect no judgment in nautical matters."

"I will write to Liverpool to-day," said Harold, "and I have no doubt we shall both acquire a large amount of seamanship during our voyage ; for we must keep our eyes open, and have our pens and pencils ready. I hope when we return, you will publish a book, Rodney."

"Not I, truly, Harold," answered his friend ; "I

have no fancy for making the public acquainted with my secret thoughts and my blundering guesses at facts. I may observe and note, but it will be for my own future recreation in my solitary hours."

"What a selfish old cynic you are, Rodney," said Harold. "Then I must be the author, and you must purvey for me. Now let us make up our baggage, on the approved principles of compactness and economy. No superfluities; no large books, remember."

"I must have the companions of my leisure hours," said Mr. Rodney.

"But I don't mean you to have any leisure hours," replied Harold; "I mean that we shall fatigue ourselves so thoroughly during the day with hard work, that we shall be glad to devote our short leisure to eating and sleeping."

"A mere animal existence," exclaimed Mr. Rodney.

"Be it so, Socrates," said the youth; "shall we not be accumulating materials to feed the thoughtful mind for the next ten years? Let me be arbitrary this one time, my dear Rodney."

"You are ever arbitrary," answered Rodney, "and I, as ever, remain your very obedient — tutor."

It was, indeed, a fact that the placid tutor usually submitted with resignation to the harmless whims of his beloved pupil and ward. Harold Crofton was an only child, left an orphan at an early age, with a large fortune. His guardian, who had been the intimate friend of his father, was a fellow and professor at ——— College. Of an affectionate disposition, without near relations, he became so fondly attached to his lively and impetuous ward, that, satisfied with his pro-

gress in study and the rectitude of his conduct, he was indulgent to his taste for novelty and excitement, and did not attempt to control his adventurous rambling, provided he was himself always by his side to watch over his safety and moderate his impetuosity. Even now, though it cost him a pang to abandon the luxurious ease of his studious life at Cambridge, he at once agreed to follow his beloved pupil on his wild project, rather than trust him unguarded amongst strange and perilous associations.

And thus it was that, ten days afterwards, in the pleasant days of August, the gay, careless, prosperous child of aristocracy, and the retired, gentle, philosophic Rodney found themselves in the inconvenient state cabin of the pompously-advertised emigrant vessel, the *Nugget*, laden with speculators for California, and a party of emigrants, driven by poverty, or induced by domestic relations to seek a home in a new world.

"Now for it, Dominie," said Harold, when the disagreeables of the first two or three days of sailing had subsided; "don't look so wistfully at that wooden case of literary lumber. Let us go on deck and study human nature under adverse circumstances. The skipper himself seems to have but one idea, the endeavor to make his ship last out the voyage; the mate is a coarse ruffianly fellow; we shall derive no amusement from them, but I hope we may glean something from the steerage passengers."

The two friends were the only cabin passengers, and, limited as the accommodations were, they had the satisfaction of having them to themselves, and might arrange their books and other possessions as they chose, certain that they would remain undisturbed.

They now went on deck, where, after a few words with the taciturn captain, Harold proceeded to make the acquaintance of the sailors; and afterwards they ventured among the noisy crowd who tenanted the steerage, from whom Rodney retreated in dismay, alarmed and annoyed at the clamor of tongues, the barking of dogs, the crying of children, and the confused scene of cooking, nursing, and card-playing that pervaded this portion of the vessel.

But in one corner of the deck Harold saw a quieter group, towards whom he drew his compliant friend. An old withered man, small in stature, with bright keen eyes, was seated with a book in his hand, giving a lesson to a rough, good-natured looking lad about fifteen years of age; a taller youth of superior appearance was lounging pensively against the bulwarks; while two neat little women, who seemed to be mother and daughter, were seated on wooden boxes, knitting industriously. As the two gentlemen approached, the sharp eyes of the old man fell on them, and, rising, he made a profound bow, saying,

“Gentlemen, I do my honors to ye. Mike! is that yer manners? Sure it’s not many the like of your honors, the rale gentry that is, that come to bless the eyes of the poor emigrants. Wont it be the thirst of larning every thing that brings your honors to this same poor place? It’s maybe, like Solomon himself, you’d ‘search concerning all things done under heaven.’ True it is, then, I pray you will not find it ‘vexation of spirit,’ as he was finding it; wise as he was, and writing many books, as, like, your honors will be maning to do.”

“I am by no means certain that I shall write a book,” said Harold, laughing; “but if I should do so,

my friend, I must know your name, that you may have a distinguished place in it. May I ask what has tempted you to emigrate from your favored island?"

"Well, thin, to spake the thruth, your honor; nade," replied the old man; then, quickly resuming his former pompous manner, and correcting his brogue, he continued: "It was altogether the times, your honor: isn't it mad our people are turning? and Dennis O'Reilly wouldn't be the man to turn with them. Would I be seeing the childer at my school knowing no better than them in England of the people that came afore them; and forgetting all the ancient glory of their country, to be larning things about trade, and mines, and drawing pictures, and singing, and such-like—things that's beneath a school-master to tache; and didn't I scorn to be meddling with the same? and wouldn't I sooner be burning my fine old classics, seeing I'd be having no use for them. It's their edication question, your honor; sure, isn't it their ignorance that is sending me away from my country? Would I be going to school myself at seventy years old, and me fit to tache them all, out and out?"

"And therefore, Mr. O'Reilly," said Harold, "you are making a voyage to teach the classics to the gold-diggers."

"Sure, thin, I'd niver be thryin' them," answered the old man; "they'd niver be mindin' their tasks at all, not they. Didn't the ancients themselves write it down that the love of gold made a man no better nor a brute? I'd be gittin' no gold-diggers at all for scholars. But, to spake the thruth, your honor, it wasn't a choice was left me at all. My lady she sends out her people, that cannot live yonder, altogether free, to Austhralia and to

America ; and these boys, and the woman, and the girl, they were in the mind to go to California ; and me not having a penny, and my school taken away, my lady she says, 'Thin, Mr. O'Reilly, sure, won't you be crossing with your people? you'll be minding the young, and they'll be caring for you ;' and I was agraable to that same."

"But when you land in California," asked Mr. Rodney, "what do you propose to do?"

"Sure, thin, your honor," answered he, "wont I stop at the town to see the boys settle at their work, and the women rint a cabin and set up their wash-tubs? and if I wouldn't be liking the ways of the gold-diggers, I'd be walking on a bit further to seek out some of our own people in Illinois county."

"But, my good friend, that is beyond the Rocky Mountains," said Mr. Rodney.

"Will it be mountains I'd be turning back for?" replied Dennis ; "would there be any mountains of America aqual to our own ancient mountains of Killarney?"

It would not have been easy to convince the old man that the Rocky Mountains would bar his journey to his friends, or that they were more inaccessible than Irish mountains ; so Harold turned away to ask the taller of the two boys why he had left his home for a strange country.

The young man colored, and did not speak ; the elder woman answered for him.

"Is it Willie, your honor? isn't he my own sister's son, and she gone to God? Pretty girl she was ; and a fine wake we made her, God be praised! And wasn't the boy left on me, in regard of his father being a wild Englisher, turning his back on his child and his dead

wife, and making off to Californy to git gold ; and niver a grain of that same has the boy set eyes on, nor a letter at all to say he was coming for his own. And Will, draming his father would be atin by savages, will nades come out to sake him ; and he niver likin' to talk about him. Maybe your honor will be excusin' his manners, in regard he were born in England, and knowin' no better, poor boy."

By inquiries made of Captain Scruton, Harold learnt that the father of William Arncliffe had been the English valet of an Irish nobleman ; that he had married the pretty sister of Peggy Maurice, and, with his savings, had returned to England to commence business ; but, after some years of imprudence and extravagance, he had brought his wife to her sister to die, and left his boy to live on the poor Irish peasants, till he went to California in the sanguine hope of making another fortune.

With the imperfect education, the shyness, and the prejudices of an English boy of his class, William pined in his aunt's comfortless cabin for two years, waiting in vain to hear from his father ; and when poverty compelled the widow Maurice and her family to emigrate, the charity of the benevolent lady who owned their cabin having furnished the means, the poor women, in compassion to the unhappy deserted boy, selected California as their destination, that he might accompany them, in the forlorn hope of discovering the fate of his father.

It was some time before the painful reserve of the boy gave way before the frank kindness of Harold Crofton, and he was induced to speak of himself and of his intentions. It had been the wish of his fond mother to



bring up her son "to a trade;" and, till he was thirteen years of age, she contrived to procure him a common country-town education. Then the ruin of his father, and the fatal sickness of his mother drove the family to seek a shelter among those who were poorer than themselves. The total want of cleanliness, the disorder, and the destitution of the widow's cabin, were scarcely more repugnant to the taste of the indulged boy, long accustomed to a home of comparative luxury, than to Mrs. Arncliffe, weaned, by fourteen years of English comforts, from the careless and unthrifty habits of her early days. The poor woman rapidly sunk amidst her privations and sorrows, and then William shrunk with still more disgust from the want and misery that surrounded him.

"But, my poor boy," said Mr. Rodney, roused from his studies by William's tale of sorrow, extorted by the sympathy of Harold, "why did you not fulfil the intentions of your parents; why did you not return to England, and adopt the mode of life they had planned for you?"

"It was no longer possible for me to attempt it, sir," said the boy. "Without money, without friends, and without any knowledge of mechanics or trade, I could not obtain a living; and I had neither the wish nor the ability to become a servant."

"An unpleasant position, certainly," murmured Mr. Rodney. "Like the unjust steward of Scripture, you could not dig; to beg you were ashamed. I trust that you had no inclination, like him, to turn to dishonesty to gain a living."

"My mother taught me, sir," replied William indignantly, "that I could not be dishonest, and hope to see the kingdom of God."

"I honor her memory, young man," said Mr. Rodney. "But I am concerned for you. What can you do in California, unused as you are to labor?"

"My first care will be, sir," answered he, "to seek out my father, and endeavor, if possible, to save him from the evil life of the gold-diggers. Then I must try, in this wide new world, to earn the means of supporting myself, and those dear friends who helped me in my need. I think, sir, a young man may do any thing he likes, if he means to do it."

"You are right, William," said Mr. Rodney; "try, and persevere, and doubt not you will succeed. Your aunt seems able and willing to work, and Mike looks strong and active; but that pretty young girl does not appear fitted for hard labor."

"Mary was cook-maid at the Castle," said William; "but the kitchen-work did not suit her health. Then my lady tried her in the nursery; but when aunt and old Mr. O'Reilly, who lodged with her, agreed to emigrate, and Mary heard that Mike and I were for going out too, she couldn't settle to stay behind; and my lady was good enough to pay all our passage. God knows what may become of us; but we cannot well be worse off than we were in Ireland."

"And Mr. O'Reilly keeps up his school on the voyage, I see," remarked Mr. Rodney.

"He is not pleased with Mike, sir," replied William, "because he goes among the sailors, when he ought to be minding his Latin; but Dick Marlin, the carpenter, teaches him carpenter-work, and climbing ropes, and swabbing, and such-like, and he takes to any thing. I wish I was like him; but I always feel shy among the rough men, they swear so awfully, and scowl on me if I go near, as if I was an intruder."

A great noise on deck drew the quiet party from their cabin. They found the mate storming and swearing, and Mike held up by his friend Dick Marlin, looking very pale, and appearing to suffer pain. William hurried to his cousin to inquire what had occurred; but poor Mike was unable to tell him.

"Why ye see, my lad," said Dick, "here it were This here meddling young rascal were at his monkey tricks, climbing, lubberly-like, and all at once he losses his head and falls down reet on yon tar-bucket, and upsets it, and Mr. Sharpley there, he comes in for a splash. With that, it angers him; and he catches up a marlin-spike, and handles the lad a bit roughly. I reckon his arm's lamed badly, and ye'd better carry him to your women, and let them doctor him a bit."

"Is there no surgeon in the ship?" asked Mr. Rodney.

"Surgeon!" repeated the mate, insolently. "It's hardly like a surgeon could be kept out of what yon beggarly troop pays. He'd have a nice life among 'em; for they're fighting from morn till night."

"You had no right to strike my cousin so cruelly," said William, much agitated at the sight of the boy's distress.

"It was a brutal act," said Harold. "I shall immediately complain to Captain Scruton of the unwarrantable and unfeeling conduct of his officer."

The man laughed scornfully as he said, "I'd like to hear what he says to your complaints and your high words. You paid your passage, and you get your passage. What more would you have? What have such as you to do with the government of the ship? Mind your own business, and keep your own place."

## CHAPTER II.

The Captain in his cabin.—A Visit to the Steerage passengers.

Dick's friendly Arrangements.—Bad Weather and Short Commons.—A Fatal Gale.—Breakers in sight.—The Landing.

WHILE William led Mike to his mother, Harold bent his way to the captain's cabin, followed by Mr. Rodney, who was rather apprehensive that the impetuosity of his pupil might lead to mischief. Captain Scruton listened with apathy to the complaint of Mr. Crofton against his mate, and coldly replied, that he never interfered with Sharpley's management of the emigrant passengers; they were an unruly set, and paid badly; it was the last time he would fill up his ship with such troublesome ballast. It was likely to be a long voyage; the wind was always contrary; he was an unlucky man, and always lost more than he gained by his trips.

"Truly, Captain Scruton," answered Crofton, "your vessel seems to be in a crazy condition; your carpenters are always repairing damages; but that is not the present question; I must insist on your officer treating these poor emigrants with humanity; and if I hear more complaints, I shall seek justice when we reach San Francisco."

"I wish you may find it," said Scruton. "In San Francisco you'll find every man is thinking of himself, and how he is to make his own fortune. They've no

time for courts of law and assizes, and such-like English nuisances. When things get wrong, men try to right them as they can; if they miss, it's their own fault. There's no mistake, Sharpley is a temper; and I'd advise you to let him be, or he'll not forget it. He bullies me when his blood is up."

"Then why do you bring out such a brutal fellow?" said Crofton.

"He's not without his good points," answered Scruton; "he's a good sailor, picks up passengers, and manages them cleverly, though it's true he's not liked. But what then? I get him cheap, and I'd not like to change him."

Crofton was highly indignant with the mean-spirited captain, and would have continued to plead for Mike, but Mr. Rodney drew him away from the hopeless task; and they proceeded to visit the crowded den, where, stretched on a mattress in one corner, they found the poor boy, his weeping mother bathing his bruised arm with the rum which Dick had procured for her. The tumult of swearing men, scolding women, and screaming children — the closeness, the filthiness, and the stench of the place, sickened the two charitable visitors; and when Rodney had ascertained that the arm was not broken, and had given the woman some prudent directions about the treatment, he said to the people, "My good friends, would it not tend more to the peace and comfort of all if you were to be quiet and orderly; if you were to clean out this Pandemonium, and to employ yourselves usefully?"

A burst of rude laughter and oaths was the answer, and William said, "Please don't say any more, sir;

they're a bad set, and they'll only behave worse to us if they think we have fine friends. I'm very sorry that poor aunt and Mary have to live among such wretches."

"We can let John have a corner of our cabin," said Harold eagerly; "that is—I beg your pardon, Rodney—if you don't object to the honest fellow sleeping there; then those poor people can have his cabin to themselves."

Mr. Rodney hesitated and sighed, but he was of easy temper and kind heart, and he consented that Harold's servant should occupy a spare berth in the state cabin, as it was pompously termed; and the Irish family, with the old schoolmaster, gratefully exchanged the pestilential den of the emigrants for John's small but clean cabin, which contained berths for all. Here Mike's arm was soon restored to strength; and as he was forbidden to intrude among the sailors again, it was here that Dick Marlin came to visit the boy, to chatter with the women, and to entertain them with long yarns of sea adventures, or the recital of the monotonous transactions of the day.

"Many's the deck I've trod," said he one evening; "but such a heap of rotten timmers as this, I were never rated on afore. It's my mind that we'se hardly weather the Cape. One leak after another breaks out, and a reg'lar sea would rive her to shivers. It's a downright sin, it is, to stow a lot of poor creatures on such a craft; and I'll answer for him he's insured her for a bonny deal more nor she's worth. But, lads, I've set my mind on a sound boat, and have fettled her up a bit; and when it comes to a smash, why I'se launch

her, and make room for you folks. It's a bad job you none on you can handle an oar, for I'se need a comrade, and I'd not like to say a word to any of our fellows, or I'd have all the lot on me."

"If you think it likely we should be driven to such an extremity," said William, "I know that one of the gentlemen in the state cabin, who has been so kind to us, can row, as well as his servant. Mr. Crofton has a yacht and boats of his own, and is half a sailor. I should not like any danger to come to him. Couldn't you take him in too?"

"Ay, ay, boy," answered Dick, "we've room enough for two or three decent fellows; but you'll let him know he'll have to rough it, and not expect us to take off our hats and say 'sir' at every word; and I say, lad, tell him to keep all snug, and not be so free with his tongue. Sharpley would like nothing better nor to batten down t'hatchway and keep him close in his cabin, if he'd an inkling we meant to be off. He's just a born rogue, and a dirty spy, and a mean, unhang'd rascal." Dick added this in a low tone, looking suspiciously at the door; then turning to Mary, he continued — "And Mary, honey, just keep out on his way, will ye; he'd be a bad bargain for any decent-lass, forby his having a wife at Portsmouth and another at Liverpool, to my knowledge." Mary bridled at the idea of the mate's pretensions to her favor; a man that had behaved so ill to her brother; though certainly of late he had taken every opportunity to make a rude courtship of the pretty neat Irish girl.

"Sure, Mr. Marlin," said she, "you'll not be thinking as we will be drowned in this same dirty ship, and we niver havin' time nor place to say our prayers, before

Mr. Crofton, the Lord bless him for that same, was giving us his own man's cabin, and a nate quiet room it is altogether. Worra! but won't it be a hard thing to be drowned dead in a forrin say, and Mike and Will niver larnin' to swim, more's the pity, and maybe Mr. Marlin, it's a long way off it will be to dhry land. What'll my poor mother be doing, och, hone?"

Mary wept for everybody but herself, till Mike, in the pride of his newly-acquired nautical knowledge, comforted her with the assurance that a boat was as good as a leaky ship any day, and Dick Marlin was a better seaman than Sharpley.

Under the pledge of secrecy, William communicated to his friends in the state cabin Marlin's suspicions and arrangements. Crofton laughed at the idea of danger in such calm weather, and thought Dick's invectives against the ship were chiefly occasioned by his aversion to Sharpley; for no man, merely for the sake of making money, would risk the lives of so many of his fellow-creatures, and above all his own life, in an unsafe vessel. And in fact they rounded the dreaded Cape successfully, though certainly often driven back, and delayed so long that the provisions of the ship became low, and the poor emigrants who lived on their own stores were almost famished. The Maurice family, who had been more provident and more economical than the rest, had still meal and bacon, and the charitable widow often bestowed on the half-starved women and children a bowl of stirabout. Crofton and Rodney, who dined at the captain's table, had certainly private stores of wine and other luxuries; but these were not of a nature to afford relief to the destitute.

But even after weathering Cape Horn, the voyaging



was difficult; the weather became uncertain; they were alternately delayed by calms, and driven about by sudden gales; which the crazy vessel could ill stand, and which split the spars, and rent the worn canvas to rags. Day after day passed, as they were tossed on the troubled sea, every day rendering their situation more perilous, and the difficulty of coming to harbor more hazardous, till at length the timid and slow Captain Scruton was roused to brave the ill-humor of his mate, and take his place.

"We're certainly making an uncommonly long voyage of this, Captain Scruton," said Crofton, as they stood anxiously on deck. "What is your old ship about?"

"If the voyage be longer than we calculated, the loss will be mine," answered Scruton tartly.

"I don't altogether agree with you, Captain Scruton," said Mr. Rodney. "With neither fresh meat, poultry, nor vegetables remaining, and with foul water, we are decidedly on prisoners' allowance. For the extravagant sum we paid, we certainly had a right to expect better fare."

"All complaints are useless now, gentlemen," said Captain Scruton impatiently. "I provisioned for the usual voyage; how could I foresee such misfortunes; continued contrary winds; and vexatious leaks springing, when I depended on Sharpley to see the *Nugget* sound? but she *is* sluggish this trip. I can't say what's come over her. God send I may bring her safe to harbor! I shall lose by this voyage any way. I must lose by it, I see; and — Now then! what's aloft there?"

A tremendous crash called every one to the spot to see that the mizen-mast had been shivered by the gale,

and had fallen on deck, causing much disaster and confusion, which the fury of the gale scarcely permitted them to attend to, or to rectify. The impatient mate was stamping, and cursing the men; two had been struck by the fall of the mast, and the rest were so appalled by the accident, as to be, for a few moments, incapable of attending to duty. The groans of one of the men, who was seriously injured, so irritated the unfeeling Sharpley, that he spurned the sufferer violently with his foot; the ship at that moment, struck by a heavy sea, lurched so dangerously, that all thought destruction inevitable, and the helpless wounded man, and two sailors who were engaged in cutting away the hamper of fallen ropes and yards, were swept into the foaming waves.

"Put out a boat, for God's sake," cried Crofton. "Try to save these unfortunate men."

"A boat, you fool!" cried Sharpley. "Who would launch a boat in a sea like this?"

The anxiety of Crofton was so great, that he would himself have leaped into the sea to assist the men, had not his prudent friend arrested him, and pointed out the futility of the attempt in that formidable sea.

"The poor fellows are hopelessly lost," added he; "all human aid is now vain."

"They might throw out ropes or buoys. Surely something could be done," said Harold.

But nothing was done, except that Dick quietly shoved overboard an empty cask; but the impetuous south-west wind soon carried it away beyond the reach of the sufferers, if even they had been able to grasp it; but they were never seen from the moment they were engulfed, and amidst the distraction of the tempest

seemed to be forgotten by all but Crofton and Rodney.

Night came on dark and tempestuous; the disabled vessel flew before the wind, her tattered sails still flapping on the rocking masts from whence it was vain to attempt to lower them. Fear reigned in every heart; the desperately wicked showed it by terrible oaths and imprecations, the less hardened worked in silence and trepidation, and the pious and thoughtful among the poor emigrants, now all gathered on deck, clinging to each other in agony, prayed audibly for help and mercy.

As each succeeding wave tore away some timber, or swept over the decks, carrying off the lighter articles, Scruton groaned in distraction. "It is ruin, Mr. Crofton," he cried, "absolute ruin! The *Nugget* is my own, I invested the savings of my life in this trip, and now I may not save a plank of her."

"You surely are not thinking now of the worthless planks of the vessel, Captain Scruton," said Crofton, "when all these precious human lives are at stake."

"It is your first duty, Captain Scruton," added Rodney, "to endeavor to save the lives intrusted to you, as well as your own."

But the man, whose soul was in his money, seemed to regard life as but a secondary consideration; he walked about, appealing fretfully to Sharpley, till at length the mate told him, without ceremony, to get to his cabin and leave him to manage. And now a new terror assailed the experienced sailors, who plainly distinguished the sound of breakers dashing against a rocky coast. To be thrown against those fatal rocks would be a terrible fate, nor did they see how it could be

averted, for the tempest still continued to rage, the rudder had been torn away, and the ship was unmanageable. It appeared impossible to make soundings in that raging sea, but the appalling sound of the breakers was plainer heard, as hour after hour they were drifted furiously on.

As long as the perplexing darkness continued, it was vain to attempt looking out for the much-dreaded land; at length as the first dim light appeared, a violent shock prostrated all on board, and it was soon discovered that the ship was immovably wedged among rocks. The faint light now disclosed to them a bare and lonely coast, guarded by sharp and rugged rocks; and, dismal as it looked, the sole hope of life for those on the vessel was the chance of attaining that shore, for no human means could extricate the doomed ship. The waves dashed furiously against the crazy hulk, already the water was rising rapidly in the hold, and now Scruton, intent on saving as much property as he could, ordered out the boats, and hurried to his cabin to collect all his valuable papers and money.

No sooner was the first boat launched than the greater part of the crew recklessly leaped into it and rowed off, regardless of the shrieks of the emigrants, the remonstrances of Rodney and Crofton, and the orders and imprecations of the mate, who was prudently bringing up stores and arms. But the wretched sailors had been drinking during the confusion that reigned in the night; they were now unruly and contentious; and amidst their strife, before the fearfully-tossed boat had made a hundred yards from the ship, it was capsized and swamped. Two of the men only were seen to rise and grasp the boat, which they suc-

ceeded in righting, and they must apparently have recovered their oars, for they continued to pull towards the shore.

"We'll follow them," said Sharpley; "and my first care, when we land, shall be to blow out their brains,—mutinous dogs."

"Is it committing murder you'd be after, Mr. Sharpley?" said Dennis. "The Lord has forbidden that same: sure wouldn't we first be knaling on the blessed land and thanking Him for saving our lives?"

"What are you prating about, you old canting rogue," said the brutal man. "Wait till you get your foot upon land before you set up your conventicle; that'll hardly be yet a bit. Here, you lads, lower these stores into the long-boat."

"We go with you, Mr. Sharpley," said Crofton resolutely. "John, put in the baggage."

The mate turned a ferocious look on the young man; but his determined voice, the sight of his rifle, or some other powerful motive, prevented him from opposing the admission of the cabin passengers and their property. In a short time everybody had collected what seemed likely to be useful, and the dejected captain, the surly mate, Dick, and the four other sailors remaining on board, with Rodney, Crofton, and John, were in the boat.

"We can still make room for some of the women," said Crofton; "and the boat must return for the rest of the poor people."

"It would be as well for you to mind your own business," said Sharpley. "Push off, men."

But Captain Scruton called out to the pale and terrified emigrants that he would take care they

should be sent for, and Crofton confirmed the assurance, by promising to look after their rescue; though he was convinced he should have some trouble, for the mate cared no more for the people than if they had been cattle. The sea still continued turbulent, but the boat was stout and firm, and the men now labored earnestly, for their lives depended on their exertions; and gradually they drew near the barren, frowning coast. But when they entered among the breakers on the great chain of rocks that guarded the coast, the boat was whirled round, and bruised against them fearfully, till a sudden gust of wind forced it through an opening with such rapidity, that Crofton, who was standing up, endeavoring with an oar to avert the violence of the repeated shocks, was thrown overboard, and must have perished in the whirlpool, had not Dick, seizing a rope in one hand, leaped into the water, and flinging the end to Crofton, who caught it, made after the boat, swimming with one hand, and holding the rope with the other. Sharpley would not allow the rowers to rest till the two swimmers came up; but made them pull to the narrow stony beach that lay beneath frightful jagged rocks. He laughed at the struggles of the almost exhausted men, and when the boat was finally drawn ashore he was careless of their fate.

But, providentially, both were practised swimmers; and though Harold had received a severe blow on his foot when thrown against the rocks, which weakened his endeavors, he grasped the rope firmly, kept himself afloat with one hand, and was drawn ashore by Dick, though in a state of great exhaustion. Mr. Rodney was ready to receive them with a flask of

brandy to revive them. He examined Harold's foot, which was bruised and wrenched, till he was quite incapable of using it; but as no bones were broken, the anxious guardian hoped that a little rest would restore him.

## CHAPTER III.

The Captain and his Mate.—The Last Trip.—The Fate of the Emigrants.—The Wreck of the *Nugget*.—Dreary Prospects.—Captain Scruton's Ruling Passion.

"Now, Captain Scruton," said Harold, as soon as he could speak, — "now, that you have unladen her, you will send back the boat to bring off your unfortunate passengers."

"I am quite aware that such is my duty, Mr. Crofton," answered he; "a perilous and awkward duty it is. Mr. Sharpley, what do you say?"

"Say is it, captain?" said the man. "Then I say, let well alone. What for are we to run the risk of losing our boat? — it's stove in already with beating against yon reefs. And what for are we to be sending out good hands after a herd of roaring Irish cattle? What for are we to fetch them off, to eat up our stores and brawl and fight, and likely bring the Indians on us, and we not safe that they'd not make off with the boat itself, when it's our last chance of getting away from these coast cannibals? Leave them to die quietly yonder; it's as good an end as they're likely to make."

Captain Scruton looked at Rodney and Crofton, troubled and undecided.

"Do you hesitate, Captain Scruton?" said Harold. "Are you the commander, or is your mate? Surely,



you do not mean to yield to his unjust, illegal, and base counsel."

"No, no!" replied Scruton hurriedly; "we must try. I put the boat into your hands, Mr. Crofton; only I beg you to be careful of her; and if you can induce any of the men to volunteer to man her—you see it's extra duty, I cannot order them, I'm not afloat——"

"But I can pay them," said Crofton. "Come, my brave fellows, which of you will go with me to bring off you poor wretches?"

Two of the sailors, at the sight of Crofton's gold, agreed to accompany him, and Dick Marlin, actuated as well by his friendship for the Maurice family, as by a spark of humanity not quite extinguished among his evil associates, gladly made a fourth in the boat. John had bruised his hand in the last voyage, and was out of condition. Mr. Rodney besought Harold, who had actually to be carried to the boat, to remain ashore; but he feared the men would fail to fulfil their duty if he were not there to enforce obedience, and he persisted in accompanying them; and once more the boat, a good deal the worse for its passage through the reef, was launched on the still agitated sea.

As the boat drew near the wreck, the cries and screams of the people left on it were deafening, and the struggle to be first to embark was tremendous. Some of the men were fighting madly to secure a forward position, and before the boat could reach them, two were thrown overboard and perished.

"Pull off, lads," said Dick; "if we draw up just now these desperate fellows will crowd in, till we shall be swamped. It's plain we cannot carry all off, and the

old *Nugget* is at her last. It's odds she'll hold together till we make another trip."

Crofton saw the emergency, and, standing up in the boat, he drew a pistol from his belt; which, as it had been there when he was in the water, was not in a condition to do much damage, but it answered his purpose. He called out, "The first man that attempts to enter the boat without my permission I shoot through the head. Lower down the women and children."

Groans and curses were poured out; but the most rational amongst them saw the prudence of compliance, and the trembling women and screaming children, with old Dennis and his two boy pupils, were admitted, who filled the boat; and the rowers hastily pulled off from the perishing hulk, amidst the despairing yells of those left behind, for whom, however, Harold promised to send back the boat.

But they were already overladen; the boat, which had been injured by the former trip, now leaked so much that they could not bale the water out so fast as it came in. They endeavored to stop the leak with the shawls of the women, but the heavy surge soon forced out the plug; and even Harold began to despair, for he saw that unless the boat was lightened, all his endeavors would be vain; they should never pass through the breakers.

At length, when within two hundred yards of the shore, the two volunteer sailors, who were swimmers, and who found Mike could handle an oar, declared that they would lighten the boat by swimming ashore themselves. Dick remonstrated with them for this desertion; the passage through the reefs was still to make, and he dreaded it with unskilled rowers; but the men

turned a deaf ear to him, they knew that they were safer in the water, swimming as they could, than on the leaking boat; they fearlessly plunged into the sea, and were soon on their way to safety.

When the boat reached the whirlpool of waters pouring through the opening in the reef, Dick shouted his directions loudly, above the roaring of the breakers, while Harold and Mike did their best to obey them; but, unaccustomed to row in such a sea, their endeavors were worse than fruitless; they ran the boat with tremendous force against the rocks, and stove her; the water poured in, shrieking women and children clung vainly to the parting timbers, in a moment all were swallowed in the foaming waves; dashed fatally against the rocks, or carried swiftly on with the tide now flowing in. Crofton caught hold of the old woman's dress, and as she had fainted, and was therefore, fortunately for him, quiescent, he held her firmly, and once more buffeted the waves for life. Dick held Mary, charging her not to touch him; and as he was a practised swimmer, he brought her ashore speedily and safely, followed by Mike, who also swam well, and a minute after, Crofton landed with old Peggy still insensible.

No sooner had they recovered breath than Dick cried out, "Come, you two chaps as is to be paid for this job, and help us to fish out another or two afore it be over-late."

"It's Will's head I'm seeing, Mr. Marlin," sobbed Mike; "and he niver swimming a sthroke in his born days. Musha! why was I coming away without him; will I be thryin' again?"

"You look to your mother, lad," replied Dick, "and I'll lend him a hand." Then, catching a rope, he

plunged into the water again. The two men looked sullen, but at length, provided with ropes, followed his example; while Crofton, watched over by Mr. Rodney, lay helpless on the beach, in great pain, for his foot had suffered in his exertions. They were soon joined by the captain and mate, both in a state of high indignation."

"Who is to pay me for this heavy addition to my losses?" said Scruton. "That boat was my best; it cost me a hundred pounds, and was a bargain. I am a ruined man, Mr. Crofton, and you have taken advantage of my weakness."

"Confound the money," said the mate; "what are you wanting the fellow's money for? Will all he has buy us another boat hereaway; and how are we to get off from this infernal coast? Didn't I warn ye, Captain Scruton, to beware of bringing out gentlemen passengers? — but you never can stand the sight of money. I never knew one of their set but brought trouble and loss on a ship with their fancies and their cant. Now, Mr. Crofton, I say, where's them precious souls you were for saving? You've just sent them off a bit sooner to Davy's locker, and lost us our boat with your tantrums, that might have landed us at some decent port. What would you like to have next?"

"I should like a little attention paid to the survivors and to myself," answered Crofton. "If God spare us, Captain Scruton, to reach England, I promise to recompense you for the loss of the boat, which it is probable my unskilfulness helped to wreck. For you, Sharpley, I can only say you are a cruel and unprincipled scoundrel, and I do not conceive that I am in the least answerable to you for my conduct."

"Be cautious, boy," said Mr. Rodney to his pupil, in Latin; "the man is possessed with a demon; do not rouse it, or you may be the victim."

"Never fear, old fellow," replied Harold, laughing; "but do help me to a pleasanter bed than these stones; surely one may find grass or leaves in this dismal country."

Rodney, assisted by Mike, raised Harold, and helped him to move to a pile of cloaks that lay high up on the beach; and Peggy, now revived and active, assisted in bathing and re-bandaging his injured foot, and providing a soft cushion for it, to make which she took off Mike's jacket.

"And no more nor he and ivery soul here is owing to his honor," murmured she. "The blessin' of the poor fall on him; may he niver be wanting a pratee and a sup of thick milk while he lives! Sure, wasn't it himself, niver sparin' his gold nor his limbs, and bringin' us safe to dhry ground, God be praised, barrin' poor Willie and the mather, and them gone together, praised be God!"

"Has nothing yet been seen of your cousin, Mike?" asked Harold of the weeping boy.

"Was it seein' him, yer honner?" replied Mike; "sure, it's niver again we'll set our blessed eyes on him, seein' he was the boy as was niver swimmin' a sthroke afore this time, more's the sorrow."

A shout from the shore summoned the anxious emigrants, who found that Dick had succeeded in rescuing William, though the poor youth remained in a very weak state. The other two men had landed, one bringing in the old schoolmaster quite senseless, and the other a young lad, whom Peggy recognized as Pat

Conolly, and observed, "There's betther nor him gone to the bottom."

The boy, who was not more than nine or ten years old, was likewise insensible; but the attention of the woman and of Mr. Rodney soon brought all the rescued sufferers round. No hope remained of recovering more living, Dick assured Mr. Rodney, as they conducted the grateful old man and boys to the rest, where Dick had to undergo the abuse of the mate for acting without orders, and being accessory to the loss of the boat. In the mean time, Captain Scruton was looking out in great agitation on the total destruction of his unfortunate vessel, torn asunder by the weight of the waves.

"The *Nugget* has gone to pieces," he cried in despair; "every plank has parted, and we shall never save a pound's-worth of her freight; I am a ruined man!"

"May the gates of heaven open to recave them!" exclaimed Peggy, raising her hands. "Sinners they were, like all on us, and it's little fit we are for judgment; but He calls us when it's plasing Him."

"This is indeed a terrible sight, Captain Scruton," said Mr. Rodney; "it is a fearful reflection that those desperate men, with anger in their hearts and oaths on their lips, should be hurried to judgment."

"What more could I do, Mr. Rodney?" answered Scruton; "what better fate have I,—a wretched, ruined man? cast away on a barren coast, in utter poverty and destitution, not knowing where to shelter my head."

"A shelter is it, captain?" said Dick; "I was considering that over to myself. What's the orders? I

have tools, and we're not ill off for hands; we'll soon rig up a shelter."

"Will I be looking out for a cabin, then?" said Mike; "sure, there'll be some up the rocks."

"You can all do as you will," said Scruton, despairingly; "I must stay to guard the little property I have saved, and to look out for any wreck coming ashore."

"And what in the world can you do with it?" asked Mr. Rodney, in amazement.

"I cannot abandon my own property," answered he. "Some means may offer to carry it off. Some vessel——"

"Vessels will keep far enough from these cursed reefs; and it's not many voyage so far north," muttered Sharpley. "If you'd fetched out what would have helped us, instead of all your lumber, we'd have made out our latitude; and we've never a gleam of sun to give us a chance of taking our longitude. But it matters little; we're in a bad fix."

Two of the men who had scaled the cliffs returned to report the complete solitude and desolation of the coast. A wide extent of plain was covered with low thorny brushwood, sprinkled with snow; beyond this lay, at a distance, dark woods, and farther still they could trace a line of snow-covered mountains. No appearance of inhabitants, not an animal was seen to cheer the wintry scene; and the men swore they had better have gone down with the old hulk than be starved to death in this wilderness.

"Be houlding your wicked tongues, ye sinners," said the old schoolmaster. "What will you be, I'd be asking you, that would tache the Almighty Himself how

He'd be ordhering the world? If it be that He's laid out work for us to do, won't He, blessed be His name, spare us, that we may do that same. And sure, if we be dry branches, won't it be just that we be lopped off. Isn't there me, myself, Dennis O'Reilly, with plenty of work marked out, seeing ye're, every soul of ye, nadin' a dale of taching. Then Mr. Rodney here, he a college tutor, and maybe he'll be having a mighty dale of duty to get through yet. And sure, then, God will spare us, and feed us, like the great prophet in the wilderness, by the birds of the air thimselves. And what for will he be feeding us? sure, won't it be to do our work?"

Mr. Rodney felt a little uncomfortable in acknowledging the responsibility the old man pointed out; yet he felt the truth of the simple words which afforded ridicule to the hardened and careless; but were not thrown away on the thoughtful.

"You are quite right, Mr. O'Reilly," said Crofton; "if we would have the help of God, we must try to help ourselves. It will never do to remain pining here, to starve for want of food and shelter. We must have tents to protect us from the bitter wind; and we must also arrange to keep a good look-out; for if we have been thrown, as I conclude we have, considerably north of California, I know that the coast is noted for the fierceness of its savage tribes."

"I cannot help thinking," said Scruton, "that we must even be north of the Columbia; the ship made such terrible way in the gale; but we are quite in the dark about our position."

"If it should be as you think, Captain Scruton," said Mr. Rodney, "we have only to keep the coast, and



proceed south to the mouth of the river, where we must fall among friends."

"Easier said than done," said the surly mate; "a nice coasting voyage we should make a-top of these jagged rocks, where we'd have to carry provision along with us to keep us alive, and every man armed to defend himself from the murdering savages; and over that, who's to tell whether we be north or south of the Columbia? If you meddling fellows hadn't stoved our good boat, we had a chance of trying our luck along the coast. Now every hand's his own master, and can take his own course. I mean to make a start for one."

"And what may be your plan, if I may presume to ask you, Mr. Sharpley?" said Mr. Rodney.

"Civil, but cunning," answered the man, with a rude laugh; "but I don't mind telling you my scheme. I mean to choose my share of the wreck, to hang a bag of beef and a keg of rum over my shoulders, to take a knife in my belt and a gun in my hand, and then to make my way due east to the mountains, cross them if I can,— if not, coast them, till I come on some station or settlement where I can make myself useful, and start off on a new hook."

"And may His mercy lead you to a better course," said Dennis. "It's a bad road to Heaven is that same you're treading, Mr. Sharpley."

"Mind your own tack, you old fool," replied the coarse man; "and if you're bound for Heaven, I'll tell you you're not far from port; you've only to bide here quietly a bit."

"Won't we all be going along with you among the mountains, Mr. Sharpley?" demanded Mike. "Sure

you'd not be laving us here to be dying like dogs under these bare rocks; and my mother and Mary too, the cratur! Arrah! won't I be the boy to be kaping them up with you, by God's help."

"The scheme seems to be feasible," said Mr. Rodney, with a sigh, "though it must necessarily be attended with toil and difficulty, and we certainly ought to keep together. What is your opinion of the plan, Captain Scruton?"

"I once more say, Mr. Rodney," answered Scruton, "that unless we can contrive some mode of transporting the salvage of the wreck inland, I must remain to guard it. A good team of horses or oxen might do."

And Scruton mournfully looked on the mountain of goods, which had by this time been increased by some chests and casks, which the tide had thrown on the beach.

Crofton turned away in disgust from the infatuated man, and said, "My unfortunate accident must prevent me from taking the field, my friends. I must, of necessity, remain with Captain Scruton; but if your expedition be fortunate, and you meet with friends, whether Christians or charitable heathens, I know you will despatch them here to help us."

"To rob us, more likely," said Scruton, in agitation. "Rather let us build a boat, and escape from the thieving tribes that frequent the coast."

"Where will we get the timmer, captain?" said Dick, "seeing there's no trees hereabout bigger nor berry bushes; and these planks thrown ashore wouldn't hold a nail, they're so rotten. Ay, ay, it were a bad job we lost yon boat."

Scruton groaned, but Dick continued to whistle

cheerfully, as he planted some wrecked oars in the ground close to the cliffs, and covered them with the sailcloth which had been thrown over the stores in their first trip.

"By rights," said he, "the women folks ought to have been first served; but I'se rig 'em up a bit berth in this here nook." And another wrecked oar or two with a sailcloth cover, and rugs spread beneath, made a small tent for the easily contented women.

By this time, Mike, assisted by the active little Pat, had collected some dry driftwood, and made a large fire in a convenient hollow, where the women employed themselves in drying the clothes of those who had been in the water, and in boiling a kettle of fresh water, as it was called, from the water-cask; and Captain Scruton having reluctantly given out tea and sugar, with some biscuit and beef for the men, they prepared tea and meat, which were welcomely received; though the mean captain protested that he had no right to victual the emigrant passengers, and he was only by shame at last induced to grant them a share of biscuit.

"God's name be praised for the mercies we have resaved at His hands," said Dennis; "and for this blessed food He is spreading for us in a strange land;" and some lips, and more hearts, answered "Amen" to the prayer of the worthy old man.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Claims of the Wreckers.—Ned Conolly's Will.—Dennis O'Reilly on the Temperance Question.—Rodney superseded.—Pat's mode of enforcing Temperance.—The Schoolmaster's Rebuke.

AFTER their scanty repast, the whole party were drawn to the beach to see, with deep distress, corpse after corpse washed ashore. These the poor women drew up above the water-mark, and wept as they recognized the faces of neighbors or acquaintances; their countenances still wearing the look of horror which the prospect of a violent and inevitable death had called up. The boys dug graves in the shingly beach, and the pious old schoolmaster uttered a prayer as the dead were consigned to their lonely sepulchre on that shore where it was probable their graves would rest unvisited and undisturbed till the great day of judgment.

Besides the bodies, the tide threw various articles of wreck on the beach, which were carefully collected by Captain Scruton; nor were the mate and sailors idle; though they prudently appropriated only such things as were valuable and portable; some small coins scattered over the beach, or secretly abstracted from the persons of the dead, and two or three watches, were secured by Sharpley; but he did not succeed in defeating the vigilance of Peggy, who detected him ex-

tracting a watch from the corpse of a poor emigrant, and stopped his hand, saying,

“Sorrow be upon ye then, Mr. Sharpley, would ye be wrongin’ the very dead themselves? sure isn’t poor Ned Conolly the boy as will never be resting in his grave, and him seeing you doing that same. Who was to be gettin’ his watch barrin’ his own flesh and blood, that same unlucky gossoon Pat, as was drowned dead, and me bringin’ him back my own self. Sorrow a sowl has the poor boy to look to barrin’ Mary and me; ochone! And you would be the rogue to be liftin’ his uncle’s watch! when Neddy himself was masther to write out his own will, and lavin’ all his ownings to Pat, the gossoon. Wasn’t that same will signed with Mary’s cross and my own cross, the masther tellin’ us that same being as good as gold, musha! it’s throe altogether! and isn’t the will itself lyin’ at this time at the bottom of the say?”

The loud vociferation of Peggy attracted Captain Scruton to the spot, who, on learning the cause of the altercation, coolly took possession of the watch himself, saying, “As I may have to feed the boy, God knows how long, it is but just that I should have something in part of payment.”

Sharpley muttered an imprecation that sounded like a threat, and Peggy was far from satisfied with the captain, as murmuring and weeping she proceeded to assist in removing and burying the body of Conolly, over whom Pat shed some bitter tears; for his uncle had brought him up, in him he lost the sole relative he could claim in the world, and his wild tricks and mischievous propensities were not likely to win him many new friends.

After an uncomfortable, though fortunately an undisturbed, rest in their crowded little tents, the dejected castaways rose next morning, bent on making some effort to extricate themselves from their miserable position. The wind yet blew tempestuously from the sea, casting ashore the timbers and freightage of the unlucky vessel, and goading Scruton to distraction as he walked among the heaps of wreck which he could not turn to profit. The men grumbled loudly over the task of dragging up the useless yards, ropes, and sails; and it was only by the dangerous bribe of rum that he insured their services. But once aware that a hogshead of rum was among the saved property, the four sailors not only demanded their grog, but even threatened to seize the whole if they were not liberally supplied.

“Captain Scruton,” said the old schoolmaster, “I’m bold to be spaking with you, seeing that I, Dennis O’Reilly, am always, by rason of knowin’ a dale, looking at the end of things; and if I would be ever keeping my eyes shut in doing that same, I would be letting the boys I own fall into mischief. Then sure, Captain Scruton, isn’t it you should be seeing far off the sorrow that will be falling on your own misguided men, God turn them from their bad ways, for isn’t it the same sup of spirit you’d be daling out to them will be tempting them on to fighting, and thieving, and may-be murder itself; and will we be standing by, and giving them their own ways altogether? Sure, captain, dear, wouldn’t you be ordering my boys, seeing they may be thrust, to be rowling that same barrel of poison back again to the bottom of the say, and peaceful be its rest there for ever and ever!”

"The rum cost money, Mr. O'Reilly," said Scruton, much irritated, "and it's worth money to me. The sea has swallowed up enough of my property, I shall hardly be such a fool as to fling away the little that remains to me."

"The old man is a second Daniel," said Harold; "the men will all go mad if they get to the rum. By all means let us get rid of it. John, you and William can roll down the hogshead, and start the infernal liquor into the sea."

John was ready in a moment; but William hesitated, and said, "Hadn't we better have the captain's leave first, sir? I don't think we have a right to meddle with his property without orders."

"In the question of morality," said Mr. Rodney, "the youth is perfectly right. We may not commit evil to obtain good. Though we are on American ground, we must not adopt the Lynch law. But, Captain Scruton, allow me to suggest the prudence of submitting to this small sacrifice, in order to avert the probable consequences of retaining the fatal possession."

But Scruton, furious at the contemplation of his losses, could not be persuaded to relinquish that which was in fact worse than useless, though he consented that John and the two Irish boys should be placed as sentinels, with loaded guns, to guard the rum. Dick was honest and might have been trusted, but Scruton required his services to collect the worthless wreck.

"Surely, Captain Scruton," said Crofton, as he tried in vain to rise and stand, "surely you do not mean us to remain in this miserable exposed place till you collect all the fragments of your unfortunate ship, which, after all, are good for nothing but firewood. Which of you,

my men, will volunteer on an expedition into the country to try and discover the best mode of escaping from this dismal shore? Rodney, my dear fellow, will you lead them, and note down the appearance of the country? The two lads are keen-eyed, they will see how the land lies; and even John Lump there can carry a gun and take care of you and of himself. He has capital hands, though his head is not particularly useful. Well, Mr. Sharpley, do you make any objection to this motion?" added he, seeing the mate scowling as he spoke.

"I think Captain Scruton has gone mad," grumbled the man, "and therefore every man's bound to look to himself. But, I say, you'd better keep your friend here; he's a deal too slow for the business. I'll manage it myself." Then turning to the sailors, he said, "Throw down them rotten spars, you fools, and let every one of you help himself to a gun. Stick your knives handy in your belts and come after me; we're making a trip inland, and it's like we may fall in with them that needs putting down thereaway; so it behooves us to be ready. Here, Marlin, you must be one; we want a strong force: but that servant of yours, Mr. Crofton, may bide where he is; he's not a likely fellow to be useful in a set-down fight. If I have to take command, I like picked men."

"You take a command!" cried Scruton; "what is the meaning of this, Sharpley? are you inciting my men to mutiny? I say, I must have a force left here to guard my property. The Indian robbers may come down any moment to plunder us."

"Keep a calm tongue, captain," replied the mate, "put guns into the hands of the old man, the two lads,



the fine gentlemen, and their stupid servant; and if you don't fall out and shoot one another, you'll may-be keep quiet till we come back."

It was in vain that the deposed captain remonstrated and stormed; the men, fortified with more rum, which they obtained by force, defying the sentinels, turned a deaf ear to the commands of their captain, and joyfully abandoned their hard and unprofitable labor to make a sally into an unknown country, enjoying the idea of a sailor's holiday ashore, a run on land.

The passengers had neither the right nor the wish to interfere in this movement; and though Mr. Rodney felt slightly indignant at his summary dismissal by the mate, he could not but allow that the command of the expedition was placed in better hands than his own. Even Dick, who had always been obedient and respectful to Captain Scruton, said to him now, after a short consideration, — "I think, captain, if so be you don't countermand, I'd better make one on 'em. I can keep an eye on these here loose hands. Depend on me coming back to duty if I live; and mind, you lads, look out sharp, and fire away if ye get a sight of pirates making down on you."

In a few minutes the party had ascended the cliffs and disappeared, leaving the weak force below in great apprehension for themselves, and considerably alarmed about the result of the expedition; Captain Scruton especially, unable by his single efforts to rescue more of the wreck, and the flowing tide preventing further attempts, sat down among his ruined hopes, gazing on the wreck and the remorseless sea in mute despair.

As the women were employed in bathing Crofton's foot, he looked penitently at his tutor, and said, "I say, Rodney, my best friend, I know I've always been a thorn in your skirts, but haven't I gone and done it now, graceless that I am. I have brought you from your pleasant home in a crazy vessel, to be wrecked, frozen, famished, and I suppose, at last, to be scalped and devoured by savages. I'm a model pupil, now, am I not?"

"Truly, my dear Harold," answered his tutor, "as usual, you have been too imprudent, and I have been too complying; but retrospection is at once vexatious and useless. The voyage, though not abundantly comfortable, has not been without interest for me. The wreck was the decree of God; and ought we not to be grateful that where many were lost, we were mercifully preserved? If your foot was in better condition, I do not see but we are exactly in the position you desired, my boy. You have your guns and your servant, a tolerable stock of provisions, and around you mountains and woods, that doubtless abound in game. If we had but a more convenient and comfortable dwelling, you might pursue your favorite sport to your heart's content, and I would be your companion and fag, as usual."

"But, my dear old fellow," said Harold, "I never meant a barren desert to be the scene of our sporting adventures; now we must try to make the best of it. What do you think of that foot, Peggy, how soon can you make me walk upon it?"

"Is it walk on it?" screamed Peggy; "sure, your honor wouldn't be thinking of misusing this blessed foot, and it being as big as a pig's head. Sorra a step

will ye be stepping for weeks to come, barrin' ye be lettin' me have my way altogether, and puttin' on the powllice of the male as that niggur of a captin was grudgin', and he makin' ye put down the gowld for the same, the thafe of the world, afther havin' your money long aforehand."

Harold groaned at the discouraging words of his nurse, and tossed restlessly on his comfortless couch, till Mary gently said, —

"Would your honor be spakin' to Mr. Marlin? sure isn't he the nate hand with the hammer and nails, and wouldn't he be conthrivin' a hand-barrow out of all yon wreck of wood? and hasn't Mike, the boy, just now pulled out of the say an illegant little matthress, as was belonging to poor Norah Byrne and her dead babby, and she herself not nading it now, seeing her bed is the bottom of the say? Wouldn't we be dhryin' it, mother dear, and be layin' it on the barrow as Dick will be making? Then, sure, Will and Dick will be the boys as will be proud to be carryin' his honner."

Crofton was amused at the idea of being carried on a hand-barrow, like a bale of goods; but Rodney thought the plan feasible: it was, at all events, desirable to seek a more sheltered situation from the wintry wind than the open coast. Mary was therefore requested to dry the mattress, and William was empowered to treat with Captain Scruton, carrying money in hand, for the purchase of some blankets, he having a bale of them among his rescued freight. But Captain Scruton was now watching the tide, to snatch up any fragment of wreck, and could not attend to him; and William was glad to summon Mike and the women to aid him in burying more of the bodies washed ashore.

“And where will Pat be at this present?” asked Peggy; “sure, he’d not be runnin’ off with them sailor men, to be kidnapped with the savages. Ochone! Mary, dear, how will I iver be facing his dead mother again in Heaven above, av I be losing her own boy, the cratur?”

They were all certain that the wild lad had gone off with the sailors till late in the day, when William, having prevailed on Scruton to produce the blankets for a certain consideration, made his way through the piles of packages to obtain them, and came suddenly on the little urchin, lying on the ground asleep or insensible. Leaving the blankets, William caught up the boy, and brought him to Peggy, who shrieked out, supposing him to be dead. But the child breathed and even snored, though they could not wake him, till Harold, looking at him, declared that he had been drinking, and directed them to throw a bucket of water over him. This chilling application effectually roused him; he opened his eyes, looked wildly around, but did not speak for some time.

“Worra, thin,” exclaimed Peggy, “what will ye be doing, ye bird of ill luck? Will it be the rum ye’d be thryin’, ye little thafe?”

The lad seemed to have some pleasant recollection, and began to chuckle with an impish delight as he said to Crofton, “Won’t he be swarin’ and stampin’, and me tellin’ him it were yer honner as was settin’ me on to do that same; and sure ye’ll not be lettin’ him bate me for it at all, thin, yer honner.”

“Ye’ve been tastin’ that poison, Pat,” said Mary, “and shame on yer mother’s son for that same.”

“Was it tastin’, thin, Mary?” answered the boy.

"Sorrah a taste was I tastin' of that same; but didn't I dig a hole in the big barrel with Dick's gimlet, and chip it round with my knife, and let in a long chip for a spout: and wasn't I laughing and dancing to see it run out, till sure my head was turnin' round, and iverything else was turnin' round, and me niver knowin' how I got here, at all, at all!"

It was plain that the mischievous boy, encouraged by Crofton's wish to run off the spirit, had secretly contrived to tap the hogshead by the aid of Dick's tools, and that the fumes of the rum, as it ran out, had intoxicated and stupefied him. They did not think it prudent to name the loss of the spirit to Scruton at that time, as he was still watching dejectedly and anxiously at the edge of the water for more wreck. The school-master, however, thought it his duty to reprove the boy for the deed.

"Wasn't it all one as stealing, ye vagabond," said he, "and was it minding your catechism ye were, and aqual to it ye are, and a raal janius, if ye'd sthrieve, barrin' the A B C you're so long in gettin' through. Arrah, then, boy, if it were in ould Ireland we were at this present, isn't it the birch I'd be givin' you in full measure. Sure, Mr. Rodney, isn't it King Solomon himself that gives out his vote bouldly for. that same corporal punishment, and don't I vote with him. It's not in the nature of boy, sir, to be drilled and filled with fair larnin' without a taste of the rod. Sure I'm the man to be spakin' to that, seein' I've been training these same boys for fifty years, and niver once altherin' my plans, for all the noise about education in the world; and hoping you'll be agreeing with me, Mr. Rodney, seein' we're both workin' at the same thrade."

Mr. Rodney did not look gratified at the appeal and was silent. He had no desire to enter on a controversy on education, and moved away, leaving the old man elated with his own superiority, to continue his lecture to the perfectly heedless little Pat.

## CHAPTER V.

A Snow-storm and its Results. — The incomprehensible Boy. — The Scene of the Massacre. — Cheer Boys! Cheer! — A quick Retreat. — The Tale of Sharpley's Treachery. — A Dismal Procession.

WHEN night came on, and the expedition had not returned, all became uneasy. Even Scruton forgot his cares about the wreck, and transferred his anxiety to his absent crew. "Sharpley is headstrong, Mr. Crofton," said he; "he would not scruple to lead the men into a conflict with the Indians, and thus, perhaps, bring a horde of robbers down upon us. Would that we had the means of concealing the stores; but I see no hollow or cave in these cliffs, which seem all solid rock."

"Would it be these ould sticks ye'd be thinkin' on?" asked Peggy. "Musha! captain, but you'll be a hard man. Wouldn't it be the lives of the men, and women, and childer, as would be worth more nor these packs, barrin' they were gowld, which they're not at all."

"Woman, they are gold," answered Scruton. "They may be turned into gold; and what would be the use of your wretched lives, without money, and without food?"

"Sure, then, captain," said Peggy, "it's what we're used to; and God's name be praised, didn't He always send us the bite and the sup in His own good time; because why? weren't we thrustin' in Him, and niver mindin' at all the empty cabin."

"That's altogether a taste of a sermon, Peggy Maurice," said Dennis, "and you're the woman that's not without a spark of sinse in your head, and won't I thry to get that same sinse driven into Mike's brain, the gossoon. It's nate enough he comes on with his Latin, as sure he ought, he resaving his larning from me, Dennis O'Reilly; and seeing I'm knowing the Latin tongue aqual to your English bishops, which is true altogether."

No one contradicted the assertion, nor, in fact, did any one listen to the pompous schoolmaster; for more or less anxiety pervaded every heart. Nor did sleep visit the eyes of any, except the satisfied Dennis and the still drowsy Pat. The rest watched anxiously with loaded guns at hand; William and Mike would gladly have set out to search for the sailors, but the night was so dark that such a plan was useless. About midnight, the snow began to fall so heavily that all crept shivering beneath their imperfect shelter, unable even to keep up a fire to warm them. No sound but the howling wind broke through the silence of night, and long and dreary seemed the hours, till the watchers thankfully welcomed the daylight, obscured as it was by the thick-falling snow which now covered the ground.

"Now Mike and I should go off to seek the men," said William; "and perhaps, Mr. Crofton, you will be so good as to lend us guns, for Captain Scruton has refused to supply us. Dick told us the mate's plan was to make due east; so, if we follow them and fire off our guns now and then, the sound may guide them right, for it's likely they'll have gone astray in the storm."

"You'd better not lend them guns, Mr. Crofton," said



Scruton; "what do these boys know about the coast, which swarms with half-starved Indians, always on the watch for plunder. The sound of the firearms will attract the wretches to our very camp, and expose us to utter ruin."

"Yet the sailors must be sought for, Captain Scruton," said Mr. Rodney; "it was for our advantage that they should make the expedition, and we are bound to aid them if they are in distress. But, on due consideration, I am the proper person to fulfil this duty; the boys are young; one is rash, and he must remain with you, Harold. William Arncliffe and I, two steady fellows, will set out; and we are not likely to fall into danger."

Captain Scruton murmured at their imprudence; Harold was agitated at the risk to his friend; Mike was bitterly disappointed; and the women, of course, wept: but the two volunteers were not to be deterred, and, with large cloaks to protect themselves and their guns from the storm, they climbed the cliffs, now rather a difficult undertaking, for the snow was frozen on the bushes which they were compelled to grasp. Then they looked over a wide extent, grown over with low bushes, and saw one undulating surface of white snow, to cross which was no easy task; for the deep snow, yielding under their steps, continually plunged them amidst the thorny bushes. From these slips William was somewhat protected by his thick hide boots; but the light and fashionable boots of Mr. Rodney were an indifferent defence against the sharp thorns. Arriving amongst taller trees, they rested under the shelter of a thick evergreen to consider what course to take, and whether it would now be prudent to fire a signal-gun.

Happening to look round, Mr. Rodney suddenly saw the odd goblin-like face of the bareheaded Pat grinning through the trees.

"The boy is incomprehensible," exclaimed Mr. Rodney. "How came you here, you audacious little villain?"

The boy gave a low chuckle of triumph, and then, changing his countenance, he whispered: "would he be murdering ivery one of them, that black-hearted Sharpley. Sure, didn't I find Dick's own hammer for your honner, and no more at all?"

And Pat produced a pocket hammer, which William identified as the property of Dick, and which, it seemed, the little sharp-eyed scapegrace had found in the wood they were now entering on, to which he had secretly followed them, as he had said, only "to be seein' the fun." The hammer, however, though it showed the men had passed this spot, was no proof that they had been murdered, and the pursuers carefully looked round them for some traces of them. The snow had completely hidden their track, but the sharp eyes of Pat occasionally detected a broken branch which marked the passage of some one above the height of a wolf, the footsteps of which animal they had certainly seen. At length they came to a small opening in the wood, cleared by fire, of which traces still remained, and where the snow was melted, probably by the warmth which the ground still retained. They paused a moment, and Rodney shuddered as he said, —

"Truly, William, I am no coward, but my verry blood seems to freeze on this spot, from some undefinable cause. Can it be possible that, as the boy suggested, the savage mate has murdered his companions?"

"He couldn't do that, sir," replied William, "they were five to one; and, moreover, he wouldn't; because there was nothing to be got by it. I feel a bit afraid myself, sir, of going farther; but then we're like to do our duty."

Pat, however, had no fears; he went spying about among the thick pine-trees on all sides, and suddenly sprung back from a clump, and, with terror painted on his countenance, pointed to the place from whence he had issued, and seizing Mr. Rodney by the cloak, clung to him, apparently unable to speak.

"Make ready your gun, William, and follow me," said Mr. Rodney, now completely roused to energy, and they entered the wood prepared for action; but what was their horror to see lying on the snow a heap of bleeding corpses. For a moment they felt paralyzed; then, remembering the duty they were pledged to perform, they proceeded, in dread, to examine the bodies. All were, too certainly, quite dead, pierced with arrows, and scalped, and it was with difficulty they recognized the features of the four sailors; but no trace of the mate or of Dick Marlin could be seen, and they hoped that these two men had at least escaped. The bodies had been completely stripped, and the clothes and guns carried off: to obtain this booty, in all probability, the Indians had murdered them.

"Should we bury them, sir?" asked William, weeping.

"We must not remain here to do it," answered Mr. Rodney, "we must not sacrifice the living for the dead; we must at once return, and induce Captain Scruton to leave this dangerous neighborhood; though how we are

to travel, and whither we are to turn our steps, I know not. Let us leave this fatal spot."

"Sure, thin, yer honner," said Pat, "wouldn't Dick be craping about among the threes for fear of them rogues?"

"It may be so, Pat," answered Mr. Rodney, "yet we must not fire a signal to recall the murderers."

Pat nodded knowingly, and immediately began to whistle his favorite air, "Cheer, boys! Cheer!" and in a few minutes his signal was replied to by the appearance of Dick, pale and haggard, who crawled out from amidst the snow-covered underwood.

"Don't you be anchoring on this accursed spot, Mr. Rodney," said he, in a hurried tone; "and God bless you, sir, for coming out to look after us; though it's a bit over late. Murder and blood, and nothing else, will come on us if we bide here; and it must have been God himself put it into this poor lad's head to whistle so bonnily, and 'tice me out of cover."

They waited no longer to listen to Dick's repeated injunctions for flight, but hastily left the blood-stained clearing, and retraced their path to the coast, rejoicing in the blinding snow, which must hide their trail; and, careless of thorns, they now plunged through the bushes.

"My impression is," said Mr. Rodney, as they proceeded, "that we are safe from pursuit as long as the snow falls; for I know that these unclothed Indians shrink from the storm even more than their fellow-creatures who are clothed after the civilized custom."

"That's a bit of good news, sir," said Dick. "God keep these villains long from our trail; but they'll be troubled if they miss lighting on our moorings."

In much less time than they had come out, they made their way back to their companions, and terrified them by the recital of this terrible adventure. Crofton chafed under his forced inactivity, as he looked at his swollen foot, and the captain groaned as he contemplated his pile of rescued wreck, though he now felt himself that it would be madness to remain.

“Now tell us, Dick,” said Crofton, “how this massacre happened, and what has become of our surly mate?”

“I cannot bide to hear of him, rogue as he is,” said Dick; “and it’s my thinking he’s sould his sowl to the bad one himself, or he wouldn’t have come off safe, when all yon poor fellows were cut to bits. Not a bit did he care for hearing them shout for quarter, but walked off laughing at the head of his black crew, like an admiral with his fleet at his back.”

“I cannot understand this, Marlin,” said Scruton. “How did the enemy come down on you — and did not Sharpley make a proper defence?”

“Defence, was it, Captain?” answered Dick. “Not he; it were all got up as they would run afore they sailed, and I jealoused it, and saw as how all along as we marched, they were colloquing together, and mis-doubting me, and throwing an evil eye on me. Then he, the bad dog, he says to me, ‘Marlin,’ says he, ‘won’t they be doing badly without you yonder at the port, and you such a first-rate hand, and fitter for a captain nor a ship carpenter?’ says he. I saw plain what he wanted, just to set my blood up, and egg me on to fight him, that he might have a hould on me. But it wouldn’t do by no means. ‘Dick, my lad,’ says I to myself, ‘these here are sharpish fellows, but they’re not sharper nor

canny Yorkshire.' So I keeps a quiet tongue and whistles whiles; and when we gets to yon wood, I puts a tree or two atween us, for I kens my chaps. Then they set 'em down, and out with their meat and their bottle; for you see, sharp as our captain is, they were the fellows as had managed to victual their boat well; and yet the niggers niver piped me up to have a bite in their mess, but sniggered over their rations, and threw out queer words, quite whispering like. 'Halloo,' thinks I, 'here's mutiny ahead;' so I makes as if I were walking off, but I creeps back under them thick bushes as keeps on their leaves summer and winter, till I comes right aback on 'em, and hears Sharpley say, 'This fellow's not a bit of use, he'd niver drive in a nail for us, and he's sure to peach on us. We must get rid of him first, and when we have all the rest sound sleeping at night, we'll come down on them and quieten them all. You can shoulder all that's worth carrying off, lads, and I'll steer you into a good port that doesn't lie so far off as they think, but I wasn't bound to tell all that. Then you hear, lads, I'm Captain Scruton, and I come in for my halves, and you'll come well off; there's heaps for all. Scruton's a regular sly old rogue, he has gold and bills as will set us all up for a good bit. Now then you're all to swear to be true to me, and work out my orders.' Then the fools all swore to it, and, rogues as they were, I seed it in every fellow's face as how he meant to have all to himself; but it were ordered otherwise. Just as I were considering over to myself how I should tack about and crowd sail to make homeward, and let you into their tricks, I sees, right among some bushes, a bit off me, a pair of glassy black een that I were sure were niver set in buffalo or wolf's head, and

down I drops and skulks again under the bushes, just in right time; for didn't there come among 'em a shower of arrows like a hail-storm. They skrieked out, and tried to come at their guns as was set agin a tree, but they'd no time left for that. Such shouting and yelling as set one's hair on an end. And then such a crew of brown creators daubed over with red lead and yellow ochre, loped out from among t'bushes, and hannelled our men's guns as if they'd been drilled with them. Then what does Sharpley do, he not been hitten at all, but runs up to one on 'em as had a heap of feathers atop on his head, and hauds out his hand, and starts to talk quite friendly like.

"I wasn't minding what they were saying, for I were shaking every limb on me to see them savage brutes gathered round our men, and tearing scalps off their heads while they were living and skrieking out for marcy, and Sharpley he never heeding 'em but talking on and laughing with that feathered chap. Then they flung away them carcasses, half-dead, and half-living in among t'bushes, and sat 'em down along with Sharpley and t'other fellow, and fell on eating and drinking, as if nought had happened. And him with t'feathers as had spared t'biggest rogue among all, talked a long while to them murdering savages in a queer lingo, and pointed at Sharpley as if he were some show. Then they grunted and growled, and first one said his say, and then another; but somehow I made nought of it, and what wi' fear and what wi' cold, I lost my senses altogether, and can tell you nought that happened till I heared that young rogue whistle, and then I thought to myself it were all a bad dream, till I set my eyes on yon bloody corpses."

The miraculous escape of Dick was acknowledged by his friends as a providential mercy to warn them of the dangers impending over them, and every voice was now raised to urge on Captain Scruton the necessity of immediate removal.

"Come, John, my lad," said Dick, "and lend us a hand to get up a barrow for your master. We'se manage to carry him cannily, wi' a bit help from Mike and Will. And be gatherin' up your duds, bonnie women, into bags; we'se all have to be heavily freighted."

Scruton turned with reluctance to groan and murmur over his cumbrous and useless property; he secured about his person all that he reckoned most valuable, and slowly portioned out the rest; and after Dennis and the women had tied up such small possessions as the sea had left them, they assisted William and Mike to make up bags of biscuit, flour and bacon, reluctantly yielded up by the mean captain.

"Do you not see, Captain Scruton," said Mr. Rodney, "that all these willing people will consent to carry away, is in fact so much gained by you? Whatever is left behind must inevitably fall into the hands of the Indians who will be guided hither by your treacherous mate as soon as the storm ceases. Here, Peggy, I will consign to you, from our own stores, all the tea and sugar that you and Mary will undertake to carry. And ought we not to provide ourselves with some of that very indifferent ship-water?"

"Water it is, Mr. Rodney," said Dick, "for afore this snow came down, every bush and tree looked as dry as a bone; I reckon they suck up little water here-away."



"I should like to take all my rifles and fowling-pieces," said Harold, "for we ought to have plenty of arms and ammunition. I see Captain Scruton has a capital supply of muskets for you all. But be sharp, my men, and get on with that litter."

"It's all but done, sir," said John, "and, Mr. Marlin, he's framed it a bit bigger than were needed; to haud yer guns, and yer portmantle, and dressing-box, and such like, that ye'd ill manage without."

Two hours after, the rough litter was completed, mattress and blankets arranged upon it, and Harold had taken possession; around him were stowed packages of all kinds, arms, and ammunition. Mr. Rodney bravely shouldered his portmanteau, and carried a rifle, powder-flask, and bullet-bag. All the men were similarly armed, and men and women were laden, in fact overladen, with burdens; for at the last moment Scruton would gladly have carried every thing off, and was himself scarcely able to crawl under his heavy lading. Even Pat had a knapsack on his back, which he was suffered to fill as he chose, and rejoiced in the privilege of turning over the stores and appropriating any thing he fancied without question. Finally, the powder and shot which they were unable to carry off they carefully buried, that the vile Sharpley might not employ it against them.

It was a work of time to draw all the heavy burdens up the cliffs, and to carry Crofton without accident; then, amidst falling snow, which happily obliterated their track, the wanderers pursued their blind course, keeping as close to the shore as the rugged rocky cliffs would allow, and marching south, in the faint hope of coming to some river which might guide them to the

Columbia, of which they believed they were still north. Slow and painful was the progress they made, and now and then some luckless individual sunk into a hidden and unsuspected hollow, and required help to extricate him from his unpleasant position ; and but for the untiring declamations of old Dennis, and the cheerful loquacity of the women, the procession would have been as solemn as a funeral.

“ Will yer honner be asy now ? ” asked Peggy of Crofton.

“ I would if I could, Peggy, ” answered he ; “ the mattress is soft, and the jog-trot is harder for my bearers than for me ; but I must confess I swallow more snow than is agreeable to me. ”

“ And Mary niver minding to fetch away her grand new umbrella as she was buying in England, ” said Peggy, “ and me niver daring to use that same all this time, farin it would be gittin’ wet. Worra, Mary, wouldn’t it shelther the master av we were havin’ it ; and we never settin’ eyes on it more, seeing them savages, bad luck to them, will be carryin’ it off. ”

## CHAPTER VI.

A Night in the Snow. — The Fishing Indians. — The Voices of the Night. — Mr. Rodney's Pillow Abstracted. — The Reading Men Puzzled. — Looking out for a Well. — Sharpley's Character.

AFTER travelling some miles, the rocky cliffs disappeared, and dark pine-woods sloped down on one side to the shore, and on the other, rose tier above tier, extending into mountainous forests. Night came on, and the travellers thankfully plunged into the shelter of the thick wood to escape the piercing cold, whatever unknown perils they might encounter. After winding through the trees and among the underwood for some distance, they encamped on a spot less encumbered with bushes than any they had crossed, where the thick pines, forming a canopy, had prevented the snow from accumulating below. There with some difficulty they collected dry sticks; and match-boxes being numerous among them, they lighted a fire, and placed round it more fuel to dry, for they were apprehensive that they might be annoyed by savage beasts, if not by savage men, and desired to keep up the fire.

Then the women filled a kettle with snow, and boiled it to make tea, and with broiled bacon and biscuit prepared a good supper, which warmed and refreshed them. Scruton was now sullenly passive about the encroachment on the provisions, for they must have meat or die. They had brought away sail-cloth for two

low tents, and, crowded in these, lay down to rest, with the exception of two, who, well armed, were left to keep watch, for fear of a surprise, and to feed the fire. They relieved each other every two hours; and though the howling of the wolves and the deep growls of the bear alarmed them, they had no visitors, and morning arose clear and cold, to light them on their perilous and aimless journey.

The thick pine-wood was a desirable shelter, as well from the bleak wind, as from the observation of wandering Indians; but the ground was so encumbered with thorns and entangled brush, that it was impossible to convey the litter amongst it; and they were reluctantly compelled to seek the skirt of the wood, and move along a narrow, rugged, rocky hem on the edge of the cliffs, which ran along the coast, undulating, and sometimes descending nearly to the level of the sea. When they set out, Dick and John were litter-bearers, and William and Mike preceded, to remove obstacles, to smooth the way as much as possible, and to look round for any danger. They had not marched more than three miles, when the pioneers turned back, making a signal for halting, and when they came up, William said:

“There are canoes down on the beach, and some savage-looking women seated near them, who seem to be employed in barbing arrows with fish-bones, of which there are heaps on the beach. Mike and I observed all from behind a rock, where we were quite unseen ourselves.”

Once more the travellers sought the wood, plunging into the midst before they paused to discuss their future proceedings. “You’d better come to anchor herea-

ways," said Dick, "and if Captain Scruton will give me my sailing orders, I'll make a snug trip down yonder among rocks, and under bushes, to spy what sorten they be, and fetch up my report. These Ingens I've heard's not all murdering rascals, like them as our mate picked out for comrades; some's not so bad as they seem, and I'd like to make these here folks out."

No better plan presenting itself, Dick had his "sailing orders" given, and knife in hand, set out towards the spot the boys pointed out. Then, deeply anxious to avoid hostility, yet prepared for defence, if necessary, the inactive fugitives waited for an hour for the return of their bold spy. At length he reappeared, covered with snow, and in a tattered condition, from scrambling under the thorns.

"We're in for it now, my lads, and no mistake!" exclaimed he, as he shook the snow from him. "Anyhow, we'se never get on the way we're making. A bonnie crew they are of ugly-looking savages, and all gathered on a clearing half a mile broad, right afore us. There they're settled sure enough, for there's their cabins like a lot of great beehives, and fish hanging out on lines to dry, and a crew of fellows with ne'er a rag to cover 'em; but with lots of spears, and bows and arrows, and such a jabbering of women, and childer I never heard."

"But if we made them presents," said Crofton, "we might perhaps induce them to be friendly to harmless travellers."

"Presents!" exclaimed Scruton. "Where are they to come from? What have we left to give away?"

"Friendly is it, sir?" said Dick; "not a bit friendly will they be. They looked half-starved and dangerous;

and them sort, they'd not mind murdering iv'ry soul on us, to come at our bit bacon, or this here axe, and I'd say they reckon a hunnerd able hands ready to fall on us."

"In that case, Mr. Rodney," said Scruton, who, since his great collection of wreck was hopelessly lost, had become more useful and active; "in that case we must make for yon range of mountains, east. I am beginning to fear that we are south of the Columbia instead of north. It is too late to retrace our steps; and if so, we shall have some dreary and dangerous regions to cross before we find assistance at the south; but we shall be in a better position near the mountains, where we shall certainly meet with water, and escape any encounter with the Fishing, or the Root-digging Indians; and fough as the road must be, the woods are safer for us than the plains."

"But how shall we get on with the women and the child, and my friend in the litter?" said Rodney.

"Is it us faymale women yer honner is maning?" said Peggy. "Musha! then, arn't we the girls as will be trampling down the sticks with our heavy brogues, nately; and he the gossoon kaping his ground like a man, barring we lifting the cratur at the bad bits."

"And sure, won't I help myself at the bad bits," said Harold, laughing. "So never distress yourself about me, Rodney. I am able to stand well now, and when we come on thickets which the litter cannot pass, I can alight, and hop over the impediments capitally. And who knows but I may bag my first game in this perplexing wood, which really seems to have never been trodden before. Here, I should say, not men, but the animal creation hold sovereign rule."

"We must not rely too much on appearances," answered Rodney; "and, moreover, the animal ruler is sometimes as dangerous as the human despot. I have no fancy for encountering lions or tigers, that is to say, *Felis concolor* and *Felis Onca*, the less noble animals to which the Americans have given the high-sounding names of lion and tiger."

"Come, come, Rodney," said Harold, "I came out here on a sporting expedition, and I cannot have you to decry my game. Pumas and jaguars, if we ever come on their range, will, I make no doubt, show fight; and we are, certainly, in the country of that regular desperado, the grizzly bear."

"Would it be plasing you, Mr. Crofton," said Dennis, "not to be frightening the weak faymales consarning wild beasts. Not that I'd be denying the thruth of such savage cratures dwelling in woods at all, after their nature, and seeing the Latins have named the beasts; won't they be the ancient inhabitants of this same? But your honor will be knowing that we come from that blessed island where niver a noxious beast nor reptile dare be setting its ugly foot; and sure we'd be misliking to meet these same *felidæ* altogether; and me begging your honor, myself, not to be disturbing them in their own ould ancient dens."

"The old man is right, Mr. Crofton," said Scruton; "it would be dangerous to rouse these fierce animals, and extravagant to waste powder and shot on them, since we could not even make a meal on the useless creatures."

"But there's the peltry, captain," said Dick. "Some of them beasts have grand skins, as would fetch capital prices."

Scruton sighed as he answered, "But how could we transport them to a market, Marlin? and even if we could the cunning Americans might cheat us in buying them. They're a bad set to trade with."

"Bad it is, Captain Scruton," said Dick. "Jonathan's a sharp rogue; he keeps both eyes open, he does! Now come along, Will, and hannel these here poles a bit, while I clear away these briars, or we'll be like to founder."

But, lopping and hewing, and forcing their way, they still made but slow progress, and the clear, keen, frosty night fell on them in the midst of a wilderness of briars and matted underwood, where no fire could be lighted without the risk of igniting the whole forest. With some trouble, in the dark obscurity of the pine-wood, they found their bags and got some biscuit to satisfy their hunger, and resting as well as they could upon or under the bushes, over which they flung the sail-cloth to protect them from the thorns, they passed the comfortless night, shivering and restless. The howls and roars of the wild beasts sounded so near to them, that once Crofton was induced to fire into the bushes from whence the howling had issued; and the snarling yell and the rustling that succeeded, proved he had been only just in time to chase the intruder.

Morning rose to show them more fully the intricate maze in which they were involved; and so unpromising appeared their present encampment, that they resolved to penetrate a little further before they attempted to breakfast, in the hope of finding a clear spot for a fire.

"Now then," said John, as they were resuming their burdens, "which on ye's gotten hauld of my fitch?"



John carried the bacon in a large bag ; no contemptible load ; but this was now sought for in vain.

"It occurs to me," said Mr. Rodney, "that to preserve myself from the thorns on my lair, I placed a heavy bag as a pillow on the bush which formed my uneasy couch ; the bag was certainly hard, but preferable to the thorns ; I distinctly remember the bag sliding from under my head, but I concluded it had fallen beyond the bush, where probably you will find it."

But the bag was not found beyond the bush, and, moreover, it was plain that some four-footed marauder had visited the encampment and carried off the meat, for its footsteps could be traced from the spot on the snow, and a track of blood beside them showed that Crofton's rifle had wounded the depredator, though it had not caused him to relinquish the booty. As the hope of recovering the bacon was vain, any pursuit for mere revenge was considered useless, and the hungry travellers looked mournfully on the biscuit, the potatoes, and the meal, which now formed their whole subsistence in the dreary, winterly wilderness.

"Well, it cannot be helped now," said Crofton ; "let us munch our dry biscuit, and march. I am able to shuffle on a little this morning without help, my kind bearers, and may shoot some game during the day to make us a dinner ; so push along, my hearties."

With the rising sun before them they cut their way through the dense wood for an hour, gradually ascending till they reached a vast fragment of rock, moss-grown, and now snow-covered, which had, at some distant period, been hurled from the neighboring mountains, and, crushing the trees below, had left an opening to the sky. They mounted this rock, the upper surface

of which was tolerably level, cleared it with spades, which they had prudently brought from the wreck, and soon raised a large fire, round which they gathered to warm themselves till the welcome tea was made ready, and then breakfasted heartily, notwithstanding Scruton's uneasy glances at the diminished biscuit-bag.

Then they marched forward, and now at mid-day the sun was bright, and even hot, and the melting snow falling from the trees rendered their progress somewhat uncomfortable.

"It will be all very well to have the snow cleared from our path," said Mr. Rodney; "but if the sun carries it all off, what shall we do for water, Captain Scruton; for we have not met with any?"

"Where the tree grows, the water flows," replied Scruton; "so long as we remain among mountains, we may be sure we are not far from springs. But between us and any station where we can find help, I fear we shall have to make our passage over miles of desert, where water, and of course every thing useful, is scarce. There's fine land, I've heard, between the mountain ranges, and if we're driven to it, we shall have to cross; but we shall then be in danger of falling in with those dogs of Indians. You see we are not in the valley now, but seem to be always ascending; and some travelled men say, that from the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, it's all hills and valleys, mountain ranges, and dreary wastes, and God knows how we are to work through all without a chart; I own I'm perplexed; I don't pretend to know any thing of interior lands, and should have liked well to have kept an eye on the coast, but for those troublesome Indians. But all goes against me, — wrecked, ruined, and now cast on a coast

that I know nothing of, and none of you reading gentlemen seems any wiser than myself."

The reading gentlemen were compelled to confess that their geographical knowledge was confined to known regions of the earth, and that this particularly mysterious wilderness puzzled them; and Harold proposed that they should work up the mountains till they met with a river, and then take it as a guide, — a suggestion which was not rejected. They had now attained a ridge tolerably free from underwood, beyond which rose a steep wall of rock which compelled them to move directly south along this ridge, a comparatively easy path; and Harold had, during the day, the satisfaction of shooting two brace of birds, something resembling grouse, but of larger size, and now warmly clothed in their winter plumage. These, they concluded, were the far-famed prairie fowl, which were reputed to be of delicate flavor; and the provident women having plucked the feathers to make a pleasanter and more secure pillow for Mr. Rodney, put the game into an iron kettle with some meal, potatoes, salt, and snow, and made them into a good stew; and though the dinner was scanty for eleven persons, they were most grateful; and the voice of the old schoolmaster was raised in thanksgiving to Him who had provided the repast.

They had made considerably further way before night, and passing through a narrow gorge in the mountains, had the satisfaction of seeing plains stretched beneath them, which, though arid in appearance, offered an easier road to travel over. Beneath a jutting rock they were again enabled to raise their tents, and, stretched out on soft moss, they obtained a more agreeable night's rest, and, though deep hoarse growls from the mountains an-

nounced some dangerous neighbors, they were not troubled with nocturnal visitors.

"Will we be saking out a well?" said Peggy, next morning. "Sure isn't it a world of trouble I'd be having to find a handful of snow hereabout; and it being by no manes so swate as raal fresh wather; musha! what will we do av we won't be finding the well, and we nading our dhrop of tay altogether?"

"As soon as we come on a mountain stream, Marlin," said Captain Scruton, "you will see to the filling the water-keg."

"Maybe, Peggy," said Pat, "yon black fellows down there will be showin' you the way to the well."

"The boy keeps a good look-out," said Scruton, raising his glass. "I see, towards the south, a line of men crossing the plain; but they are a mile in advance of us, therefore we have the advantage of steering out of their course. But I do not like the sign."

"Ingins it is, captain," said Dick, "and I'd not be over sartain as how Sharpley were not among 'em. Whatna' for did them dogs let him off, I'd like to hear, if he'd not been rogue enough to give them an inkling of a prize a-head, and offer to pilot 'em to a bit plunder; and when they found we'd made off wi' some of what was best, wouldn't he be mad, and want to be after us. Like enough they've followed our trail, and never dreamed as how we'd turned into yon wood, and crambled up these here rocks just where we did."

"The suggestion is not unworthy of attention, Captain Scruton," said Rodney, "If you believe your mate to be base enough to betray you."

"To speak the truth, Mr. Rodney," observed Scruton, "I know him to be an unscrupulous scoundrel; but, as

long as I had him afloat, I had him safe. The men all hated him, and were spies on him."

"It was something remarkable," answered Rodney, "that, knowing his character, you should have engaged this worthless man."

"He was not worthless, sir," replied Scruton; "he was a good mate; and such are scarce. I never cared about his character, till he stepped ashore, and then I expected the rogue would break out."

"And sure, Mr. Rodney," said Mike, "isn't it with his aquals the thafe has dropped in; wouldn't he been murtherin' and smashin' Dick Marlin himself, av he'd been finding him out aneath them same blessed bushes; and where would we be gettin' through that bitter wood, and Mr. Crofton's litter, barrin' Dick wasn't cuttin' a nate road, musha!"

Mike and Dick were firm friends, and the boy had already acquired practical knowledge from the carpenter, more likely to be useful to him than the classical lessons of Dennis O'Reilly, which he shirked whenever he could, to the great discontent of the old schoolmaster, who looked upon him as a sheep led astray from his fold, and pathetically appealed to Mr. Rodney, whom he considered as his coadjutor, saying, "It's little use it were, Mr. Rodney, for you and me to be laving our counthry, and coming among haythens, and them we were looking for to do betther things, falling back, and taking up with thrifing and wandhering off, and all mane things, no betther nor faymales, which sex are not having capacity to imbibe the thruue larning of the ancients, seeing they have no more nor one tongue, and that same, as the Scripture has it, being 'an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.'"

## CHAPTER VII.

Ducks and Geese.—The Sabbath on the mountain.—Alarm of Pursuit.—Pat's Discovery.—Rigging a Whip.—The Scalp-hunters.—A false Scent.—The best Marketable Article.

It was at length decided that rather than descend to the open ground, where they would be in danger of being surprised by the roaming Indians, they should continue their wanderings towards the south, amidst the mountains; the jutting crags and deep clefts of which would afford them the means of a temporary concealment. Into one of these deep clefts they had now withdrawn, till the Indians they had seen in advance should be entirely out of sight, and also to allow the women to search for some sheltered pile of snow, which would enable them to obtain the luxury of tea, the greatest enjoyment left to them.

They penetrated through a narrow winding pass, between high perpendicular rocky walls, for some distance, till they reached a grassy hollow amidst the mountains, where a large pool of partially frozen water, surrounded by reeds and bare willows, was covered by flocks of water-fowl. The fluttering of wings and the noisy cries gave the sportsmen notice to make ready. Crofton called on Rodney and John to support the charge, and they drew near to the lakelet. Their approach raised a flock of fowl, whose heavy flight was easily arrested by the ready sportsmen: several

shots were fired, and a good many birds fell; some into the water where they could not be reached; some on the ice or on the banks. The destruction was hailed with shouts of triumph by Mike and Pat, who ran eagerly to collect the spoil, and two geese and three ducks were brought up to delight the women, who spared no time in beginning to prepare them. Even Dennis condescended to assist them in plucking the birds, apologizing to Mr. Rodney for his employment, by observing that even some of the heroes of Homer deigned to descend to prepare their own food.

A goose was immediately stewed with potatoes, and two ducks roasted on a willow rod, Pat acting as turnspit, and they once more made a hearty meal, and then in the warm sunshine slept, that they might be refreshed to travel by moonlight; by which expedient they hoped to avoid the Indians.

"Sure, thin, plase yer honners," said Peggy, "wouldn't we be resting here for a few days maybe, seeing it is altogether a land of plenty, this same, and clane wather, and poulthry, and stone walls; real nate lodgins as any livin'. Won't it be well off we'll be; barrin' the bacon, that his honner was nading for a pillow, ill luck it was! and won't it be a blessin' to us entirely, he niver wanting a pillow at all, God be thanked, seeing we'll have feathers for the pluckin'?"

There were more weary feet than Peggy's that ached for a rest; and, remembering that the next morning that would dawn on them would be Sunday, the travelers agreed that it was but a duty that they should celebrate it on this peaceful spot. Therefore, when the affrighted fowls returned to the lake, the sportsmen provided food for a second day, securing the provision

in a nook which they inclosed with heavy stones, to guard it. Then they collected dry moss and spread on the ground, that they might have the unusual luxury of a soft couch; as Harold, now able to walk, had relinquished his mattress to the two women.

The next day Mr. Rodney read the services of the Church, and added a special thanksgiving for their many deliverances, and a prayer for further protection. Though the air was still cold, and the prospect wintry, the sun shone brightly on their little sanctuary, and the wild-fowl seemed to rejoice in their immunity from danger on this day of rest, and sported fearlessly on the now released water. Even Scruton, softened by the sublime prayers of the Liturgy, was less worldly and sordid than usual, and more resigned to the will of God.

On the third day of their rest, Mike and Pat, always active, proceeded from the snug retreat to the path along the mountain-ridge, which they had previously left; and returned, with terror depicted on their faces, to report that the plain below was covered with Indians.

“Will yer honners be lendin’ me the loan of a gun, thin?” said Mike; “isn’t it myself as would be bringin’ them down like hares clane. Sure Will knows it how nately I was killing them on the demesne; the kaper himself lendin’ me the gun, and him tellin’ me to shoot all the rabbits, barrin the hares; and didn’t they the bastes, be always runnin’ in the way of the shot, and me thinkin’ they were rabbits; and niver mindin’ they were hares at all.”

But prudence suggested absolute quietness and concealment, and Mike was not allowed to show his dexterity; Captain Scruton, from a secure position, over-



looked the plains himself, and saw that the report was but too true. The lower ground swarmed with Indians, spread about, and apparently engaged in attempting to make out a trail. Dick, when summoned, declared that they certainly were of the tribe that had murdered the sailors, and Scruton, with much disgust, recognized the treacherous mate himself, painted and arrayed Indian fashion, and busily employed with a tall man, decorated as a chief, in examining a particular spot of ground.

"Rascal!" muttered the angry captain, "he will have guided them to the wreck, and they will have carried off all my salvage;" and, with a groan, he resumed his old sordid repinings.

"Much good may them rotten timbers do them, captain," said Dick; "they were never worth working up again, and I'd not have undertaken to build a coble out of all the lot. Now, what think ye, Mr. Rodney, about yon niggers? it's cruel hard to be taken, like, in a trap, and it's bad gettin' out of this here hole, — leastwise for *he*," pointing to Crofton. "Them there lads could climb and lope up these rocks like goats, but then there's the women and useless hands."

It was decided that, instead of returning to the level ridge, they should continue to ascend the dark wooded mountains till they could find safer ground at the east of the range.

"We are lost if we continue to travel on the exposed side of the mountains," said Scruton; "for the Indians, spurred on by that villain Sharpley, are evidently looking out for more plunder from us; besides, it is plain they are a scalp-hunting tribe, and eleven white scalps would be a great prize. Sharpley knows I have a small amount of specie, and some other

available valuables about me, which he would like to grasp; but I'll bury them in the ground before he shall rob me."

"Would it not be more prudent," said Mr. Rodney, "to drop the useless dross in his path, and thus, by delaying pursuit, facilitate our escape?"

"You're perhaps flush of money yourself, sir?" said Scruton angrily, "as you talk so coolly of flinging it away. But it's bad getting on in the world without a penny in your pocket."

"It's only a short journey, it seems, through this same world, Captain Scruton," said Dennis, "when we are raching the terminus, and are taking a look back; and sure, isn't it all the same, thin, the full pocket or the empty pocket."

"Leave philosophy alone, my good friends," said Crofton, "and let us have action. Come, my boys, take a look round this prison, and try to find a loop-hole of escape."

"Will I be showing yer honner-a-nate bird-nesting place; barring there's no birds there just now?" said Pat. Crofton willingly followed the shrewd lad round the edge of the lake, and to an opposite niche in the rocks, where a tall pine-tree grew close to the abrupt walls. Clinging to the rough branches of this tree, the boy swung up like a monkey, then showing his comical face through the dark foliage, he called out, "Will ye be thyrin' it? Sure it's asy altogether ye'll be thinkin' it, yer honner."

Laughing at the earnestness of the boy, Crofton, with some difficulty, ascended after him to the higher branches of the tree, behind which he saw a narrow crevice between the rocks, barely wide enough for one person to

pass, which opened a way to a higher ridge of mountains, precipitous, and thickly covered with pine woods; but not more impassable than the woods they had previously crossed. At all events this seemed to offer a possible escape from the trap they had fallen into, and when they descended, Crofton hastened to report his observations to his friends, who thankfully accepted even this difficult and perilous mode of extricating themselves from their present position.

"It's a bad job, though," said Dick, "that we've leave a bonnie broad trail ahint us; ye see, we've trampled round and round this bit hole, for all the world like wild beasts in their cages. They'll be like to have a bit guess how we've gotten out."

"Had we not better delay the attempt a little?" said Mr. Rodney; "after all, these alarming Indians may pass on without discovering our retreat."

"Not they, sir," answered Dick; "sure as a gun they'll make out this, and we ought to be a good bit off afore that. But, God be thanked, yonder's a cloud like enough to bring snow. If it come down after we're off and afore they come up, I defy 'em to make out our trail. But we must carry off all our belongings; so, captain, if you'll sing out the word, we'll all lend a hand, with a will."

After a short consultation, it was agreed to try this plan of flight, under all its disadvantages, and the captain sung out the word. The travellers took a last glance from their old path, and saw that the Indians were gradually drawing near, still examining the ground. They could even hear and distinguish voices, and no time must be lost in setting out; the great difficulty lay in hoisting up the tall tree those who were not, as Mr.

Rodney said, of the order of *Scansores*. He was not himself addicted to gymnastic feats, and he looked despairingly at the women and the old man.

"I'd manage to heave the ould woman atop on my back," said Dick, "but Mary, God bless her, she's a sappy weight."

Pat was already aloft, contemplating with glee the perplexities of his friends below, and crying out, "Will I send down a rope, Dick, and haul her up?"

"The boy is saucy," said Scruton, "but he is not without shrewdness; I think, Marlin, you might rig out a whip from aloft."

"A whip it is, captain," replied Dick, "and haul I will, but I'll need a hand to help, and some on you must run up along with them poor women, to guide 'em, for they're timorous, you see."

Harold accompanied Dick to the high branches of the tree, carrying a stout rope, which they hung over a higher and stronger bough, and lowered with a wide loop or noose at the end, in which Mary was instructed to stand, grasping the rope firmly, Mike and William ascending with her to hold and encourage her. The attempt succeeding, Peggy and Dennis were raised in the same way. Then the baggage was drawn up, and finally, Mr. Rodney, somewhat appalled at the mast-like appearance of the tall bare trunk of the pine, availed himself of the same contrivance, sighing to reflect on all the perils of scalping, breaking his neck, or being devoured, that this imprudent expedition had brought upon him.

When all had ascended, they formed a long line in the narrow mountain-crevice, and Dick, who was the last, made a final descent, to look carefully round, lest any

thing should be left behind; and he had no sooner re-ascended than the snow began to fall so thickly that it was plain that every trace of their occupation would soon be hidden, and the snow must smooth the greatest of their difficulties. For five minutes Dick looked from above anxiously, and by that time the hollow was shrouded in snow; then he hastily passed the word to move on, for he heard the well-known voice of the vile Sharpley below. All were silent, and paused to listen to the villain, who was speaking to some one in English, and they heard him say, "This is a like-enough place for them; but this cursed snow falling just now, balks us when we might have come on their trail. But we'll have the gold of that stingy fool Scruton yet, if he be living, and your followers may have his bright buttons and his scalp for their share."

"But, Sharpley," replied another voice in English, "you mustn't let 'em scalp the women; I'll not go in for that at any rate, man."

"What for?" answered Sharpley. "You're a nice one to be turning soft. You can try, if you will, to save 'em, but once give 'em a taste of the job; these black fellows are not easy to stop: I've seen 'em at their mad work afore. And what matter is't about a lot of Irish vagabonds, after all?"

"It's strange, Sharpley, that you can't recollect the names of these people," said his companion; "I've some Irish relations myself; and over and above not being fond of blood-letting, I'd hardly like to see the scalping-knife used on my own flesh and blood, man."

"You'll have time enough to look 'em over and sort 'em out," answered Sharpley. "I only wish it were come to that. There's nought to see here, and yet I

swear it's just the hole they'd be likely to sneak in. Is there no other way out on't think ye?"

They scrutinized every recess that might have afforded concealment in vain. The Indians, who were not less than fifty or sixty in number, did not attempt to waste time in searching for footsteps now, but moved round the lake, and keenly examined every bush, to discover whether a branch had been disturbed. Finally, a party paused beneath the pine-tree, and looked up: the hearts of the watchers beat strongly, for their lives hung on a thread. Though the natives are not much accustomed to climbing, Dick knew that if they said a word to Sharpley he would soon be on their trail. Fortunately the wind had drifted the snow up towards the tree, and the bole was shrouded, or the bark might have betrayed marks of their ascent.

After some conversation in their own language, the hideous, painted, half-naked savages moved on towards their English leader, who led them off towards the narrow entrance to the hollow; but before they left, Dick, and Crofton, who was next to him, heard Sharpley say, "They've somehow managed to get on south among the ridges. It's a sure thing they'll keep on the west side, for Scruton, he'd laid it down he'd make for some port to get help. His heart's sure to be with yon rubbish-heap he left ashore, and he'd niver agree to a land trip. We must keep on yon ridge where we lost their trail; for come on 'em I will."

His companion seemed to be remonstrating with the vindictive wretch; but the words were lost in the distance, as the troop wound from the hollow and disappeared, greatly to the relief of the cramped, and anxious refugees. As soon as the intelligence was

communicated along the line, Harold said, "Now what in the world are we to do, Captain Scruton? For my part, I should have liked nothing better than to have shown fight; we were in a capital position to guard our pass; but the fact is, that though I had no mercy for those two English renegades, I should hardly have liked to shoot down those wretched ignorant savages in cold blood."

"I'd like to have seen them let you have a chance, sir," said Dick. "Bless you, master, they'd have rained arrows in among us as thick as these here snow-flakes; and if them arrows hits, they tells, and no mistake; some on 'em poisoned, like enough, and every one cutting like a razor-blade. Nay, man, with such-like beasts, for they're no better, it's safer to run nor to fight."

"It seems," said Scruton with a sigh, "that we are absolutely driven to the interior: a hard case it is to be compelled to abandon one's own. But it's little matter, for I make no doubt that mutinous dog, Sharpley, has disposed of every thing before this. We must get off from him and his scalp-hunting crew, though its likely enough we may fall among tribes as bad before we reach any traders; and even then they'll, maybe, look sour at us, for what have we left to trade with?"

"You have money, my good friend," said Rodney, "which you will find to be, among civilized people, the most marketable article you can deal in."

"What I have is my own," replied Scruton testily; "and little enough there is left of it. It's fair for every man to look out for himself."

"A lamentable prospect that would be for some of

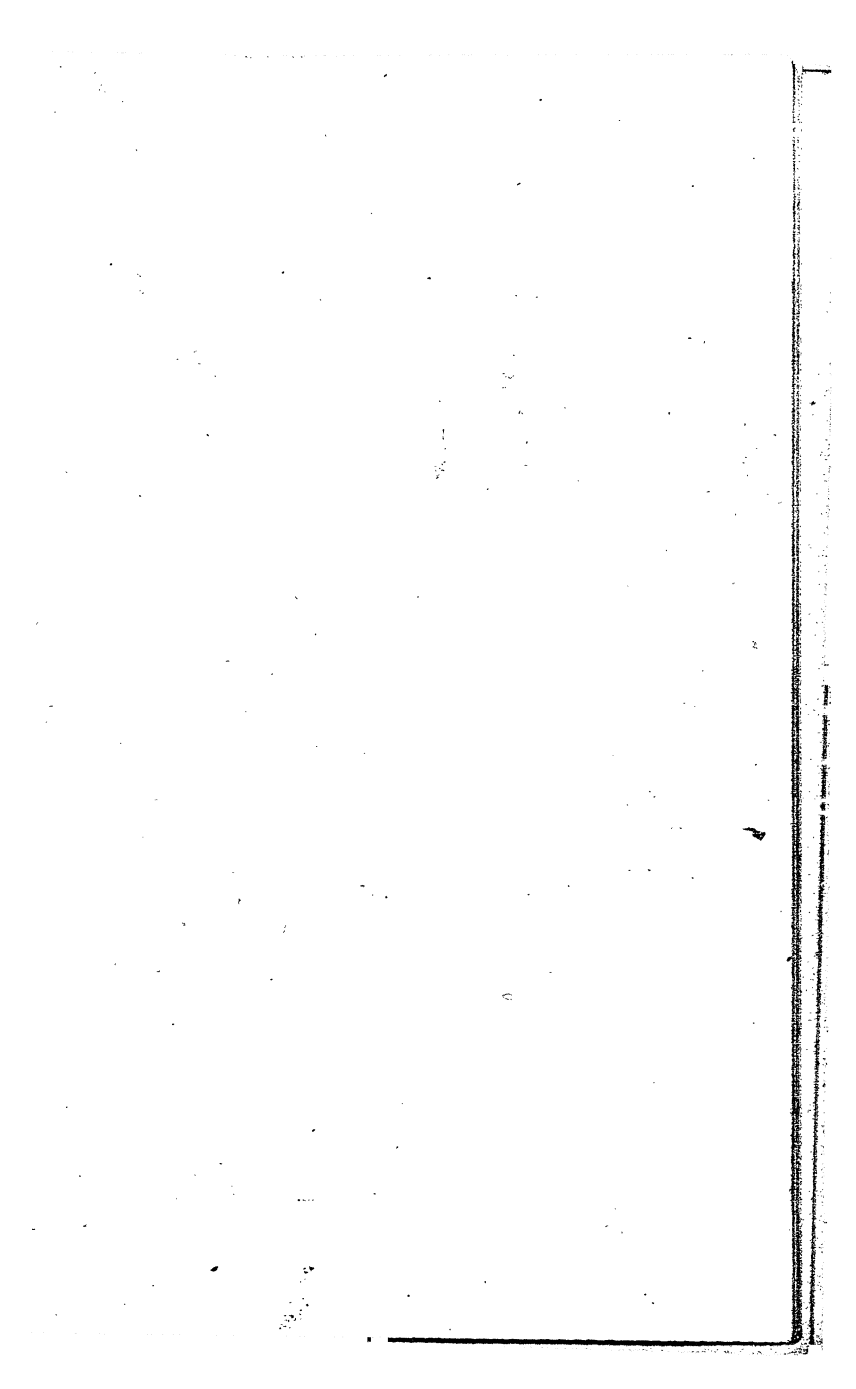
our party, Captain Scruton," said Rodney, pointing towards the destitute Irish emigrants.

"Say no more, Rodney," exclaimed Harold impatiently; "you and I, fortunately, have money also, God be thanked for it. Now, my conviction is, that in this common calamity, we are bound to share alike in good and evil. Let us only reach the abode of Christian men, and I will answer for it we shall have Christian hospitality. So, button up your pockets, Captain Scruton, we have no intention to empty them,—and please to say when and where we are to march."

Scruton looked vexed and ashamed; but trial had failed to subdue the ruling passion. Then he suggested that they should, as far as they were able, continue to ascend the mountain-ridge before them, preceded by Dick and Mike with axes, as pioneers, the thick underwood being still an impediment; nor could they prevent the troublesome urchin Pat from being one of the foremost, his object being to collect the pine-cones which lay around, many of which were more than a foot in length.

"Like enough them savages eats 'em," observed Dick; "God be thanked, anyhow, we're not brought down to that. But an' ye will gather 'em up lad; fill a bag; they'll come in handy for boiling our kettle, now when all's covered with snow."







BEARS ON ALL SIDES.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Signals of Distress. — Pat and the Bear. — A Peep into a Den. — Dick's Description of the White Chief. — The Defile in the Mountain. — Descent to the Plains. — Dennis Plans a College. — A Salmon Feast.

STILL the travellers struggled upwards, buried in the dark and silent depths of the apparently interminable forest. Still the snow came down, and lay heavily on the sombre wintry foliage. They heard the wind howl above the trees, though unfelt in their close and almost covered path; while beneath their feet little snow had reached that rugged, stony ground from which it seemed a miracle that the living forest should spring. In this dismal aspect and silence of nature the heart grew chill, and, for some time, even the most loquacious were silent, till startled by a loud cry before them.

Rodney and Crofton immediately shouldered their rifles, and advanced towards the cry, followed by William carrying two loaded-guns, for he knew the pioneers were unarmed; indeed, they were never more than twenty yards before the rest; but it was from a greater distance, in the depths of the still unexplored forest, that the cries, still continued, were heard; and they found Dick and Mike hastily forcing their way to aid the victim in distress.

"It's that good-to-nought lad, your honor," said Dick. "I misdoubt me he's fallen into some trouble; maybe broken his neck."

"He would hardly be able to cry out so lustily if that were the case," observed Mr. Rodney.

"That's a good lad," continued Dick, as he took one of the guns from William. "I wish he were more like ye; but it's not in him. Halloa! stop that chap! they're all alike; it's that hot Irish blood."

William succeeded in stopping Mike, who had thrown down his axe, and was dashing through the maze of underwood, quite unarmed, towards the spot from whence the cries proceeded. Then, keeping close together, prepared for defence, they soon reached the place, where they beheld Pat, perched like a monkey, on the slender branch of a tall pine, while, below, a huge brown bear was just grappling the trunk to ascend. But, at the sound of the rustling branches, the animal desisted, turned round, and grinned ferociously, growling in the low, deep tone of rage, yet not making any attempt to attack them. Crofton at once pointed his rifle at the beast.

"Haud off, man," cried Dick, in great excitement, "we'se have to fall on him on all sides; he's bad to kill, he is; and hē'll skulk off if we let him. Stand ye there," to Mr. Rodney, "and Mr. Crofton and me, we'se get ahint yon trees, and hinder him from running off thereaways; and mind ye fire right into t' beast, and not again us."

Then Dick marshalled his forces very discreetly, choosing positions behind the trees for himself and for Mr. Crofton, at a due distance from each other. The rest of the party had now come up, and at the sight of so many, the bear seemed to become uneasy; he made a few steps forward towards Mr. Rodney, who held his piece ready to fire; but the shrill shrieks of the women

when they first saw the animal seemed to alarm him, and he backed to his position beneath the tree; and wheeled awkwardly round to attempt again to ascend. Mr. Rodney then thought it time to interrupt him, and fired into his shoulder. The wounded beast made a sudden dash towards his assailant, and all the party took to flight towards the side among the trees, leaving Mr. Rodney to make a second attempt; but just as he drew the trigger, he stumbled over a piece of rock, and fell, and the ball, being diverted from its intended course, struck the dry branch on which Pat was perched, overlooking the fray with great enjoyment, broke it, and the poor boy fell, alighting on the back of the bear, which was overthrown by the sudden shock. William saw the danger of the child, and sprung forward plunging his knife into the side of the prostrate beast, and then hastily retreated, dragging away the almost senseless boy. The bear, bleeding and furious, rose to avenge himself on his assailants, and Crofton fired a second shot which seemed to have reached no vital point; for the animal turned from one side to another, charging madly against the interposing trees, till Dick, emerging boldly from his hiding-place, confronted the bear, and before he could be attacked, fired at the head, and brought his desperate antagonist to the earth, roaring with agony.

Several more shots were necessary to finish him, and then all gathered round to contemplate with satisfaction their conquered foe.

"Arrah, then, Dick, my boy," said Mike dancing with delight, "isn't it a raal beautiful shot that ye are? My lady's kaper wasn't hitting a baste no better at all, and niver such a big baste, seeing there won't be no

bars in ould Ireland, God be praised! And wouldn't it be a mighty lucky thing, Dick, av none of their honners would be nading the skin, in regard that Mary herself has niver a bed to lie on at all, barrin the snow; and this same skin making such an illigant warm matthrass, anyhow."

Crofton declared that Dick, who really killed the bear, had the best right to the skin; and of course it was presented to pretty Mary, as Mike desired; Dennis at the same time pompously reproving him for his errors of language.

"Will it be the English at all, Mike," said he, "that you're talking to their honors; and me shamed on you, afther troublin to tache you from the printed book, along with the Latin; that same being the ould ancient tongue from the beginning, when the world was made, among all the nations of the earth. God be praised it is, we've presarved that same!"

"Sure then, mather," answered Mike, "it's not Latin I'd be talkin' out of school, and niver a book to be sakin out the words; and nobody but yourself mindin' them hard words, barring it would be them Injuns would be knowin' the Latin betther nor the English."

Dick, still greatly excited by the adventure, now inquired of Pat how it happened he had encountered the bear. "Sure then," answered the boy, not much worse for his fall, "wasn't I takin' a look into a snug cabin, niver draming the baste was livin' in that same, and he, not likin' to be spied, comin' out on me; and wasn't I sharp in runnin' up the three, musha!"

"Will there be another bar in that same cabin, maybe," said Mike; "sure then we'd betther be firing in; will ye be showin' us the door, Pat?"



Pat was nothing loth to conduct his companions to the scene of his unlucky intrusion, pointing out a low, suspicious-looking opening in the face of a bush-covered rock. Mike would have entered it at once, but Dick, giving him a cuff, drew him back, and employed him in collecting a heap of dry bushes, which he threw into the mouth of the den, and then set on fire. A deep growling, and the sight of some moving form within the cave, assured him they had yet more work to do. Two or three shots were therefore fired, which were followed by howls and then by silence. This gave them courage, and Dick, pushing a lighted torch before him crawled into the den, and returned, dragging out two well-grown cubs, both already dead.

"The poor bastes!" cried Mary. "Sure thin, Mr. Marlin, you'd as well not mislested them. They'd niver be harming us, young things as they are!"

"To speak the truth, Mary," said Mr. Rodney, "I am somewhat of your opinion. I think this second deed very much resembles wanton murder, and therefore, my good friends, I propose that we continue our journey with a determination to explore no more caves."

"You'll may-be not sneeze at a bear-steak, for all that, sir," said Dick, "seeing we've about forgotten how flesh-meat eat, like. Lend a hand, ye idle chaps, and let's have these here beasts skinned and cut up."

The old bear was skinned, but was found so meagre from its winter seclusion, that, in the abundance of food, they left the carcass untouched. The young ones, when skinned, were in good condition, and were immediately cut up for use. Then the young men cleansed the skins as well as circumstances permitted, in a little

stream which fell over the rocks, and which doubtless had influenced the bear in the choice of an abode; they afterwards spread the skins to dry, and then sat down to an ample dish of bear-steaks which the women had broiled, and which the hungry guests all agreed to be far superior to any beef or pork they had ever eaten.

"I say, my lads," observed Dick, who occasionally forgot all ceremony, "what about all that firing: think ye these Injun fellows would be in hearing of it?"

"I have been greatly troubled with the fear that they would," said Scruton; "but in the dilemma in which that mischievous boy had placed us, we were compelled to risk the experiment. We must, however, move on as soon as we have dined."

"An unpleasant suggestion, Captain Scruton," said Rodney, "and after a plentiful meal, such a movement would be calculated to produce indigestion. I would willingly indulge in half an hour's repose and several of our friends who have, I observe, thoroughly enjoyed the steaks, will doubtless agree with me."

On the whole, however, as they could not possibly march quickly, it was thought expedient to make a further progress before night, especially as all desired to come on a clear spot for the night's encampment, that they might more conveniently keep watch against bears, wolves or Indians. So enclosing the meat in the two small skins, and dragging the larger one after them, they moved slowly under their heavy burdens, till the temptation of a little hollow glade, where the bare rocks had interrupted the growth of the trees, induced them to pause.

They spread the skins on the ground, and the snow having ceased, made a fire, and on the branches which

overhung it, suspended the legs of the bears that the meat might be dried in the smoke. Then they raised the tents, and keeping alternate watch, passed a quiet night.

"Dick," said Will to his companion in the last watch, as they stood by the fire leaning on their rifles, amidst the stillness of the vast dark forest, — "Dick, did you notice what sort of man the white chief of the Indians was?"

"White he wasn't boy," answered Dick, "seeing his face were painted all manners of colors; and I'd defy his own mother to have known him, daubed that way, but I seed as how he were a fine made big fellow, straight as an arrow, and showed fairish good action."

"Did he walk well, and step out firm as if he'd been drilled?" asked Will tremulously.

"Stiff as a grenadier with his stock on, and marching in time, as if t' band were playing," replied Dick.

William was silent and agitated; at length he said, "He would be Irish, may-be, Dick? — you said he talked about Ireland."

"Ay, ay, talk he did for sartain about friends in Ireland," answered Dick, "but niver a bit of such were he himself. He hacked his words up fine-like, all in quality fashion. It wasn't my way of talking at all, and not altogether so free and easy-like as Mr. Rodney and Mr. Crofton talks. But I'd like to know what ails ye, man; I can't make ye out at all. There ye are from morn till night always moping and musing about some nonsense, all the world like a schule lad whining after his mother. Open your mind, can't ye, lad."

William struggled and stammered, but he could not "open his mind" to Dick, who knew nothing of his history; and the proud, shy lad continued to brood drearily over his suspicions and his sorrows alone. Doubtless there was something depressing in the eternal gloom of the sombre mountain forest, where they were shut out from every view of nature except the dark wintry foliage around them, while above them rose high and threatening the snow-crowned peaks of the mountains, as they pursued their toilsome and dreary journey, uncheered by any sound by day, and at night startled by the howling of the hungry wolf.

The young bore all this bravely; the old school-master silently pined, and Scruton grew more desponding every day; and many days still found them struggling through the wood, even after their meat was exhausted, for eleven hungry travellers soon consumed the bear's flesh, especially as, regardless of Scruton's admonitions and injunctions to be economical, they feasted to their heart's content while it lasted, trusting more game might fall in their way. At the end of a few days of short allowance, the pleasant murmur of waters broke on their ears; and making their way in the direction of the sound, they reached a cascade, where the water, pouring over a high rock, flowed in a deep channel below, probably in the spring filled with the melted snow; now, though shut in between two rocky walls, there still remained a hem of dry rock on each side of the clear purling stream. Mike flung himself down on his knees to drink the pure fresh water, for they had for some days had nothing but melted snow, and in his delight he cried out, —

"God's name be praised, and will we kape close

along with it, yer honners? Sure won't it be good company altogether, and may be lading us out of this same black prison."

So long as they could find a path at the side of this welcome stream, it was determined that they should follow its guidance, and they wound along the narrow bank through the defile, which was guarded on each side by bare precipitous walls of rock, while along the edge of the water here and there was seen a dry sickly-looking willow. For about a mile they went on, scarcely knowing the direction they were taking; then the gully became wider, but more difficult to pass, for huge fragments of rock, fallen from above, impeded, and often threatened to cut off their progress, and the entangling brushwood again appeared.

But wild fowl were now seen hovering over the water, and the guns soon provided an ample and welcome supply of food; and they had the satisfaction to discover that the defile passed through the high peaks of the mountains, and that they were now actually descending. They again came on the pine forest; but it was less dense than before, and opened into small glades, some of which, however, they saw with uneasiness had been cleared by fire.

Still following the stream they marched on, till they were tempted to turn aside along a bare jutting crag, to the very edge of which Harold ventured to look over, and he saw with pleasure, far below, pleasant plains, covered already with green herbage, though it was only the end of January; and though around and above them the snow was still lying, spring seemed commencing below.

In another day they reached the grassy slopes which

formed the base of the mountain chain, and along the banks of their stream, now a river, they proceeded, judging it would flow towards some lake or larger river, which might prove an effectual guide. Along their road lay masses of fallen rock, overgrown with mosses and creeping plants, which would, doubtless, be beautiful in summer. Tall withered grass covered the ground, through which the new short green herbage was springing, and timber-trees were scattered over the plains; not only pines, in their everlasting garb of mourning, but various deciduous trees of great size, which, though naked, were still picturesque. Beyond these pleasant plains, at many miles' distance, might be seen another gloomy forest and another dark chain of mountains. The sun was shining brightly and even warmly upon this pleasant scene, and the weary travellers uttered a cry of thankfulness as they stepped upon it. Dennis sat down on the grass and said,—

“Sure, won't we as well stop here as wander further? What will ye be thinking, Peggy? Maybe the captain would be setting on his carpenter to help our own boys; and they getting us up a snug cabin and a potatoe-ground, seeing we have some left for seed. And our ducks at the door, and niver a penny of rint to pay. Sure I'd end my days peaceful here; and you, Peggy, and Mary, and the boys, to wake me like a Christian.”

At this suggestion, Peggy looked round on the solitary spot with alarm, and, contrary to her habit, was silent. Mary began to weep, and Will said, “I came out, Mr. O'Reilly, to seek my father, and I must go on a bit longer yet before I can be satisfied.”

“Sure thin, masher,” said Mike, “you'd not be

kapin' us all fixed down in this same? Sorra a bird sings here, nor a rabbit runs, let alone a cow or a horse; and mother, dear, you'd be missing the pig comin' in and out, nat'ral like, and niver a grunter here. Worra! won't it be dull in this altogether?"

"My good friend," said Rodney, looking with compassion on the wearied old man, "you must not remain here. On the west of the Rocky Mountains the Indian tribes are notoriously ignorant and barbarous."

"The more's their luck, then," answered Dennis, "that it has pleased God to send such a man as I am among them, to be larning them to be scholars and Christians. And Mary there, capable of a class of faymale girls, and putting them up to needle-work and fine arts, and such niceties, as are not suitable for a man of learning to be stooping to."

With some difficulty Mr. Rodney and Harold prevailed on the schoolmaster to seek a more convenient spot for his college of instruction in learning and the fine arts, and to go on with them over a road, now comparatively easy; and, after a peaceful and profitable Sunday's rest, they pursued their way along the banks of the river.

"Will your honner be carryin' a fishing-book?" inquired Mike, coming up in great excitement to Harold. "Sure we wouldn't be lettin them big salmons be swimming off, and we niver seeing a taste of them since we were leaving ould Ireland, where, sure, salmons grow as nat'ral as pratees; and Dick saying he'd rig up a rod with a willow-branch, av yer honner would be givin us the hooks."

John was ordered to lower the portmanteau of his master from his shoulders, that it might be searched for

fishing tackle, and not only did it produce an ample supply of hooks, lines, and flies, but also a portable rod, which could easily be fitted for use; and Mike, who seemed skilled in angling, was permitted to make the first experiment with it. He soon returned in triumph with three noble fish, which were immediately cooked, and a salmon feast was an agreeable change for the travellers, who enjoyed it the more as they had still the bountiful river, with its inexhaustible riches before them.

"There's some sense in this," said Dick, "it's a deal better nor fishing up gold-dust like them rowdy chaps in Californy, as is always cutting one another's throats for their gains, that never does none on 'em any good. Keep to salmon-fishing, my lads, it's a cannier business nor gold-fishing."

"Sure, Mr. Marlin," said Peggy, "wasn't I always drivin' that same into Arncliffe, Will's father, but niver, by no manes was he mindin' me. And him laving the poor boy, and niver sendin' a line to say he were dead or livin' all these years; sure, then, wouldn't it be the gold as changed his heart."

Then Peggy repeated the history of Arncliffe's enormities, and Dick now comprehended why William was so serious, and why he had questioned him about the white chief, and he shook his head as he named it afterwards to Mr. Rodney, and added, "God help him, sir, if it were so, and I wouldn't wonder; for that Californy turns men into rogues and murderers."



## CHAPTER IX.

Indian Lodges. — A Confusion of Tongues. — The successful Oration of the Schoolmaster. — A Lesson in Building. — The marvellous Shot. — A Salmon Feast. — A Hunting Expedition. — Bears on all sides.

As they went forward, they were frequently startled by traces of the visits of man; the grass trampled down, the marks of a fire; above all, a broken arrow on the ground greatly alarmed the timid, and all were in readiness for a surprise. For two or three days, however, they pursued their way by the river quietly, but then, passing through a grove of pine trees, they came suddenly on Indian lodges. Five or six large huts, shaped like bee-hives, were erected, apart from each other, and on the tops were standing several Indians gazing with astonishment at the procession of strange beings advancing. They were merely clad in a blanket or cloak of skins; with shoes or sandals of woven reeds, and a head-dress of the same materials. They did not seem to be numerous, nor inclined to be offensive, and the travellers would willingly have communicated with them, but the difficulty seemed insurmountable. At length Mr. Rodney and Harold, waving branches of pine, undertook to advance and make such overtures as they were able, the rest being ready to defend them if they saw any appearance of hostility.

“I’d try them with Latin, Mr. Rodney,” said Dennis,

"sure some of their words would be coming from the thre ould stock."

Mr. Rodney declined the experiment, rather choosing to rely on the universal language of mute expression, which he was soon called on to use, for the chief, as they judged him to be, by the eagle's plumes he wore, came forward to meet them. He spoke in a pleasant, musical voice some unknown words, and seemed astonished that they did not reply to him, till Harold spoke in English, and intimated by gestures that such was their language.

The Indian seemed then first to comprehend that his own was not the universal language, and he pointed to the different complexion of the strangers and of himself, to express that this must be the cause of the variance of their tongues. Then Harold, with a world of difficulty, tried by signs to explain that they were lost; and that they wished to find the people who had complexions like their own, and prayed the chief to lead them to these people.

The man seemed to be amazed; then spreading his arms round in every direction, he pointed to his own complexion, plainly showing that he believed the whole world to be copper-colored, the unfortunate party before him alone forming the miserable exception. The women now descended from the roofs of the huts to look curiously on the strangers, and seeming satisfied that they were not dangerous creatures, they retired to bring from their dwellings bundles of dried fish, very unpleasant in appearance and in odor, and placed them before their visitors, motioning them to eat.

"God help them, the poor ignorant haythens!" said Peggy, "will they be atin this same carrion? Sure,

thin, masther, it's yourself must be talkin' to them, and incensing them as how they'd be catching the salmons altogether fresh, and atin' them like Christians."

The "masther" was for the first time silenced and mortified by the conviction of his inability to converse with these people, till Mike said, —

"Will ye be thryin' them in raal Irish, masther; may-bè they'd be knowin' that sooner nor the grand English."

On this hint Dennis poured forth an oration in Irish which excited the astonishment and even the awe of the natives, who seemed to distinguish that the language was different from that in which Crofton had addressed them. They looked on the white hairs and withered face of the old man with a sort of veneration, evidently supposing he held rank among the tribe — probably judging him to be the medicine-man — and the women flocked round him, holding up their children, as if to solicit his beneficial influence upon them.

Flattered and moved by this reverence, Dennis, unconscious of the confirmation he was affording to their error, laid his hands on the children, and looking up to heaven, he prayed loudly that their eyes might be opened, and that God might be pleased to bestow on them the blessing of the true faith. The ignorant women evidently thought he was pronouncing some incantation, and wept much as they prostrated themselves, with one accord, before him.

Then summoning their husbands to assist them, the women proceeded towards a thicket of high bushes, which, though still leafless, emitted an aromatic smell. Mr. Rodney pronounced them to be of the *Artemisia* family, probably the *wild sage* of travellers. Armed

with stone axes, the men soon cut down a quantity of the dry branches; and Dick, seeing their employment, stepped forward with his axe, and effectually assisted them, to their equal astonishment and satisfaction, his axe exciting their admiration and cupidity in rather an alarming manner. As the branches fell, the women collected them, and carried them to a clear level plot of ground, where they began to arrange them in a circular form; and Dick, now perceiving that their intention was to erect a hut on the same plan as their own, thought proper to interfere and attempt some improvement.

He cut down some of the willows that grew on the banks of the river, and planted poles, eight feet in length, in a circle, tying them together at the top in a conical form. This seemed to astonish the women, who pointed out their own huts, only four feet in height, as models. He next, with the assistance of the Indians, wove the sage branches between the poles for the walls and roof, leaving an entrance below. This the women several times attempted to fill up, pointing to the distant mountains at the east and west, and imitating the roars of the wild beasts, and then to the north and south, and with hostile gestures indicating that Indian people, of the same complexion as themselves, would come and war against them. But Dick was unmoved.

“A pack of fules!” said he to Harold, who was watching, and amused with the contention, “to clamber into their houses through t’ roofs sooner nor through t’ doors, like other folk. I’se hardly let them bully me out of my nat’ral senses. I’d like onybody catching me building a house without iver a door.”

Harold comprehended that the hospitable Indians

meant this hut to be a lodging for their visitors, and that they were really distressed that it should not secure them against danger, and he endeavored to explain to the chief that they had other modes of defence against wild beasts or human foes; he showed the chief his gun, then pointing to a wild duck just rising from the river, he brought it down with a shot.

With loud cries the people abandoned their employment, to crowd round the bleeding, dying bird, and to look with awe on the murderous weapon; then they talked with each other, and seemed to regard the strangers with still deeper veneration. The temporary lodge was soon raised, the women brought a quantity of clean dry rushes, and strewed them over the floor, then they produced new, neat, woven mats, about four feet square, which they spread about, probably meaning them for sleeping-couches. Finally, they invited the strangers to take possession of their dwelling. Dick completed the interior by partitioning a portion off for the women, who gladly sat down in the first home-like apartment they had entered since their unfortunate shipwreck.

But Scruton and Mr. Rodney, on considering appearances, began to suspect that the Indians wished to detain them permanently, they evinced so much joy now that they had caged their birds. They brought out a robe of skins very neatly prepared, with which they invested Dennis, who was nothing loath, for old age made him always chill, and his conceit was gratified by the distinction.

"It's a knowin' people they are ather all," said he. "Sure won't they be seeing as how 'larning is most excellent,' as the ould poem says. But sure, it's some

shame I'm feeling, seeing as how Mr. Rodney, being always reckoned a good scholar in your English colleges, may-be well be turning mad, to be set under myself altogether."

Harold assured Mr. O'Reilly that his tutor was resigned, and satisfied, as all his friends were, that the mantle had fallen on the right shoulders.

"All this nonsense is annoying, Mr. Crofton," said Scruton, "for it is out of the question that we should choose this port to lay up in; where we can do no good, and where we can expect nothing better than to be regularly plundered, and perhaps murdered. I have observed that these savages cast a greedy eye on our freight."

"I think they would like to have Dick's axe," replied Harold; "and no wonder, for I suspect it is the first iron implement they have ever seen. They seem friendly people; do you think there is a spare axe among your stores to give them?"

"Give, do you say, Mr. Crofton?" said the captain. "We don't know yet what we may need ourselves, and an axe like that costs a good round sum. If you had had them to pay for, perhaps you'd not be so ready, sir, to throw them away."

"An axe is it, captain," said Dick. "Why then, we've four on 'em, big and little, and one would niver be missed. These blackies is canny folks enough, they is, if one could tell what they mean, but it's hard work making it out with twisting and girning like."

As Scruton seemed much opposed to parting with any of his property, Mr. Rodney advised Harold to waive the question at present, till they were perfectly satisfied of the friendly intention of the Indians, with

whom it did really seem advisable that they should make a temporary rest, as all seemed quiet, in order to recruit their strength, and to consider their future movements.

In the mean time, Mike had caught two large salmon, and John had shot some wild ducks, and a fire being kindled outside the hut, Peggy and Mary busied themselves in preparing a feast, of which the chief was to be invited to partake. It was impossible to entertain the whole tribe, who might amount to sixty able men, besides women and children. The large kettle was hung over the fire to stew the ducks and some potatoes, and when the Indians saw the bulbs, they brought some roots which looked and smelt something like onions; Mr. Rodney pronounced them to be a species of *Allium*, and certainly edible, and with his sanction some were added to the stew. The salmon were cut up in slices and boiled, and when the large metal dishes brought from the wreck were piled with the smoking viands, and the glittering plates of block tin spread round on the ground, the guests sat down, and beckoned the chief to join them.

In obedience to their call, but yet in great amazement, he squatted beside them, and was served with a plate of the stew, which he devoured with great relish, though, perhaps, his great admiration was confined to the plate itself. Again and again was this plate replenished with stew and with fish; and as his appetite grew less keen, he had time to watch the strangers, and to endeavor to imitate their mode of eating, holding the fork admirably, but always failing to convey the morsel upon it to his mouth, to which his hand naturally was directed.

After the dinner was concluded, portions were handed to the hungry Indian females, who stood round watching the feast with longing eyes; but it required all Peggy's vigilance and resolution to recover the plates from them, which one and all seemed to regard as a part of the donation, and which were most unwillingly given up. The possession of all this wealth evidently increased the consequence of the travellers; but, as Captain Scruton remarked, also increased their peril; for how could they expect these children of nature, who had no knowledge of the laws of God or man, to relinquish the treasures they had now in their power?

"But which we also have the power to hold, Captain Scruton," said Rodney. "I have much reliance on the simple good nature of this people, who have yet certainly not evinced any evil propensities."

It was very pleasant to pass the night under the shelter of a roof; the entrance they had closed with the piles of luggage; and they spent the following day in endeavoring painfully to extract information from their hosts, and in teaching them English words by pointing out an object, while they acquired at the same time the equivalent word in the dialect of the tribe. The chief was an intelligent man, he readily pronounced and remembered the words, and applied them properly. Before the day was over, he could call all the strangers by their names; he could say, "Harold kill duck, Hamatcha (his own name) eat duck." He had pointed out to them that in the north and the south there were many enemies, who carried off scalps, but whom he no longer feared, as he had "gun" to protect him.



But though they considered themselves bound to assist the poor people so long as they remained their guests, the travellers earnestly prayed that they might not be involved in any warfare, especially with their fellow-men. When the chief saw the bears' skins spread in the hut, and learnt the names of the animals which had worn them, his eye shone, and pointing to the mountains at the east, he said, "Many bear; Harold kill," and Harold joyfully accepted the intimation. As the communication became more easy with the chief, they learnt that the dens were known, but that at this season the animals were ferocious, and if the arrows of the hunters failed to wound them fatally, some of the men were sure to fall victims. But the infallible "gun" seemed to promise easy and certain success; and Harold was impatient for the field, though Rodney advised his pupil not to risk the danger or the disgrace of a failure.

"I came out for sport, Rodney," answered he, "and have never yet met with any thing like a chance. Besides, if I can kill a couple of bears, we shall be able to pay our lodging account handsomely, without any obligation to that mercenary fellow, Scruton."

"My very imprudent young pupil," said Mr. Rodney, "permit me to suggest that it would be a safer and simpler plan to pay your debts with your purse rather than with your life."

"My life! what nonsense, Rodney," answered he; "just as well a man might be in fear of his life every time he mounted his hunter, because some awkward fellows have broken their necks. There is no more danger in hunting the bear than in hunting the hare, if

you have a double-barrelled gun and a fair amount of pluck."

"So let it be, Harold," said his tutor; "your will is ever that of the Medes and Persians. Then, in quality of my office, I remain at your side, ready to give Bruin the *coup de grace* if your double shot fail."

"I'd like to see it fail, if I have space for my aim," replied Harold; "but, I say, Rodney, I hardly like to drag you out. You see, I shall be more fidgety about your safety than my own."

"No matter, Harold," said he, "duty is imperative. Now, how many of your followers do you propose to lead to death or victory?"

"Who will volunteer to join in a bear-hunt?" cried Harold to the rest of his party.

"Sure, thin, your honner," said Pat, joyfully, "wouldn't I be the boy to be dodging him out of his den, seeing I know his ways entirely, the cratur!"

Pat was rejected, and committed to the charge of Dennis and the two women. All the rest, armed with guns and knives, drew out for the expedition, which was led by the chief and six of his warriors, armed with bows, spears, and tomahawks. Pat was at first rebellious, but he was soon reconciled to his dismissal, and joined a circle of Indian boys, over whom he ruled despotically, employing them in carrying him about on their backs, and subjecting them to the usual degradations of slavery. The boy had, with more success than any of the party, acquired a considerable number of Indian words, and could make his lordly wishes known without much difficulty. Dennis, too, fully enjoyed his rest, and spent his time in the useless task of teaching

the young savages the alphabet, making the letters on a flat dark stone, with a chalky substance, used by the savages to paint their skin. The children rapidly learnt the names of the letters, but the acquisition did not promise to lead to any higher amount of learning. He was now engaged in teaching his little flock to repeat the words of the Lord's Prayer, and though unconscious of the whole meaning, the children seemed to be aware these words were of a solemn nature, and pronounced them with due reverence, always showing great respect to their honored teacher.

It was on the last day of January, on a clear bright morning, though the air was cold, that the hunters turned their steps towards the Snowy mountains, which lay four or five miles east of the lodges. Gradually they ascended, first over gentle slopes, then through dense forests up stony ascents, sometimes climbing over the bare rocks which jutted forward, or rose in almost perpendicular walls along the imperfectly trodden path on which the Indians led them, and which they asserted led to the haunts of the bear; but half the day passed and they had yet seen no traces of the animal.

At length they reached a sort of glen, surrounded by rocky walls and dark overhanging woods, still feathered with snow. Here the chief waved to them to halt, and be silent, pointing out to them on each side low openings leading to the caves in the rocks which the animals frequented. The difficulty was, which den to assail, for while they attempted on one side, they might be attacked in the rear.

They finally divided into three parties, and lighting heaps of dried bushes, threw them into several of the dens. From two of these retreats growls were heard,

and more bushes were then thrown in till the flames became furious; on this, dashing through the midst of the burning bushes, an immense brown bear protruded its head from the opening, grinning and roaring fiercely. Two or three shots were at once levelled at the head, and took effect so far as to infuriate the beast, which rushed into the midst of its foes, and thus surrounded by the whole force, was soon despatched with knives and axes, though not before two of the Indians had received some deep wounds in their naked limbs.

As they stood round, looking triumphantly on their conquered foe, a cry was heard, and Harold fell upon the dead bear grasped in the deadly paws of a living animal which had sprung upon his back, and which, with his fiery eyes and gnashing teeth, for a moment intimidated all the men so much that they durst not draw near, and yet did not dare to fire, lest they should destroy the unfortunate Crofton, who cried out, "Fire, I beseech you, my good friends, or he will crush me to death. Do your best not to hit me, but fire."

John snatched a tomahawk from one of the terrified Indians, and aimed a blow at the head of the bear, which only caused him to hug his victim closer, till the cries of their good friend stimulated Will and Dick to venture near enough to plunge their knives into the side of the animal.

With howls that rung through the mountains, the bear now abandoned his senseless victim, who was instantly drawn away by his friend Rodney, and carefully attended, while the maddened beast charged among the Indians, overthrowing and putting them to flight. But three or four shots finally ended his career.

## CHAPTER X.

Worse than the Bears. — A Skirmish with the Indians. — Sharpley again. — A painful Meeting. — The White Chief. — A general Movement. — A Distribution of Gifts. — The Separation. — Gloomy Prospects.

THE Indians had spread round to examine the other caves, when a shot directed from a high cliff struck one of them dead ; this was followed by a shower of arrows, but fortunately the glen of the caves was so narrow that they passed over the heads of the assailed hunters harmlessly. But Hamatcha evidently recognized his foes, and turning to Harold, who had recovered from his swoon, but was still weak and much bruised, he said, pointing to the cliff above, —

“Bad Indian ; kill all, take all scalp.”

“I should like to see them try,” said Harold, now fully roused. “Form, my boys ; leave the bears alone now, and let us make a sally. We must never remain here to be shot down like rats by those assassins. Lead us on, Hamatcha. How shall we meet them ?”

The chief, looking at his own small party, seemed at first inclined to retreat ; but the spirit of his allies, and the confidence he placed in the power of their guns, gave him courage, and he led the way, ascending through the forest, to the heights where the assailants stood ; while they, observing the retreat of the hunters, and thinking they had taken to flight, with terrific yells rushed downward to arrest them.

"Let us receive them here," said Harold, as they reached a broad shelf of rock where the bushes and trees were thick on both sides, affording cover. Three men were placed behind this cover on each side, and with the rest he remained to confront the enemy, who could only descend singly through the entangled brake. The first two Indians who stepped on the shelf were shot down by the men in ambush; and at this sight the rest tumultuously rushed forward, breaking down the bushes, yelling frightfully, and discharging their arrows with some effect, wounding two of Harold's little party, though not severely, he trusted. A volley of shots brought down two more of the assailants, who, being now crowded together, though partly hidden by the trees, Harold saw did not consist of more than twenty men, all naked, painted, wild-looking savages, armed with spears, bows, and quivers of arrows, two alone carrying guns; and as but one shot had been fired, Harold concluded that they were scarce of ammunition, and had no doubt of driving them off, though probably not without loss.

He next gave the word to the men in ambush, and the sound of unexpected shots from the sides did great execution, as he judged from the groans; and, to his great astonishment, oaths and imprecations in English, which were plainly heard, as the combatants were not twenty yards apart. Scruton immediately recognized the voice, and cried out, "Is that you, Sharpley, you cowardly traitor and thief? Where are my goods, rogue?" He would actually have rushed forward to seize the man, had not Mr. Rodney held him back from certain destruction.

The chief, distinguished by his feathered head-dress,

now directed his men to charge with their spears into the thickets which covered the men who had fired on them, and though they were opposed by more shots, the chief himself succeeded in dragging out a captive, whom the rest saw, with distress, was William.

"We must rescue the lad," said Harold; "come on, my brave fellows." And the front rank marched forward, with rifles presented, towards the savages, who did not dare to raise an opposing weapon against the formidable array. "Cause the boy to be released, Sharpley," said Harold, "or we will shoot every man of you."

But just at this moment a cry escaped from the prisoner, and they heard him exclaim, in a tone of deep distress, "Oh! father, is it here I find you?"

The chief, who held the boy, started and flung him from him as he replied, "William! well, I'm glad it's thee, my lad." Mr. Rodney, who saw well that the rescue of the youth would now be more difficult than ever, stepped forward to draw him into the midst of his friends, on which the worthless father said furiously, "Who are you? What right have you to part father and son? He's mine, and I'll make a man of him. Come along, Will, and have no more to do with that sneaking crew; you'll have a glorious life with me, ruling over these fools."

Trembling and weeping, William answered,

"Leave these heathen savages, father, and come to us. Mr. Rodney and Mr. Crofton, who have been such kind friends to me, will forgive you all you have done, if you turn from your bad ways, and remember you are a Christian, and have to answer to God for all this."

"Not I," said the reckless man; "I always liked rul-

ing better than serving, and I'm not like to be tired of a free roving life yet a bit; so troop along with me, my lad; let them detain you at their peril; I've a right to you; the law is on my side."

"How dare you, unfortunate and abandoned man," said Mr. Rodney, "appeal to the laws you have thrown off? In an English court, I will resign the guardianship of your son to a respectable Englishman, but nothing shall compel me now to yield up the boy, soul and body, to an outlaw, a robber, a companion of scalp-hunting savages in a wild American forest. William, make your own decision; I can trust you."

"You may trust me, Mr. Rodney," answered the boy. "I will never consent to live with men who are ignorant of God. And once more, I pray you, dear father, for my dead mother's sake, for the sake of your own comfort on earth, and your future salvation, to abandon this wicked life, and return to your people and your God."

Arncliffe muttered some bitter words, and urged his followers to resume the attack; but the survivors were intimidated by their loss and the sight of the guns pointed against them, and Sharpley, who was leaning against a tree, groaning and cursing, with his right arm hanging useless from a wound, now called out to Arncliffe to come away while he could, and leave the dastardly crew; but the disappointed man lingered to say, as he spurned the body of one of the Indians who had opposed him,

"What hope of protection can you have from such cowards as these? and I tell you plainly, I will have my lad. My tribe are more numerous and powerful than these poor fishers; I will bring them down on you,



and not only carry off my son, but the powder and shot you have dragged all this way. It's not in my way, but my followers will claim all your scalps; so you know what you have to expect."

The next minute he led off his men up the wood, leaving the hunters to lament that they had ever planned the expedition, which had terminated so unfortunately. The scene of the contest was melancholy; William, sobbing with shame and sorrow, stood aloof, while Mr. Rodney, with kindness and firmness, endeavored to console him; the rest, in the mean time, were examining the wounded and dead.

Four of the enemy lay quite dead, the wounded had been carried off, and Hamatcha made a sign to Crofton that his people desired to carry off the scalps of the slain; but the stern and determined refusal he uttered was perfectly comprehended by the Indians, who turned away obediently, though reluctantly. Of their own party, only one man was actually dead, but two more of the Indians were severely wounded. The distress of their companions seemed very deep; but the chief explained that they must not delay their return, lest their vindictive opponents should take the opportunity of attacking the weak garrison at the lodges.

The procession moved slowly down the mountains; the hunters carried the bears, and the Indians took off their own dead and wounded, but left the bodies of their foes exposed to the wild beasts, though Harold did suggest that they should decently bury them; but the chief, somewhat impatiently, reminded him of the danger to their women and children.

"Bad Indian, come back; many! many!" said he, spreading his arms out to express the multitude. "Kill

all, fire all lodge, take all scalp ; white men, Indian, all go, quick."

Rodney endeavored to make out how far from them the lodges of their dangerous opponents lay, and how long it might be before they could return in force ; but it was difficult to extract from the chief any idea of time or distance. He pointed to the south, and waving his hand, said, "Many, far ;" then to the sun, and by his holding up three fingers, Mr. Rodney concluded he meant that it might be three days before the enemy could return in great force ; but all this was uncertain, for Dick declared these were the same Indians he had seen far to the north-west. It was probable, therefore, that they belonged to a wandering tribe, and were continually roaming about in search of spoil. Harold feared that they might be nearer than Hamatcha calculated, and suggested that they should at once ascertain what direction they must take to avoid the savages, since it was scarcely to be hoped that they should conquer, if opposed by the whole tribe.

"Assuredly not, Harold," said Mr. Rodney. "The better part of valor is discretion. We must run away. But whither, is an important question ; all we can do is to endeavor to obtain, by the usual painful and laborious process, some information on the subject from the chief, our very ignorant friend in need."

"We must endeavor, Rodney, at all events, to save this poor, distressed boy from the hands of his unnatural parent," said Harold.

William, who was walking by their side, covered his face at this allusion ; his pride and his sensibility were alike wounded at his position, and he shrunk from discussing the subject with his friends.

"Cheer up, my boy," said Harold, "you are not the first who has had to mourn over the delinquency of a parent. You have done your duty in trying to reclaim him, it is now your duty to leave him."

"You want humility, William," said Mr. Rodney. "God has pleased to send this trial to you, and you rebel against His will, and refuse to bow meekly to your infliction. Your father seems to be a man of understanding, though evil passions have perverted it. Let us hope and pray that God may, in His own good time, visit and recall him to His fold. Even the sight of his child shunning his society may lead him to reflection and repentance. You must bear your cross patiently, William, or you are unworthy of the name of Christian."

The boy thanked his friends, and made strong efforts to overcome his morbid feelings, and to talk as usual with Mike and Dick, who kindly tried to console him.

They were now within sight of the lodges, and the uneasiness of the chief subsided, as he saw all remained undisturbed, and heard the merry voices of the children. Nor was it long before a troop, headed by Pat, ran forward to meet them, the boy crying out, as he saw the bears, "And was they biting hard, Mike? Musha! sure they're grand bastes!" Then seeing the body of the poor Indian, he added, "Worra! worra! was the baste killing the poor red man? — what for were ye not telling me go to be watching the dens? Ochone!"

The sight of the dead and wounded produced great wailing and lamentation among the women; but there was some consolation in the promise of unusual feasting which the sight of the bears afforded. They were soon

skinned, and steaks broiled for the hunters, and it was not till they had eaten and rested, that the adventures of the day came out, and the two Irish-women learnt how William had met his father. Mary wept silently, but Peggy's indignation was loquacious; she insisted on it that the unnatural father had no right to William, who was bequeathed to her by his mother, and she defied the villain to try and wrest her own from her.

Nevertheless, when she became fully aware of the threatened invasion, she was more inclined to avoid than to defy the unprincipled man, and would gladly have set out immediately. But, after much time wasted in the difficult attempt to understand the plans of Hamatcha, in which Pat's ready acquisition of words proved useful, it was at length made out that the whole party, red men and white men, must set out by moonlight this very night. They must proceed along the base of the snowy mountains, north, till the Indians should join some powerful friends; then the travellers must cross the mountains to those valleys beyond, which the vindictive tribe dared not enter, for the Indians who frequented those valleys were their enemies.

"And doubtless will prove our enemies, too," said Mr. Rodney, "if we ever succeed in scrambling up to the clouds, and then descending safely again to earth. Surely some of these tribes are equestrian. There, William, take this paper and sketch a horse upon it, that we may inquire of the people if such a strange animal be known among them."

The experiment succeeded, the performance of William was regarded with wonder and admiration, and the travellers were informed that beyond the moun-

tains there were "many, many" of the animals; an assurance that somewhat reconciled the dejected wanderers to their formidable task of crossing the snowy ridges.

The Indian who had been slain was buried, with the usual heathen formalities, his bow and spears being placed at his side, after which, at midnight, they set out, a long and slowly-dragging train. The wounded men were borne on hastily-constructed litters, the babes on the backs of the mothers; household goods they had none, except some woven rush-baskets, nets, spears, and bows, which were easily carried away; and the Indians who were not laden assisted their visitors in carrying their heavy baggage, including the skins and the flesh of the bears. For eight weary hours they marched on over pleasant plains, at this season easily crossing the rivulets which flowed from the mountains; then they paused on the banks of a deep river, and the Europeans looked with dismay at the obstacle.

"Sure, won't we be swimmin' across," said Mike, "barrin' my mother, she niver swimmin' a sthroke, and Mary herself being a poor hand. Would we be makin' a boat, Dick?"

"What's the lad talking about?" answered Dick. "Think ye a man can build a boat out of reeds and slate stones? Just you, Mr. Crofton, put it to them queer-tongued chaps how it is they think of getting over this water?"

The chief signified that the whole party must halt till he despatched some of his followers down the banks of the river, and all were glad to eat and sleep till the messengers returned, accompanied by a number of strange Indians, who carried a long light canoe, a

glad sight, which promised to smooth the difficulty. Two of the strangers launched the canoe, which would contain no more than eight at once; and on Harold calling Hamatcha to be one of the first party, the chief drew back, and said, in a melancholy tone, "White man go away," pointing across the water; "Hamatcha go friends," showing the stranger Indians who furnished the canoe, and with whom they understood their friendly hosts were now about to take refuge.

This announcement caused equal sorrow and alarm; they regretted the separation from the simple and friendly people, and they dreaded the perils that lay before them in an unknown country. Crofton inquired if any man of either tribe could be tempted to accompany and guide them; but all steadfastly refused to leave their own friends, knowing that their safety from the fierce tribes depended entirely on their union.

Crofton then opened his portmanteau, that before their separation he might make some parting gifts to the people whose hospitality to strangers had been the cause of banishment from their homes. A gay-colored Indian chintz dressing-gown, presented to Hamatcha, excited unbounded admiration and gratitude. He then distributed some silk handkerchiefs among the women, much to the vexation and disgust of Captain Scruton, who declared that cotton handkerchiefs would have pleased them as well, and these were of costly Indian silk. But Harold only laughed at this useless economy, and ransacked his possessions to find trifles to bestow on all his friends. Besides these, two knives and a frying-pan, which had excited great admiration, were given to them, and were highly prized. The skins of the bears, and part of the flesh, were left

with the boatmen who were to row them across; and thus the baggage of the travellers was considerably lightened. The Irishwomen even found some pins and needles to leave with the Indian women, to whom they had already taught the use of these implements; and they received in return as many of the light rush mats as they could carry, to serve for mattresses.

Then the affecting separation took place. The European women and boys wept; the more resolute Indians concealed their emotions, except that their faltering words denoted the sorrow they felt in parting from such generous and powerful friends. The travellers, in two divisions were transported across the river; Hamatcha accompanying the last, to point out the direction to the mountain pass, the exact situation of which they in vain attempted to comprehend, except that they must walk along the base for *two suns*; and then, by raising and depressing his arm, he showed them they must often ascend and descend, and they concluded the lofty range was intersected by valleys. Then he left them, and slowly and sadly they marched forward over well-watered rising ground, a heavy gloom resting on all; for they felt as if they were wandering further from civilization and security.

"I cannot help thinking," said Mr. Rodney, "that our kind but ignorant friend Hamatcha has counselled us erroneously. I am of opinion that, by persevering in our progress to the south, we must in the end have struck on the golden-sanded river Sacramento, which would have conducted us to St. Francisco and to Europeans."

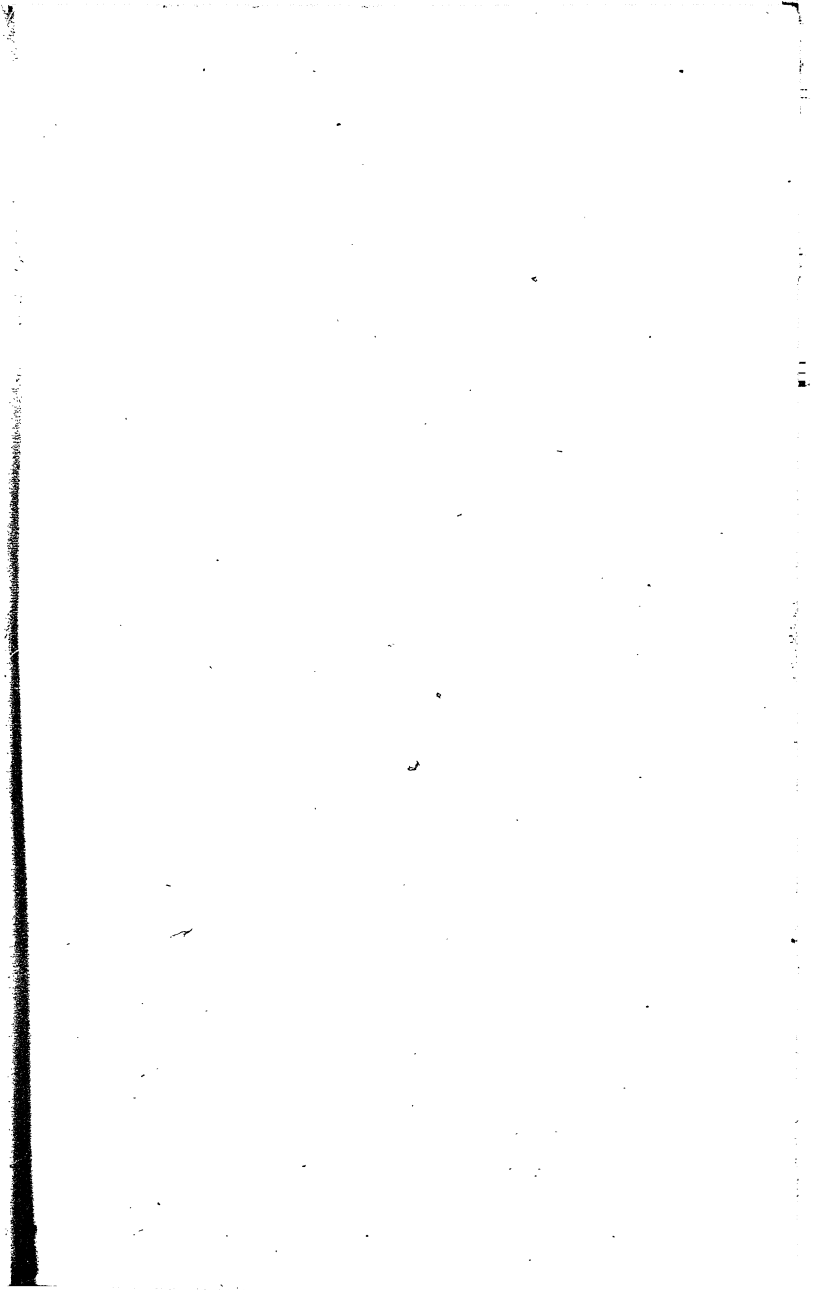
"If we'd ever reached the place," said Scruton. "But the mountains in California swarm with robbers

and murderers, Indians and diggers, ready to pounce on any traveller, and rifle him of his gold ; or, if disappointed of plunder, they make no scruple of murdering him. There's no safe way to St. Francisco but by sea, or with an armed guard. What would you say to making to our old landing-place, to pick up what those rogues have left ; and then perhaps we might rig up a boat or a raft, and coast to St. Francisco."

"Pardon me, Captain Scruton," answered Mr. Rodney, "if I look on your proposal as little short of madness. We were driven from the coast by famine and savage foes ; through many dangers we have progressed thus far inland, why should we fling ourselves on destruction ? On either hand we must inevitably have to cross a range of mountains ; then by all means let us proceed east. There are trading stations of Europeans beyond these mountains, even before we reach the last and most formidable chain, the Rocky Mountains."

The bear's flesh afforded them abundant food, and the mountain streams fresh water ; and they went on for the "two suns," without any greater difficulty than crossing the various streams. Then Scruton pointed out that, at no great distance, the snowy crests of the mountains seemed to be divided into two peaks, and he suggested that if any pass was practicable, it might be at this spot ; and, though the pine forests on the lower ridges presented the usual impediments, they determined next morning to make the attempt.







THE WOLVES IN THE CAMP.





## CHAPTER XI.

The Ascent of the Snowy Mountains. — A deserted Hut. — The Elk. — The negligent Sentinels. — The Frightful Pass. — The Despair of Dennis. — Brighter Hopes. — America in contempt.

BINDING their burdens firmly on their shoulders, and preceded by Dick and John as pioneers, the travellers once more commenced an ascent so formidable as to seem almost impossible. The women bore their exertion bravely; Pat tripped over the underwood or crawled beneath the matted branches gleefully; Mr. Rodney alone sighed over the toil. Accustomed to a life of bodily ease and quiet study, the change was violent to this state of excessive labor, which allowed no interval for mental enjoyments. He looked wistfully on his beloved pupil, who was robust, excited, full of enjoyment of his new condition of adversity, watching for adventure, almost courting peril, and then thought, "For his sake, I must bear this strange life uncomplainingly. Happy days of youth, when labor is pleasure, and privation merely amusement! I must not suffer myself to grow old yet awhile."

For the first day the weather, though cold, was bright and clear, and they bivouacked beneath the pines among the straggling bushes at night with tolerable comfort, under their warm cloaks and coverings. The second day was dark and gloomy, the wind blew keenly over the snowy heights, and before night the snow began again to fall; and though it was now Feb-

ruary, threatened a serious storm. The rude tents were blown down, the trees afforded insufficient protection, and they crept shivering beneath their cloaks and skins, and tried vainly to sleep through the stormy night, rendered still more dreary by the howling of the wolves, so close to them, that twice during the night Harold rose to chase them by firing his gun.

The morning arose dark and tempestuous; they attempted in vain to light a fire to make some tea, and were at length compelled to breakfast on some biscuit moistened with snow, and then set out to move upwards slowly through the snow, struggling against difficulties, till the weakest were quite exhausted, just as they reached a level spot, covered with snow, where a deep niche in the rocks, over which the pines, bent by the winds, had formed a sort of roof, afforded them a welcome shelter. They spread the bear-skins and mats over the snow, lighted a fire in the sheltered extremity of the hollow, and filling the large iron kettle with snow, contrived to boil a good portion of the leg of the bear, which was their last meat, all lying down to sleep soundly while their dinner was cooking, except one to watch the fire.

They enjoyed so much the food, the rest, and the shelter from the storm, that they did not leave till next morning, that they might have a warm breakfast before they commenced the toils of the day. Still the storm continued, and after struggling on during the day, evening brought them to a ridge from which a sharp and precipitous descent led to a long ravine or separation of the mountains, which was now apparently half-filled with snow, through which the dark pines appeared.

It was vexatious to have to descend only to ascend again. Still, it was inevitable, and with more difficulty than they had ever yet experienced, they scrambled down the steep descent to the ravine, and looked round for some nook to shelter them. What was their surprise, to see, at some little distance, a sort of hut, towards which, in great anxiety, they marched over the yielding snow. It was a large, low, circular erection, somewhat similar to the lodges of their late hosts; the walls of loose, dry bushes; the entrance from above. The interior was clean, but contained not a single trace of habitation, except the skeleton head of an elk or moose-deer, with its tremendous horns, from which they concluded that the previous inhabitants of the hut had been hunters, and, also, that the elk was to be found in the mountain forests; a circumstance which filled them with joyful hopes.

Leaving the old man and the women in possession of the hut, the rest set out immediately to beat the woods, hoping to discover some game; but night was at hand, and after a vain search, they were compelled to turn back in some despondence. Just then, Pat, whose favorite perch was always the bough of a tree, put his round face from a pine, and made a signal to Crofton.

"Where is it, my boy?" asked he, eagerly, and the lad pointed to a spot he had marked from the height he had climbed, and said, in a cautious tone,

"Would your honor be lendin' me the loan of your gun?"

To this bold request Harold made no answer; but slinging his rifle safely at his back, he climbed to the side of Pat, and from thence, to his great delight, he saw a noble elk feeding quietly on the first young

shoots just budding from some of the pines and bushes, drawing the branches towards it with the peculiarly-formed upper-lip.

Carefully and deliberately Harold took his aim, fired, and wounded the animal, which made a bound, and forced its way through the bushes; but Mike, who had watched the direction of the shot, was ready to spring forward towards the spot, and as soon as he heard the rustling through the bushes, waited to see the elk, and fired a second shot into it. With a strange, unnatural whistling cry, the deer leaped from the wood against Mike, overthrowing him, and lying across him; he struggling violently, but unable to rise.

The boy's shrill cry for help soon brought his friends round him. The elk was despatched, and Mike was released, considerably bruised by his weighty antagonist, but proud of his exploit.

"Sure thin, Dick," said he, "didn't we give him the shots illigant? and isn't it a fine skin he's carryin' to be coverin' in the tint for his honor to slape in?"

This elk, or moose-deer, as it is in America commonly named, was nearly six feet in height, the legs long and firm, the head and horns immense, and Mike turned pale as he thought of the risk he should have run, if the animal had not been mortally wounded. It was not long before it was skinned, and the skin prepared by the directions Mr. Rodney gave, and which his reading had supplied him with. The inside and outside were thoroughly scraped, to make the hide smooth and of equal thickness, then smeared over with the brains of the deer and with snow, and continually rubbed till a soft and spongy leather was produced, and hung in the smoke of the fire to dry. This leather the



Indians use for moccasins, and for the warm garments of winter; and though the travellers still had their clothes, a deer-skin covering was not to be despised in this severe weather.

In the mean time some had been employed in cutting up and cooking steaks of the flesh, which resembled beef rather than venison, but was enjoyed with unbounded satisfaction by the hungry travellers. They slept in their hut, and were somewhat reluctant to leave the hollow which had supplied them with shelter and food; but, after a beef-steak breakfast, they packed their abundant stock of meat into as small a compass as they could, leaving the bones behind them, and once more took up their burdens and prepared to face the mountain forest and its difficulties.

The snow had ceased, but the wind was still cold and wintry; yet for two days they persevered with cheerfulness, for good food and strong hope lessened the labor of ascending and descending through entangled brakes and over rough ledges of rock. On the second night they again found a niche at the edge of a wood in a little valley, where they encamped, taking the usual precautions of sleeping with a fire and a watch. The first sentinels were Crofton and William, and they discoursed long on the boy's constant source of care, which only his firm trust in God, and his belief that the trial was sent in mercy, could have enabled the youth to sustain without absolutely sinking, his sensibility was so acute.

As they sat by the fire, Harold suddenly started up, saying, "I am convinced, Will, that I heard a rustling behind us; it must be another elk, and have him I will. Keep watch here, my lad, till I beat the thicket." Then

examining his rifle, he stole softly towards the spot from whence he heard the sound.

William continued to sit by the fire, absorbed, as usual, in thought, till he was startled by a low growling, and, looking round, he saw a troop of wolves, forming a half-circle, and gradually drawing up to the encampment. His first act was to throw a heap of dry sticks on the decaying fire, which blazed up, but did not deter the animals, which advanced with a furious howl. Then he snatched up his rifle and fired at them, more with the hope of summoning assistance than of destroying the wolves, for he was an unskilful marksman. At the sound of the shot, the men rose from their sleep, and Crofton appeared from the wood. There was no time for words; every one acted directly, and in two minutes after, the shots had dispersed the marauding wolves. "Thank God, there is no harm done!" said Mr. Rodney; "but I am surprised, Harold, that you, a sentinel, should have left your duty."

Harold was vexed at his imprudent sally, and William was ashamed that he should have allowed the wolves to steal so near unnoticed, and they both pleaded guilty. But this was not all; the voice of lamentation was heard, and Peggy came forward, exclaiming, —

"Ochone, Will! and was it your mother's son would be letting the murthering bastes be makin' off with our blessed mate! and we be starvin' ourselves?"

It was too true, the wolves had succeeded in carrying away the spoil that had tempted them. The large basket of venison was emptied; not a scrap remained for breakfast, and at the height they had now reached it

was hopeless to expect to meet with more game. Cheerlessly they pursued their march next day; onward, upward, still they struggled through the black forest. At length they came on a rent or opening in the mountains, narrow at the base, and widening towards the summit, the dark rocks on each side rugged, bare, and inaccessible, while far above them rose the snowy peaks which they believed were those they had seen from the plains below.

A rugged path, not broad enough for more than one, lay close to the walls of the defile, while through it poured a torrent, which came thundering forward, and flowed towards the north-west. The travellers paused for a moment at the mouth of this dismal crevice, which, though it still gradually ascended, must form a pass through to the east; and every heart sunk at the sight of the silent, gloomy, apparently interminable road before them. Whither would it conduct them? Perhaps only to perish with famine amidst the unexplored intricacies of the mountains, far from every living creature.

“This state of things will never do, Rodney,” whispered Harold. “We must be plucky ourselves, or we shall have all the troop lie down and die. Just look at Scruton; a brave fellow, I’ll engage, when he is bearing down on the enemy; but now he is as pale and spongy as a milliner’s girl, as he looks at this *via dolorosa*. There’s nothing for it, Rodney, but to wave our swords, and shout the old slogan — “Up, guards! and at them!” What do you think if you were to make them a rallying speech?”

Mr. Rodney declined the speech; but Harold was a host in himself. He formed his troop into a line,

cheered the women, laughed at the grave faces of the men, rated John for skulking behind, as if he had broken the knees of his best hunter, and then, shouldering his rifle and whistling a lively march, he led on his people. But it was not easy to preserve cheerfulness inclosed between those towering, and sometimes overhanging rocks, treading a path so rough that the progress was slow and painful; while often the river flowed over their narrow way, and compelled them to plunge into the icy water two or three feet deep, till they could attain a dry spot.

The pass was so tortuous that they could rarely see a hundred yards before them; but at every turn they hoped for a more cheerful prospect, but in vain. For six or seven miles they toiled on; then the defile opened into a kind of basin, wild and barren, and covered with stones fallen from above. Still the only outlet from this comparatively open spot was another narrow defile, through which the same river rushed, and which was inclosed between rocks, still high and gloomy as ever. To increase their distress, the wind rose, sweeping fiercely through the defile, and the thick snow again fell, darkening the little light they received from the narrow strip of sky above them, and they were glad to seek shelter in a dark, damp cavern, where toads were crawling on every side; but they contrived to banish them to their holes, and lighten the dismal gloom by making a fire of a few sticks collected during the day; and warmed by some tea—they had no longer any meat—they coiled themselves round the fire, and slept as well as the howling storm permitted them.

Next morning they found the snow had ceased, the sun showed itself faintly over them, and the fresh snow

melted by its beams, poured over the heights, and swelled the river, till a cold fear fell on the wanderers that they might be completely enclosed in this frightful rocky desert, where, except the toads in the cave, they had never seen a single animal. After a light breakfast of biscuit and water, they pushed languidly forward, observing with alarm that their rugged pathway now ascended precipitously, and the fatigue became so great, that at last poor Dennis gave way, and, sinking down, he said,

“Isn't it peaceful I'd be dying, Peggy, if we were back in your cabin in our own blessed country? and, sure, if it be His will, won't it be as well to die in this same, barrin' the loneliness, when you'll all be gone, as you nades must be, gettin' out of this black wilderness, and lavin' me all alone, the Lord only with me? and wasn't He with Elijah, His prophet, and with David himself, that was afther his own heart, and won't He be comfortin' me too? His name be blessed!”

But no one ever thought of leaving the old man behind. They had the sail-cloth and tent-poles which had been used for Harold's litter, and a hammock was soon constructed, where Dennis was placed; a little brandy from Harold's stores revived him, and all the able men cheerfully offered to carry him by turns, as well as the narrow, rugged road would allow. Another night of cold and privation was got over, but the next day the ascent had become so abrupt, the narrow path so obstructed, and the lofty crags on each side looked so threatening, that they dared hardly speak lest the tottering rocks at the side should fall and crush them, while all hope of surmounting the steep before them seemed vain. Even the strong men stumbled and fell

in the trial, the women and boys scrambled on all fours, clutching the scattered stones to aid them, which frequently rolled down under their grasp, and groans, sobs, and exclamations of despair were the only sounds heard.

At length they reached a resting-place, a wide level spot, still enclosed on each side by the snow-crowned heights, but an opening opposite, the travellers saw with thankfulness led downward, though it might perhaps only lead to one of the intersecting valleys of the chain. Weary as they were, they did not pause to rest now, the spur of famine, and the hope of relief, urged them to proceed; they crossed the plain, in the midst of which was a lake, which was the source of the river they had followed up, and then descended through a rocky, snow-covered defile for an hour, when they came on a wide plain, covered entirely with snow, and difficult to cross, for the sun had thawed the surface. There was neither firewood nor water; they dipped their dry biscuit in the snow which they had not the means to melt, and chewed the tasteless morsel with sad hearts and silent tongues. From this miserable spot, a short ascent conducted them over a ridge where another descent led to a valley much lower, which they reached just as darkness shrouded the majestic scene around. But they had seen the bushes above the snow, and they were able to collect the branches, to light a fire in a sheltered rocky niche, and to indulge in the luxury of tea. Their evening devotion was one of thanksgiving, for they looked backward on perils escaped, and forward with renewed hopes.

The morning lighted them from this valley, which was but lightly covered with snow, and they proceeded over low hills to a succession of level ridges, where

again the dark pines rose, mingled with bushes of artemisia, the very twigs of which had an aromatic smell. Among these bushes were the forms of some small hares, with pretty grey fur and white ears, several of which fell under the shot of the eager sportsmen. The skins were cleaned, and Mary took possession of them, that she might convert them into caps for the men, many of whom had been compelled to face the wind and the sun with uncovered heads. But the flesh was the great prize; and they gladly rested till a rich game stew was prepared, to the great contentment of all, even poor Dennis reviving after his enjoyment of good meat again.

"For sartin," said Dick, "it's one blessing they have in this poor country, that a chap may shoot a hare when his bairns is hung'ring, and not be feared of being shopped, or being sent off to Botany Bay. But, Captain Scruton, how I've heard folks tell this and tother of 'Merica, and, as far as I see, it's like to be a poverty-struck place. Bless us, what do folks live on? It grows nought."

"It's a grand country, Marlin, but we've fallen on a poor part," answered Scruton.

"Ay, ay, captain," said Dick; "it's likely we've landed at wrong end; but we've come over a good bit of ground, and it seems all alike."

"It's little you'd be seeing yet, Mr. Marlin," said Mary; "sure, haven't I heard them spake as knows it, that there's towns in this same 'Merica bigger nor Cork or Liverpool?"

"That's not to be credited, Mary, honey," replied Dick; "but, big or little, I'd like to light on one of their towns."

"I fear we shall have some weary days before we reach them, Dick," said Harold; "but we'll make a push for them."

"Would we be finding a bit of good land soon, sir," said Dennis, "where Mr. Marlin would be running us up a nate cabin, and you would be lavin' me and the women and the boys to farm that same, and be living as God plases, and never striving at all to be seeking after forbidden things?"

"We must not think of it yet, my friend," said Rodney. "We still have to get beyond the Rocky Mountains before we think of rest. Then, probably, we may locate, till Mr. Crofton be tired of sporting, and we be reinvigorated for further travel. I trust by God's blessing we shall speedily be extricated from this frightful wilderness of mountains."



## CHAPTER XII.

Hares and Rabbits. — The deceitful Lake. — A Skirmish with Savages. — Water in the Desert. — The Black Bear and her Cubs. — The value of Bear Skin. — The Rocky Mountains in sight.

THE next day's journey, brought them down to gradual slopes, thickly covered with high bushes, of sage-like smell, another variety of the *Artemisia*, from thence they descended to white plains, and an exclamation of pious thanksgiving burst from all, for they could not but hope that these plains must contain the means of existence, while at the same time, the labor of travelling would be greatly lightened. Already they saw numbers of small hares and rabbits moving about under the shelter of the bushes; and though lofty trees and all green vegetation were wanting, they set their feet hopefully on the level ground, and marched on in a direct east course. Here and there in the horizon they traced the outline of mountains, which they trusted they might be able to avoid. Their most important care, at present, was to meet with water; but for some time their anxious search was vain.

They could not but believe that there must be many rills from the mountains, and they deviated to the right and to the left, hoping to strike on them, and finally fell in with a little rivulet of melted snow, which, trickling among the roots of the bitter sage bushes, had a most unpalatable flavor; but it was useful for stewing the rabbits, and they were glad

to keep near it till they should meet with a purer stream.

But for two days they continued their march over the dry, grey-colored plain, compelled to drink of the bitter, turbid rill; then, to their great joy, they saw the glittering of the large sheet of water, and hastened towards it. Pat, possessing himself of a tin cup, speeded on before the rest, to dip his cup in the lake, and enjoy the cool draught; but no sooner had he tasted it, than he uttered a doleful cry, calling out, "It's doctor's stuff it is, sure! Will it be them Ingins themselves will be putting salt in it?"

This was a melancholy announcement, too well confirmed by the sight of the willows and low bushes around the lake, the branches of which were encrusted with a saline efflorescence, from the spray of the water. Disappointment and dismay marked every countenance, and the two poor women actually sat down and wept.

"Don't you be looking like that, Will," sobbed Mary; "sure, then, it's not for myself I'd be sorrowing; isn't it mother dear, and Mr. O'Reilly, the masther? and how will they be kaping alive without the drop of water, and the tea? Ochone!"

"You're a good lass, you are, Mary," said Dick, "and if I thought I could find a well a-top of yon big mountain as lies there north-east, I'd make no light of running up it. But, I misdoubt me, here's other work. I say, captain, must I pipe to quarters?"

From the mountain Dick had pointed out appeared a troop of wild-looking naked Indians, who advanced towards the travellers; but when they drew near, halted, and appeared to be in great confusion. Bows

were brought forward, and the Europeans reluctantly prepared to defend themselves.

Still, willing, if possible, to avoid an encounter, Mr. Rodney hastily collected some of the white feathers of the water-fowl which were scattered round the lake, and tying them to the end of a long willow-branch, the party moved forward to meet the Indians, waving this signal of peace. A yell and a shower of arrows formed the answer to this demonstration. Fortunately, they were still separated by such a distance that the arrows fell short of their aim. This was not the case with the volley of shots returned, which seemed to produce great terror among the Indians, for two fell as if dead, and from the cries it was judged more were wounded. Encouraged by this successful effect, the travellers moved quickly forward, and approached near enough to see that these men had all the appearance of wild beasts; their countenances were hideous and ferocious, and utterly devoid of intelligence.

"They are of brutal nature, Rodney," said Harold, "and can only be subdued like brutes, by force. See, they are again drawing their bows. Down behind the bushes, my men, and then give it them again."

As the arrows flew, the men prostrated themselves under the shelter of the bushes; then rising, they poured a double volley of shots on their antagonists, who retreated with frightful yells to the wood-covered mountain, leaving a number of their companions dead on the field, while the Europeans had not a man wounded. A solitary arrow had pierced the fur cap of William, and it was plain it might have inflicted a fatal wound, for it was barbed with a hard stone, polished and bright as steel.

Pat employed himself busily in collecting these arrows, of which great numbers were scattered around, while the rest went forward to examine the slain. They shuddered at the repulsive appearance of these savages, and were shocked to see that they had inhumanly abandoned some of their friends who were yet living. They turned away from the spot, determined not to linger near this ferocious tribe; and carrying away as spoil two bows, they left the field of battle and the deceitful lake, scarcely knowing where to direct their steps.

"At all events," said Captain Scruton, "it will be necessary to crowd sail. These hideous savages may have numbers at hand to back them, and these arrows well sent would soon cut off all our hands. They must be a cowardly crew, for if they had stood their ground, and gone on peppering us, we hadn't a chance."

"I'd bet a good deal, captain," said Dick, "that yon wood they've taken to is a fine place for watering, and it's hard to leave it to them ugly dogs; but it's like we've have to march on till we come on another such-like hill."

Hungry and thirsty, yet somewhat cheered by their easy victory, they waited but to shoot two brace of wild ducks, and then went on straight forward till they had placed some miles between themselves and their revolting opponents. Then nature cried out for rest and food; but though the ducks were roasted, none had appetite to eat, when their parched mouths craved water. Fortunately, they found on the dry desert a plant resembling sorrel, which they chewed gladly, and the pleasant acid juice somewhat relieved their excessive thirst. Then, too weary to raise the tents, they lay down beneath the

*artemisia* bushes, and found a short respite from their suffering in sleep.

In the clear morning light they looked round on the dismal unvaried desert, and a hazy line in the horizon afforded some hope of mountains.

"And where there are mountains, Harold," said Rodney, "there ought to be water. God send we may soon reach such relief. Never did I believe that I, who, as you can testify, have not been a water-drinker, should long so much for a bumper of that neglected beverage. Expect to see me, if we ever escape from this detestable desert, as curious, for the future, about the quality of my decanter of water, as I have ever been about my vintages of port. Eheu!"

"In truth, Rodney," answered Harold, "you know I am no spoony, and yet, for my life, I cannot get up the steam and be jolly, like Mark Tapley, when my tongue is rattling like a stone in my mouth; and I should be thankful to feed on grass, like the beasts of the field, if we could find any. Well, Captain Scruton, where are we? Will you take the helm? Will you pilot us over these endless deserts, and through the Rocky Mountains?"

Scruton groaned as he replied, "I am useless here, Mr. Crofton, adrift on an unknown sea, without compass, rudder, or provisions, beset with rocks, shoals, and pirates. I doubt our ever coming into port."

"Still, Captain Scruton," said William, "I am convinced the ground is more yielding to our step than it was, and the bushes look less gray. Then, I observe a high hill yonder, at our right hand."

"South-east it is," said Dick. "He's right! Will keeps his eyes open, captain. Yon hill will be like to

send springs and melted snow down here among these dry bushes; and if we fall in with a few more of them savages, it's easy to quiet 'em, as we did yesterday."

"Is it yourself, Mr. Marlin," said Mary reproachfully, "will be shedding blood of man, as though he were no better nor a baste? Worra! worra! Wasn't I thinkin' betther on you. Wouldn't them you were killing dead outright yesterday be having souls like ourselves?"

"It's a queshten, Mary, honey," answered Dick. "It's my thought as how they were more beasts nor men. God forgive me, if I'm wronging 'em, savage heathens as they are. Anyhow, I think myself they're better out of mischief, nor living to be feighting and scalping harmless Christians."

"Remember, my good girl," said Mr. Rodney, "that we tried first to approach them pacifically, and only took up arms in our own defence."

"And that same's altogether lawful," decided Dennis dogmatically, "and the Scripture not being again' it. Sure, Mary, when I'm saying it, you'll be belaving your masther."

Mary sighed, for her gentle heart shrunk from the sight of blood; and, but half convinced, she walked on silently, meditating on the last state of these unconverted heathens, till a joyful cry from Mike roused her.

"Isn't it a dhrop of wather I'm seeing on my brogue?" he exclaimed; "and, sure, won't this same be a reg'lar bog, barrin' it's noways green, as it ought to be, like our own illegant bogs in green ould Ireland. Will I be skipping on, yer honners, to come at the wather?"

Then, not waiting for the required permission, he and Pat hopped over the now marshy ground before the

rest, and were soon kneeling down to press the moisture from the earth, and extract a little discolored water into their tin cups.

"It's wather it is!" replied Pat in delight, "and no salt in it at all, at all, only the sage, or some other bitter yerb."

None were patient enough to wait till they should reach clear water to assuage their thirst, but actually enjoyed the muddy, discolored draught, bitter with the percolation through the roots of the sage. But as they proceeded they soon met with water on the surface; then in a narrow channel; finally it became a deep, clear rill, by the side of which they encamped, and held high festival on water, and all the good things water could produce for them.

Moreover, flocks of birds, larger than quails, though somewhat resembling them, which tenanted the sage bushes, and hovered near the water, were marked by the sportsmen, and a sufficient number were shot to provide a plentiful and delicious repast, for which they failed not to offer grateful thanks to God, who had fed them in the wilderness.

For the next two days they travelled up the banks of the stream, which soon widened to a little rivulet, with willow-edged banks, wild fowl hovering over it, and a greener herbage around it. Then they reached the source of the river in one of the isolated wooded mountains which were numerous in this desolate region. They approached this wood with caution, remembering their late encounter, and warned by the appearance of a regular trodden path to the side of the river; yet as the travellers were quite aware that they were deficient in the keen discrimination which enables the natives at

once to distinguish a trail, they could not decide whether it was the step of man or beast that had marked the path. At all risks, the place was suitable for an encampment; they rested therefore close to the water, which was so precious to them, resolved to keep watch strictly, and be fully prepared for action.

Around them lay many isolated hills, and the vast chain of the Rocky Mountains was now plainly visible before them, and many an anxious glance was directed towards that formidable barrier. The tents were once more raised, the bear-skins and mats spread over the marshy ground, a fire was lighted, and a supper of wild fowl prepared, then all gladly sought repose, except Harold and Dick, the first on watch; both quick and alert to act, but careless about keeping up the fire, which they did not consider necessary for warmth, and which might interfere with the chance of sport.

"You see, Dick," said Harold, "whether these foot-marks be those of man or beast the visitors will take care not to come near the fire; they will keep beyond our shot. Couldn't we smother it up a little? What have we to fear from Indian, bear, or wolf: we have our good rifles and our sharp knives."

"Knives is it, sir," said Dick; "then as to them knives, begging your pardon, you'd as good stick a pin into an old bear. It's not a bit of good; you might stick him right and left, if he'd let you, and he'd haud on, and niver be no worse. But just send a shot right through his head, and it'll may-be tell. He's a desp'rate rogue when he's vexed, and hugs like a rat-trap; and I'll tell you, a pat with them sharp claws of his just rives skin and flesh, so you mind what you're about, Mr. Crofton; and there's another thing, we'se have



to keep quiet, for he's not that fool to come and face us."

They smothered the fire, and then crouched among the thick bushes, close to the water, and there waited patiently, occasionally muttering their hopes and fears to each other till past midnight; then, weary and cramped with their position they were about to rise, when they were arrested by a rustling in the wood, and a heavy, dull sound of footsteps.

"It's a bear, I'll be bound," whispered Dick. "You fire, and then run up a tree, till I give another shot; and if that won't do, and we've a chance for it, we must try another round. What is't? do ye see?"

Harold did see a huge black form stepping heavily along, and by the light of the stars he saw also that it was not alone. It was a she-bear, with two cubs waddling after her. They approached the water slowly, and as they drew near, it was plain the unusual appearances made the mother uneasy. She growled as she looked round on the tents, the smoke from the fire, and the various signs of intrusion on her grounds. Then she stopped, and turned her head to look after her cubs, in such an inconvenient position that Harold feared he should be unable to take a good aim; but at all risk he fired upon her.

The beast, with a furious roar, turned round, and erecting herself on her hind legs, made ready to fall on her foes. Dick called out to Harold to take care of himself, and shot the animal in the breast. It fell forward, and Harold, thinking to secure the conquest, turned to make a second and more accurate aim; but before he could fire the bear had risen again, and with one blow of its heavy paw it dashed the rifle from his

hand, which went off, and wounded one of the cubs. The poor beast screamed piteously, and this fortunately diverted the mother's attention from the men, and she turned away from it. By this time the noise of warfare had roused Mr. Rodney from his lair, and he appeared fully armed. As soon as he saw the situation of things, he waved the disarmed Harold to one side, and cautiously drawing near, shot the enraged beast through the head.

"Don't ye be over-sure yet, sir," cried Dick, running up to Harold; "she'll cheat you again, if you don't look sharp. And what occasion were there at all, Mr. Crofton, for you to show again after you'd given your first shot; didn't I tell you about them sharp claws? You'll have a bonnie hand and arm, I'll be bound. But, Mr. Rodney, we'se not let you little chaps get off; they're good eating."

One cub was dying: the other, standing licking its dead mother, offered itself an easy victim; but the pitiful women, who now had joined them, moved by the sight of the affection of the awkward animal, begged its life. Then, to make sure, as Dick said, they skinned the old bear and the cub, now dead, and cut up the flesh; and all idea of returning to rest being given up, they employed themselves in keeping up a blazing fire to drive off the wolves, which, attracted by the smell of blood, had drawn near, and their howls rung through the mountain forest. The surviving cub lay moaning by the side of the skins, which nothing would tempt it to leave; and Dick, who, though rough, was tender-hearted, declared "there was no biding nigh hand, it wailed so like a Christian."

They were not sorry when morning light chased all

intruders, and allowed them to look round and consider their position. Harold was in bad spirits; his hand and arm were much torn by the sharp claws of the bear; and, though the wounds had been dressed as carefully as circumstances permitted, he still suffered great pain, and was vexed and mortified to find that his favorite rifle was bent and rendered useless by the bear.

"It's clean beyond my hand," said Dick, looking at the gun. "Give me my timmer and my tools, and I'se not turn my back on any workman living, in the matter of a tidy boat or canny bits of house jobs, or aught in that way; but these big fingers of mine could never tackle to your knicknackereries. It'll never do another stroke of work, I'se feared; it's such a clean smash that awkward beast has made on't."

"The bear had provocation, Marlin," said Mr. Rodney; "and it is in the nature of bears, as well as of the nobler creation, to indulge in fits of anger. But our act of revenge shall be more rational and profitable; we will eat our enemy."

"And sure, your honner," said Peggy, "isn't there the bag full of that same precious salt as was lying wasting about yon chatin' wather, and vexing Mary and me outright, and we gatherin' it up without paying a penny at all. And wouldn't we be salting these illegant hams, and smoking them over that black fire, and kaping them, seeing we may come again on the famine days, God save us!"

The hams of the two bears were salted and smoked, and the rest of the meat packed conveniently for carriage; then Mr. Rodney, looking on the handsome skins spread out to clean and dry, observed, —

"I think, my friends, you are taking unnecessary trouble. Why should you encumber yourselves with these weighty furs now, at the end of February; when, according to the laws of nature, we may expect the return of spring speedily, and shall certainly not require these warm coverlets."

"Furs are of considerable market value, Mr. Rodney," said Scruton; "and after my heavy losses, I am anxious to seize every opportunity of improving my prospects. It would be unheard-of wastefulness to abandon these valuable skins, so providentially sent to us."

"What madness, Captain Scruton!" said Harold, impatiently. "Do see how all these poor fellows are laden. Who is to carry this additional burden?"

"I will sooner carry them myself than fling away such a prize," answered Scruton.

"Nay, nay!" said Dick. "I'll niver stand and see it—sea or land, blow high, blow low, captain's captain, anyhow; and I'se niver be he to see him hug a freight like that atop on his shoulders while I were able to take in a bit more lading. I reckon it would be all one as mutiny."

So Dick rolled up the bear-skins, and shouldered them manfully, leaving the disconsolate cub mourning for this utter bereavement; and Harold dejectedly bore off his disabled rifle, declaring that he could not bear to leave it; besides, Mr. Rodney suggested there was the probability of falling in with a gunsmith in that solitary wilderness.

Thus, well provisioned, but all heavily laden, they resumed their journey, making from one hill to another, for there they always met with streams trickling over

the heights, now that the sun had power to melt the snow; and, undisturbed by the dread of famine, they went on cheerfully for many days. Already the snow-crowned ridges of the Rocky Mountains were seen plainly before them, and they had not yet encountered any serious obstacle in their progress. Relieved, yet involuntarily trembling at the sight, they encamped on the banks of a clear rushing rivulet, amidst tall willows which formed a thick belt on each side of the water, and passed a night of perfect repose.

## CHAPTER XIII.

A Mischievous Arrow. — The Volcanic Mountain. — Building and Fowling. — A Sporting Excursion. — Where lies the Mountain Pass. — The Pine Wood. — The Glen of the Dead.

A BRIGHT, breezy morning tempted the managing women to desire a day's delay, that they might wash the linen. This was granted, and the men employed the time well in shooting the partridges and water-fowl, or in fishing, and thus made large additions to the stores of provisions. The linen was washed in the river, and dried on the banks, and the women, assisted by Dennis and Pat, were folding and smoothing it by the water, when a rustling among the trees on the opposite side caught the attention of Pat, who uttered a warning cry, but too late, for at that moment an arrow twanged across the river, and stuck in the foot of Mary.

But the cry of Pat reached the ears of John and Dick, who, armed with rifles, came up; and Pat pointing out to them the spot from whence the attack was made, they fired into the thicket. A rustling sound succeeded, and then they saw two Indians appear, who ran with incredible speed towards a wooded hill about a hundred yards distant, and disappeared among the trees.

"They'll have gone to fetch up the gang," exclaimed John.

"Ay, ay!" said Dick; "they'll pipe to quarters, and

we'd as well crowd sail, my lad. But, Mary, honey, never be down-hearted; let's see this mischief."

Mary suffered the men to inspect the wound, and John, somewhat practised in stable surgery, undertook to cut out the barbed arrow, with an alarming sort of lancet, which he produced from a case; and the operation, though roughly, was successfully performed. Then Peggy, with many tears and much reviling of the Indians, washed and bound up the wound; while the sportsmen, recalled by the sound of the gun, were listening with alarm to the vexatious adventure.

"We ought to move off immediately," said Scruton. "No doubt the Indians will covet the linen they have unluckily seen."

"But this poor girl cannot possibly walk," said Mr. Rodney.

"Sure, then, your honner," said Mary. "I'll be managing that same for a bit. Won't I be better walking with a sore foot, than being kilt altogether by them haythens."

Mr. Rodney protested against the experiment; but all were so anxious to escape from the neighborhood of that suspicious wood, that they set out briskly, the anxious girl scarcely feeling the wound in her desire to escape from the dreaded Indians; and before it was quite dark they had left the spot many miles behind them. Then, scarcely able to see where they had halted, they encamped beneath some trees, and, relying on their watch, all slept but Mary, who lay awake in great pain. In the morning she was feverish and exhausted; her foot was greatly inflamed, and it was plain she would be unable to walk at present, and they must necessarily be delayed.

While Peggy fomented the swollen foot, and Mr. Rodney prepared such composing medicine as the travelling medicine-chest afforded, Harold, Scruton, and Dick set out to observe their situation, and to choose some retired spot for their enforced rest. The scenery was beautiful; a vast range of forest was spread round as far as the lower eminences, which formed the base of the Rocky Mountains range. Tall timber-trees, just budding into leaf, stood at short distances; the ground was covered with newly-sprung green grass, and a clear stream murmured musically through the midst. Flocks of small birds were hovering round, or twittering among the trees; the river swarmed with fish, and gray hares were coursing over the herbage. It was a lively, verdant solitude.

"It is far too good to be safe," said Scruton. "We shall come on some of those land pirates cruising about sooner than we like, or I'm much mistaken."

"What is yon tall peak I see over the trees?" said Crofton. "Let us go a little nearer, and have a look at it."

The mountain was about a quarter of a mile from the encampment, gloomy and isolated, rents and fissures yawning round the sides, and showing the black volcanic rock of which it was formed. There could be no doubt of its being an extinct volcano.

"This is just the sort of place the Indians hold in dread," said Scruton. "I have met with travellers who have lived among the red men, and all say that these savages believe the volcanic mountains to be haunted by evil spirits, and therefore carefully avoid them. I should say this was a safe place."



"I say, Dick, would it be possible to scramble up and see what we can find above?" said Harold.

"How's your hand for the job, sir? it's nought to me," said Dick.

The hand was quite well; and giving Captain Scruton the guns to hold, the two active men climbed the side of the lofty mountain, clinging to the creeping shrubs, which scantily clothed the black, burnt, crumbling rock, that was not, however, so steep as to render the ascent difficult. It seemed about three hundred feet in height, and on the summit some snow still lay. When they reached the height, they saw, with astonishment, that, with the exception of a hem of about a hundred yards in width, the extensive summit was one large sheet of water, surrounded by reeds, and covered with thousands of wild-ducks, geese, and other water-fowl; while on the sides were gathered cranes, storks, and many unknown large birds, all of which seemed quite unconcerned at the arrival of the unusual visitors. The men stood a few minutes to look at the scene.

"We must have Rodney up here," said Harold; "he will enjoy the examination of this curious crater, though I fear he will not like the fatigue of the ascent."

"I were considering, sir," said Dick, "as how we could rig up a bit of a lodging here for yon poor lass, till she come round. There's never a soul to come nigh, I'd be bound. But, Mr. Crofton, what's astir yonder, sir?"

"You rascally little dog, what brought you here?" said Harold, as Pat emerged from among the reeds with his cap filled with large eggs.

"Sure, then, yer honner," replied the boy, "wasn't

I thinkin' to be helpin' you, seein' Mr. Marlin and you wouldn't be havin' the time to be birdnesting; and aunt Peggy and Mary wantin' so sore some eggs, and she, poor girl, so bad, ochone! And will ye, Mr Crofton, be lendin' me your caubeen for another lot of the same."

"Get along with you, graceless," said Harold; "here are eggs enough for a week; we had better bring Mary to the eggs at once."

"And wouldn't that be the raal thing," answered Pat. "Sure, then, yer honner is cute. Will I run down and fetch her?"

The active, nimble lad waited for no reply; but, swinging himself down the steep as lightly as if he had been one of the monkey race, was at the encampment long before the men, telling of the wonders of the Black Mountain, and alarming poor, languid Mary, by insisting that she should come along directly, and run up the bank.

When the matter had been duly discussed, it was agreed that the retirement and the plenty that were found in this strange spot rendered it desirable for a residence, till Mary should be in a condition to walk, and Dennis be recruited by rest and plentiful food. There was some difficulty in transporting the invalids and the baggage to the heights, but the strong men did not shrink from toil; and before night the tents were raised on the mountain, and in such a secure hold no watch being required, all slept as soundly as their noisy neighbors, the aquatic birds would allow them.

When morning showed them their new domain, the women were delighted with it. Poultry, eggs, water,

and security; what more was there to be desired? The wearied old man again petitioned that he might remain in such a pleasant home for life; till Mr. Rodney convinced him, that, exposed to the frost, and snows, and winds of winter, life could not be preserved here; nor, indeed, could they have remained here, if they had arrived two months earlier. Besides, except some low bushes which had crept over the edge from the rocky sides, and the reeds round the lake, there was no fuel. The ground was covered with rich short grass, springing from a light sandy soil, and was in every direction burrowed by the common rabbit, which is so plentifully diffused over the whole earth.

"These tents might easily be carried away by a gale," said Captain Scruton. "We ought to have some more secure protection for ourselves and our property. What do you say, Marlin? Can you rig up some sort of cabin?"

"We're short of timber here, captain," answered he; "but we can easy hoist up a few spars from below, and fit 'em in for posts."

"That will do, Dick," interrupted Harold. "I see it all. Then we will weave the reeds in to form the walls and roof, and daub all with clay. It will be capital."

"All easy enough to say, sir," said Dick; "but words isn't work. There'll be a good bit of labor; but we're not badly off for hands; so let's start."

The earnest men were soon down on the plain; some tall, slender pines were cut down, lopped, and drawn up with ropes; and glad to have work to employ them, the active "hands" soon had the frame-work of two huts run up; one for the women and the cooking, the other for the

men and the baggage; the arms and ammunition being carefully protected by the bear-skins. They saw with concern that of the ample stores brought from the wreck, a very small quantity of biscuit and potatoes was left, and one bag of flour. Tea they had yet, but very little sugar remained.

"The sugar we must resign to the women and O'Reilly," said Harold, "and put ourselves on short allowance of bread; this will be no great privation when we can procure eggs and ducks to any amount; though we must be cautious not to drive away our game by alarming them with frequent shots."

But Mike and John, well versed in the meaner arts of sporting by nets and snares, contrived silent methods of procuring the fowls, to avoid disturbing them by firing; while Pat continued to pillage the nests with excessive enjoyment, though not always with impunity, for he had more than once a conflict with an enraged gander, and had to scream for help, after receiving a severe drubbing from the strong wings of the injured bird.

In a few days the simple huts were completed and thatched, and the travellers looked round with quiet satisfaction, enjoying the idea of a home. Spaces had been left for light and air, and the tent covers and skins made carpets and couches; Dick entertained some visions of tables and chairs; but the idea of a permanent abode in this mountain solitude was utterly rejected by Rodney, Crofton, and Captain Scruton.

"It is somewhat dismal, Harold, to read the same books over day after day, without aim or end," said Rodney, flinging aside his favorite "Æschylus."

"My dear fellow," answered Harold; "take up my

Shakspeare. A single page will afford you materials for thinking for the day. Suppose you commence a Greek translation of the whole of the plays, and in the mean time I will descend with my gun to lower ground in search of some legitimate sport. Netting birds is sad slow work. What do you think of our daily life, Captain Scruton?"

"I think it is a waste of time, Mr. Crofton," answered he; "and time is money. It is always an unfortunate circumstance to be encumbered with women passengers. Here are we, sound and seaworthy, laid up in dock, when we might be turning the little that is left to some account; and all because a girl has a bad foot."

The next morning Harold and Rodney took their guns, and John and Dick being engaged in making nets for fowling and fishing, Mike was, to his great delight, accepted as an attendant, and likewise supplied with a gun. Then they descended from their abode and proceeded over the green hills which lay before them, to descend into grassy hollows, and again mount to higher hills, while beyond these lay hill upon hill, mountain upon mountain, ridge above ridge, wooded and snow-tipped, spreading before them many miles, continually rising, till the view was cut off by the lofty snow-crowned crests, which were lost in the clouds. Mike gazed at this strange sight with amazement and awe.

"Worra! worra! yer honners!" said he. "Sure, ye'd niver be climbin' up to the sky altogether! that bein' a raal sin; and wouldn't we be like them building men in the Bible, that would be thryin' to set up their big house at Babel, and angerin' God by that same? Sure, didn't He give us all the world to live in, and kape the sky for Himself intirely?"

"The builders of the tower of Babel were sinners, Mike," said Mr. Rodney, "because they pretended to raise works equal to those of the Creator, and were punished for their presumption. But these mighty rocks are God's own building, and He has not forbidden His creatures to go forth over all the earth. I should certainly feel some alarm myself at the prospect of scaling yonder lofty heights, for mortal man has never reached them, and we are but mortal; but, doubtless, the knowledge and judgment of our skilful companion, Mr. Crofton, will lead us safely through the bowels of the mountains, and save us from the perils of the ascent."

"You know better than I do, Rodney," answered Harold, "that there are several safe and easy passes of the mountains; why should we not fall on one of these?"

"Why not, indeed?" said Rodney, gravely; "considering that the chain does fall short of two thousand miles in length, it cannot be so very difficult to meet with one of these smooth highways."

"Well, Rodney," replied Harold, "it's no good chaffing me. What are we to do? We have got into a mess, and we must scramble through. At present we are tolerably well off, and we can afford to wait a little and look round us."

"Tolerably well off!" repeated Rodney, with a sigh, as visions of his former days of peaceful enjoyment crossed his mind. "Truly, Harold, I have no taste for the Red Indian life. I like my snug rooms, my easy chair, my books, my well-cooked dinner, and my bottle of '34 port. I love not to slay man or beast, and would rather look on my venison at table, oblivious of the

means of transforming it from living deer to the savory meat, than be compelled to officiate as butcher and cook, and thus lose all appetite for the untempting repast."

"Now, don't try the nonsensical, Rodney," answered Harold; "you like a day's shooting as well as any man."

"A day's shooting, I grant, my boy," replied he; "but a month's shooting, with the painful necessity before you of bringing down or fasting, and the occasional variety of killing a fellow-creature, is not sport, but dismal slavery. But I have done; this reconciles me to all—how pleasing! how glorious! thus to contemplate this magnificent display of the mighty works of the Creator! How wonderful would be a birds-eye view of the immense area covered by these extraordinary mountains, and the rich valleys which lie hid among them. Alas! that the toil of exploring them should be so trying to my untutored limbs."

"We must keep ourselves in training," said Harold. "Come, let us cross another of these high ridges."

They reached the summit, and looked on a steep descent, clothed with an ancient dark wood of pines, apparently unbroken by the entrance of man or beast. Far below lay a deep narrow valley, still as death, and unapproachable except through the thick wood. This was sport to Harold, but Rodney murmured over his rent garments and his thorn-scratched face. Mike, shorter and more agile, ducked beneath the bushes, and careless of his ragged fustian dress, pursued his way, undaunted by difficulties. They had nearly reached the valley, when a cry from the boy summoned his companions to a little cleared glen, where lay two bleached

human skeletons. Not a particle of flesh remained on the whitened bones; but not one of these bones was broken or displaced. No voracious animal had violated the remains of mortality, or they would have gnawed and disturbed the bones. Decay had gradually proceeded in its destructive work and succeeded; and the two tall skeletons lay there, as they had sunk to death, tranquilly. A shuddering awe kept the hunters silent for some time; then Harold said, "How has this been, Rodney? — has murder or famine done this work?"

"God alone can answer that question now," answered he; "but this discovery seems to be intended as a warning to us. It points out to us, Harold, that there is no pass here; we must attempt the formidable undertaking at some other point. Let us leave this glen of horrors. We will not wait to inter these dry bones; here, it is plain, they will remain undisturbed, and the sight may serve as a warning to future adventurers. God be merciful to all who wander in the wilderness!"



## CHAPTER XIV.

Abundance of Game. — Men and Horses. — An Easy Victory. — A Vexatious Prisoner. — The Obdurate Arncliffe. — John's Disappointment. — Once more on march.

THEY left the relics of mortality with thoughtful hearts, and after mounting several successive ridges, paused in a beautiful green valley, through which ran a clear rivulet, on the banks of which the footsteps of animals were visibly impressed on the moist soil.

"This is our ground," said Harold joyfully. "Here, Rodney, we will step behind this thicket; and Mike, my boy, you beat the bushes; but, remember, if you drive out the game, that you cut away quickly, for fear we should shoot you by mistake."

Nothing could have suited Mike better: he cautiously wound round into the midst of the opposite wood, and then hallooing and striking the bushes, he was soon assured, by the rustling sound, that he was actually driving the game before him; and very soon the hunters were gratified by seeing two large elks appear from one part of the wood, and from another a huge black bear.

"Where are you, Mike?" cried Rodney.

"Here, in the three, sir," shouted Mike, waving a ragged red handkerchief from a tall pine.

"Then," said Crofton, "I'll take the bear; and you, Rodney, let fly at the elks." The plan was followed; one elk fell; but the bear, though wounded, roared, and

retreated, pursued by both hunters, who followed the bloody trail to a cave in the rocks, and commenced a regular siege.

"We must take turn about," said Harold; "and each, as he fires, must run off to escape the counter-charge. I take the first shot."

He fired at random into the den; a deep growl was the only notice of the attack. Mr. Rodney's shot produced a more angry roar.

"That's a hit, Rodney," cried Harold. "What a lot of killing he takes. He'll hardly be worth all the powder and bullets. This to your heart, my bold fellow." And again Harold fired, and drew back just as the frightful, grinning head of the bear was cautiously protruded from the mouth of the den. Then Rodney took a deliberate aim from the side, and shivered the immense jaw of the beast, which, maddened with pain, rushed forward, leaning its head forward on the ground, and roaring horribly. The men felt rather alarmed, but, withdrawing behind the trees, they each fired once more, and the poor animal sank exhausted with the loss of blood.

"This is barbarous work, Harold," said Mr. Rodney. "I have no taste for useless slaughter. What in the world can we do with this monster, so far as we are from home?"

"Sure thin, yer honner," said Mike, dropping from a tree over their heads, "won't I trail him all the way myself?"

"Come away, Mike," said Rodney, "I hear more rustling in the thicket; we are hardly prepared for an encounter on this close ground; we had better return to the open valley."

They dragged the bear with them to the valley where they had killed the elk, though fearful that they must abandon one of the cumbrous animals; but happily they found Dick there, who had tracked them to the spot, and was contemplating with much satisfaction the slain elk.

"I thought if ye were lucky ye'd need another hand," said he; "and when I'd finished my job, I after ye, but it's an awful road; God save us!"

They hastened to decapitate the elk, as the huge antlers would have rendered it difficult to carry it through the wood, and then, heavily laden, set out homewards, on their own track. They reached the last narrow valley, and sat down to rest, and as Harold looked up the long vista open to the north, as far as the eye could reach, he said, —

"My opinion is, Dick, that we ought to have kept on north. This looks like a regular road; and depend on it we are too far south for an easy pass."

"Where there's an easy pass," answered Dick, "it's like enough we'd fall in with lots of them vicious Injuns. I've heard tell as how they're always clambering over to come on them buffaloes as keeps on t'other side. We're best out of their track."

"All right, Dick," answered Harold; "but it's plain we cannot cross here; and we can never remain shut up in yon rat-trap; Mr. Rodney is uncomfortable, and I must consider him."

"That's as you like, sir," said Dick, "and may be it will be dowly for them as can't run up and down easy. What for are ye letting that lad waste good powder with his pigeon-shooting; he's mutinous if he ever gets a gun into his hand."

Mike had killed several long-billed snipes before the voice of authority could check his wanton amusement; but Harold commanded caution, for he saw some moving objects towards the north, which he asserted must be deer.

"Likelier Injuns, I'd say," observed Dick, "only they gallop over-fast for them. Why, sure as death, sir, yon's men o' horseback!"

"On horseback!" repeated Harold; "what a blessed sight! They seem but a small company. Do you think we could buy some of their horses?"

As the horsemen came on at full speed, it was seen that there were no more than a dozen men, nearly naked, painted, and armed with bows and spears. They were mounted on small, swift horses; and as they rapidly drew near, they uttered the usual discordant yells, and waved their spears in a threatening manner.

"There's no chance of trading here," said Dick; "we're in for a skirmish, but we'll fight it out. Come behind these here bushes, honeys, we'll never let 'em see how short-handed we are."

They had scarcely time to withdraw behind a rampart of pines and brushwood before a shower of arrows fell around them, fortunately intercepted by the thick branches and enduring foliage of the pines.

A double round of shots returned by the concealed hunters succeeded so effectually, that the Indians drew back in dismay, leaving two horses lying, and probably believing their adversaries more numerous than they really were. More arrows fell harmlessly, but another well-aimed round of shots made the Indians turn to fly; one dismounted warrior springing behind a more fortunate companion, and one man stooping to drag the bear

upon his horse, and in two or three minutes they had galloped back in the direction from whence they came, and were soon out of sight.

The victors then quitted their post, and Mike, in great indignation, exclaimed, "Worra! worra! sure wasn't the spalpeen riding off with the bar, and me trailing him all the way for that same murdering rogue entirely!"

"Never mind the bear, Mike," said Harold; "we can treat our friends to horse-flesh steaks, which are said to be excellent. See, our shots have actually destroyed three valuable horses!"

"And here's a fellow lying right an' under this beast," said Dick, "and an awful crushing he'll have gotten."

A deep groan from the man proved that he was still living, and a struggle made by the horse, as if unwilling to injure its master, showed that it was also conscious; and they gently raised the wounded animal and drew it from the man; but it staggered, and sank down again. In the mean time, they hastened to assist the Indian, whose groans indicated his sufferings.

"Look to the horse, Dick," said Harold, "while we see what can be done for this unfortunate Indian."

Mike filled his cup with water at the stream, which they threw over the sufferer, who gasped, opened his eyes, and to their amazement said, "Dogs! have they left me?"

Mr. Rodney started back, but Mike cried out, "Sure, your honners, isn't it uncle Arncliffe?"

The disguised, painted, degraded man was indeed the wild, reckless father of poor William. A ball had passed through his shoulder, which had caused a great

loss of blood, and the right leg was crushed, and apparently broken by the horse falling upon it. The latter injury seemed to occasion the greatest pain, and his muttered execrations and impatient cries were terrible to hear, while his charitable attendants bound up his wounds, and endeavored to straighten the bent and shattered limb.

"Where will we be carryin' him, yer honner," sobbed Mike. "We'll niver be gettin' him up to mother's cabin. Will I run off to fetch Will?"

"Where's Will?" cried the man. "I'll blow his brains out if he tries to run off again. Let me be, you meddling fellows. Where are you going to take me?"

Dick had, in the mean time, brought water to the wounded horse, stanchd the blood which flowed from its neck, and bandaged it with his scarf. Then leaving the animal lying quietly munching the grass round it, he turned to assist his companions.

"He'se like to be shifted," said he. "We must handy-cuff him if he's obstreperous. A fool! doesn't he know what's good for him. We'll manage him, Mr. Rodney, no fear; but it's a hard job for fellows about worn out. There, lad, be off, and fetch a sail to roll him in."

The man's eyes glistened with rage, and his tongue poured out foul invectives on his preservers, to which they turned a deaf ear. Mike ascended the hill, and then called out that help was nigh, signalling to those on the plain to hasten onwards. In a few minutes John and William appeared, and Mike had scarcely time to tell the story before they reached the party in distress. John immediately directed his attention to the horse, while William, in great agitation, came up to his

father, and when he saw him naked, and painted like a savage, he covered his face and sobbed with shame and sorrow. He pulled off his own coat to throw over his father; but he, with oaths, flung it from him, and in his agony again insisted on being left alone. Fortunately, after a long time spent in altercation, he sank into a state of insensibility, and by that time Mike had returned with a mattress, and the sail, in which they swathed him, and bore him on the mattress, as carefully as they could, but with incredible difficulty up the mountain, where Mr. Rodney and John, to the best of their skill, set the leg, and enveloped it in bark. The wound they left to the care of Peggy, and when, though partially recovered, he was more submissive, Mr. Rodney gave him a few drops of laudanum, and left him to the women. The hunters longed for refreshment and rest, but John returned to bring up the wounded horse, actually getting him up the steep, and installing him in possession of the pasture round the lake.

"There's work in him yet, sir," said John; "and let him have a bit rest, say a week to set him to reets, I'se uphaid him to carry all t' baggage."

"A most happy riddance that will be for our afflicted bones, John," said Mr. Rodney, "and I entreat you to put the animal into repair for such a useful purpose. I scarcely expected to derive even that advantage from our ill-starred excursion of pleasure."

"There it is, Rodney," said Harold. "Unlucky dog that I am, I am always bringing vexations upon you. But who ever could expect that untoward circumstances should oblige us to admit this desperate wretch into our peaceful community?"

"Peaceful no longer!" sighed Rodney. "I am not

sure that duty requires more of us than to use some endeavors to restore the man to a healthy state of mind and body; and if we find our efforts unsuccessful, to abandon him, and to pursue our own tranquil way."

"But charity, my dear Rodney," suggested Harold.

"Charity has its boundary of duty," replied he. "So far we will go: but look round, would it be charity to our companions to sacrifice them to a robber and a murderer?"

"Poor Will!" said Harold. "It would break his heart to leave his father in this lost condition. Yet we must absolutely keep the boy with us."

"God forbid that we should leave the lad in such bad company," answered Rodney; "and therefore it is the more advisable that we should not wait till the renewed strength or artifice of Arncliffe should wrest the boy from us."

But for many days after this the unfortunate man raved in a high fever, and was afterwards reduced to such weakness that even speech was denied him. He was kindly and judiciously nursed; his son was rarely absent from his side, and while in this state the boy read prayers and short portions of Scripture to him, hoping that the light of truth might be revived in him. It might be that a gleam of grace fell on the soul of the sinful man as he lay there, suspended between life and death; for when at length he recovered the power of speech, he was less violent, and though sullen, did not absolutely resent the good offices of his attendants.

"What are you all doing here?" asked he of William. "What do these grand friends of yours mean, disturbing the free Indians on their own hunting-grounds, and meddling with matters they have no



business with? And if you did come to seek me, what need was there to bring yon women, and that puling old man with you?"

"You know, father," answered William, "we were alike emigrants to California, alike wrecked, and cast away on an unknown coast, from whence we have tried in vain to get to some civilized place. The gentlemen have been very kind to us, or aunt and old Mr. O'Reilly, at any rate, would have died of famine."

"No great loss that would have been," answered Arncliffe. "How did you ever expect to get on with those clogs at your heels? And now what are you waiting on this bare hill top for?"

"Till you are able to be moved, father," replied William. "Mr. Rodney and Mr. Crofton are kind enough to delay our departure for your recovery."

"Let them cut away, then, as soon as they like," said the ungracious man. "You can stay with me. We want no women nor fine gentry. There's room enough in this free country for a stout lad like you to live and thrive without help."

"I don't want to live like a savage, father," said the boy. "I want to work; to earn my living honestly; to help others, and to serve God."

"You've picked up a lot of slavish notions from your mother and aunt, lad," replied the father. "A deal they profited them! One poor creature dead; the other a beggar."

"One is already happy; for she sees the face of God," said William, weeping. "The other is walking in the right path, and working out her salvation, trusting in Him."

The man turned round uneasily, and still too weak

for much exertion, said no more; and William sighed to reflect how little his father had profited by the afflictions God had pleased to send him. In a few days he was able to sit up, to eat, and to talk; but his surgeons were of opinion that he would not walk for months, if, indeed, he ever recovered the perfect use of the limb. Then the travellers became a little anxious to set out, for it was now the end of March, spring had commenced, and they dreaded that the melted snow should swell the streams, and render them impassable.

William had dressed his father from his own scanty wardrobe, and on a fine sunny day they carried him out to rest on a pile of bearskins, and enjoy the open air. All came up to congratulate him, and Scruton at once said, "We are glad to see you convalescent, Mr. Arncliffe, for our progress has been vexatiously retarded. What course do you propose to pursue?"

"There stands my own horse," answered he; "and here is my own son. You can turn which way you choose."

"We might have done that three weeks ago," said Mr. Rodney, "had we not been detained by a Christian duty. You do not appear to be sufficiently grateful for the benefits which a merciful God has extended to you."

"You half-murdered me," grumbled the man, "and then expect me to fall down and worship you, because you did not kill me outright, but are so kind as to leave me a cripple for life."

"You know well enough that was all fair play, Arncliffe," said Harold. "And I tell you, your savage friends, who ran off and left you in that dastardly way, will hardly take you back now, sick and infirm. They

won't have a lame chief, so it would be wiser for you to stay among Christians. Come on with us, man; we'll trust you to be our guide, and we'll take care of you; and, at all events, William does not leave us."

The man growled out some words in a surly tone, but he saw that he was powerless; besides, there was a force in the straightforward determination of Crofton that disarmed opposition. He did not reply then; but when alone with William, he said, "If I'd been a bit stouter, I'd never have stayed with these folks to be a servant. But there's a time yet; there's good grounds beyond the mountains, if we were once through them; but we'll have to be a good bit further south before we manage that."

Taking it for granted that Arncliffe must accompany them, all was made ready. The horse, which John had so carefully tended and brought round, that it might serve for a pack-horse, was now claimed to carry its owner; and it was reluctantly that he consented that the bear-skins and two portmanteaux should be slung across it.

Once more the march was commenced; Arncliffe, mounted on his horse, leading the way, sullen but silent, while John and Dick, fostering some suspicions, walked by his side, each carrying a gun as well as his usual burden.

"If he gets a gliff of them black rogues as he were consorting with," said John, in confidence, to his companion, "what's to ail him riding off with my master's portmantle, and his dressing-box, with lots of money in 'em, as he's like enough to have smelled out."

"He's a bad rogue, John," answered Dick; "but

he's feared on us, and cannot help himself. He ordered Will to hand him up a gun; but our captain wouldn't hear of that, and sets us on to keep our prize in tow, ye see, that's it. And John, man, it's our duty not to let him slip from his moorings."

## CHAPTER XV.

Arncliffe's Stratagem. — The fruitless Pursuit. — Lost in the Mountains. — Famine and Desolation. — The recovered Trail. — The Raft. — The Scarlet Signal. — A Tunnel through the Snow. — Escape.

THE first day's journey produced such a night of agony to Arncliffe, that even the compassion of his unloving guards was awakened; and at the suggestion of Harold, Dick and John constructed a sort of sling of the dried skin of the elk, to support the injured limb, and extorted from the sullen man the first expression of gratitude he had ever uttered.

Following his guidance, the party crossed several of the lower ridges of the mountains without much difficulty, and then they proceeded south through a long narrow valley, where they were concealed from observation, and where game and shelter were easily found; but the streams that fell from above were numerous; and at every one there was delay, from the difficulty of crossing; and for many days the progress was slow and tedious. Then, deviating from the valley, they again commenced to ascend from ridge to ridge, in a south-east direction, gradually rising far above the plains, till the air became cold as winter; yet still before them lay the lofty crests, inaccessible to man, through which they must find a pass or perish. Their sole dependence was now on the doubtful knowledge of Arncliffe, as they now perfectly relied on his faith,

notwithstanding his morose and thankless manner. The guards no longer annoyed him by attending at his side, but left him wholly to the care of William, who walked by the horse, learning the various Indian dialects, which his father seemed wishful to teach him; and the boy, always earnest in the acquirement of knowledge, was glad to learn any thing that might be useful to his benefactors.

One day, after a toilsome ascent to a narrow ledge, along which they were to proceed, Arncliffe dismounted to examine the feet of the horse; and when Harold came up to him, he said:

"You must all pass on; the horse has cut his foot with a sharp stone, and I cannot afford to have him lamed. I must lead him slowly to the encampment. Do you see yon dark spot? — that's a clump of pines; just round it you'll find a narrow cleft; turn in there, and wait; I'll be with you as fast as a lame horse and a lame man can come."

"You are right, Arncliffe," said Harold; "I'm truly glad to see you so humane to the poor creature. Shall John look to the foot? he has some skill in veterinary practice."

"I know as much about a horse as he does," replied the unsocial man; "you'd better get on; and Will, do you carry this heavy portmanteau, it's enough to break the back of any beast."

William cheerfully relieved the animal of the heavy trunk, and then waited patiently till his father washed the leg and tied some bandage round it, often looking up from his employment to watch the procession move slowly along the narrow pathway, till it was no longer visible in the dim light; then turning to his son, he

said: "Now's my time. I'll be with you again before long, and then, mark me, go with me you shall. I'm tired of this trade, and must be off a bit."

Then springing upon the horse, he turned round, and after galloping back a little way, disappeared round a jutting rock. William, encumbered with the heavy portmanteau, pursued him in vain, calling after him to pause for a moment. When he reached the spot where his father had disappeared, he found it was a gap which led down to a low valley; thither he descended and crossed it having to wade through a river swollen already with melted snow, and then pursue an upward, thickly-wooded track which the horse had left. But after following this trail for an hour, he lost it, and became bewildered in the wood. Then, despairing of ever coming up with his father, he lay down overcome with fatigue, sorrow, and shame, and wept over his father's obstinate continuance in evil. And now he saw his folly in attempting to follow him, for night was at hand, and his first duty should have been to report to his generous friends the treachery of the man in whom they had confided. Now he shrank from the painful task, as he slowly rose to return; but the sight of the portmanteau reminded him that he was bound to restore that at least to the owner.

Then he looked round him, and tried in vain to fall upon his own track, and he wandered to and fro, till at length, following an opening through the trees, he came out of the wood upon a wide, bare jutting rock, from the edge of which he looked down upon huge fragments of rock, and black unfathomable hollows, filling a vast ravine, beyond which rose another stupendous wall of rock. It was a dismal and awe-inspiring solitude.

William was not a coward, but his heart sank at the sight.

“Am I abandoned and lost in this wilderness,” thought he. “Will my bones be left to whiten here, unsought and uncared for! How shall I be able to bear this dreadful lonely death?” He wept bitterly till he remembered God had said, “Fear not, for I am with thee.” And he repeated aloud, though he trembled to hear his own voice at first, —

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me!” Then, with strengthened faith he turned back, bending beneath his cumbrous burden. He could not remember any turn he had taken when pursuing his father, — he knew not whether he could escape by proceeding north or south, nor, buried as he was amidst rocks and pines, and the sun having sunk, whether he faced the east or west; and a cold fear came over him that every step he took might be plunging him deeper into the mountains, further from his friends, and nearer to destruction.

He halted in an agony of doubt; unfortunately he had no gun to fire a signal; but, feeling assured that his faithful friends would be in search of him, he shouted loudly; the surrounding cliffs echoed back his cries; but no voice answered. He had descended into a little hollow, and now depositing his heavy load beneath a cliff, he walked round to find a convenient outlet; but none appeared, — no path to encourage him to hope. He saw that he must again climb to escape from this hole; but on which side to ascend he could not determine. At length wearied and distracted, he lay down upon the portmanteau, and even



slept, notwithstanding his painful reflections, and the frightful howlings and roars of wild beasts on every side.

The light of morning awoke him, but a thick mist hid the sun from his sight, and he knew not which way to take; but, at all events, he must leave the hollow. He therefore selected the side easiest of ascent, and, dragging his burden after him, slowly attained a barren, dreary spot, broken by deep chasms, which prevented him crossing it; while around rose immense walls of rock, from which huge fragments had fallen and formed miniature mountains, that almost forbade further progress. Sometimes the masses of rock, fallen one upon another, were so precariously balanced that it seemed to step upon them would be to overthrow them; yet the moss and lichens, and the roots of climbing shrubs, had really bound these masses so firmly together that William, expecting every moment to be hurled and crushed, was able to cross them safely to reach one of the chasms which seemed less difficult than the rest to descend. Yet even this was little better than a precipitous wall, overgrown with bushes, which had no other soil to spring from but the ancient moss which clung tenaciously to the rock. Grasping these bushes, after first flinging the portmanteau down before him, he descended to another hollow, which he had no sooner reached than two deer, alarmed by the rustling, bounded past him, and again he deeply regretted the want of a gun; for the pains of hunger were now added to his troubles, and even the dark pines that overhung the rocks seemed to be barren, for not a cone lay beneath them, on which the boy might have made a breakfast.

Sickened with famine and disappointment for a moment he wished to lie down and die; but again his faith revived, and he forced his way upwards on the opposite side of the hollow, till he came to a spot where some broken branches arrested his attention. Eagerly he looked round; he persevered in finding the track, he followed it over a ridge, fancying every moment he caught sight of some familiar object; finally, he descended into the valley which he had first crossed in pursuit of his father the preceding day.

But he now saw, with dismay, that the river, greatly swollen, nearly filled the valley, and he feared he should be utterly unable to cross it. Since the misfortune of the wreck, he had learnt from his friend Crofton to swim a little, and would not have been afraid to face the difficulty, but for the incumbrance of the port-manteau, which he could not make up his mind to leave behind him. He carried always in his belt a knife and small axe, for the convenience of clearing the way in the woods, and with these he resolutely set to work, to lop pine-branches, and to cut down the rushes that grew near the water, to form a rude raft. It was a tedious labor for one not accustomed to mechanic arts; but Dick had taught Mike and him the use of tools, and employed them to assist him, so that he was not wholly ignorant.

What a rough, strange, matted mass was that vessel of burden when at length it was fearfully launched. A strong cord, which the pocket of a boy rarely fails to produce, was attached to it, that it might be towed to land if found water-worthy. And it floated! rolling awkwardly enough about in the rapid stream certainly, but it really floated. Then William took off his own

clothes to place on the portmanteau, which, by its own straps, he secured firmly upon the float; and after a prayer for aid in his undertaking, he plunged into the water, holding the cord, and, struggling through the foaming torrent, endeavored to swim across, ever, as he grew weary, resting his hand on the raft, which drifted across the level valley, and down the bed its own waters had worn to the very ridge on which he had parted with his friends. Then, catching at the overhanging boughs, he was able to gain the south side of the river, and draw his raft to land in time to save it from being whirled over a newly formed cataract which poured down to the plain below.

Exhausted by his efforts, and enfeebled by fasting, he lay down on the stony ridge for many minutes, incapable of thought or action. Then he arose and dressed himself, for the cold evening had come on, and he shivered from weakness and famine. He endeavored in vain in the dim light to make out the dark spot to which his treacherous father had directed his benefactors; and when he failed to see it, he said to himself, "Shall I survive till another morning dawns to show me the spot? Shall I ever reach it? and alas! shall I then find the dear friends I have lost?"

He unstrapped the portmanteau from the raft, and found beneath it a good-sized fish, resembling a trout, entangled in the matted fabric. He snatched it yet struggling from the unsafe snare, and secured it far from the water. Then he kneeled down to thank God for this bounty. His energy was renewed; he collected scattered twigs, lighted a fire and broiled, or rather heated his precious fish, for he had not

patience to wait till it was cooked. He made a hearty supper on half his provision, longing to eat the whole, but prudently refraining, lest by excess he should render himself unfit for further work. Then lifting up his voice and heart to the Giver of good things, he lay down on the solitary mountain-side, and slept in thankfulness.

As soon as morning broke, he looked out for his landmark, which appeared more distant than he had expected; but after breakfasting on the remainder of his fish, he felt ready for his work; and shouldering his burden, set out cheerfully. The sun was pleasant; but the streams, flowing from the rocks above, rendered the road tedious, and it was long before he plainly distinguished the dark clump of pines at the side of a lofty peak. This he concluded must be the place for the encampment which his father had indicated, and he proceeded briskly. But humble as his nature was, he could not help feeling surprise and disappointment that he had not met with any of his friends searching for him.

"I thought, perhaps, Mike and Dick might have come," said he to himself: "They might have fired signal guns to direct me. But they may have thought that I had been base enough voluntarily to desert with my unfortunate father."

At length he reached the trees, and looked round anxiously for the cleft which the travellers had been directed to enter; but he sought in vain. There certainly appeared to be a rent in the rocks a few yards beyond the pines; but this crack was filled still with the snow of winter. He walked onward for some distance, but the wall of rock continued unbroken, nor could he any longer see the track of his friends.

He paused to consider; then he recollected, in great alarm, that it was very unusual, at this season, to see snow on these lower ridges; and he turned back to examine the snow-filled crevice again. The sun was now powerful, and the upper surface of the snow was melting and flowing over the ridge; but he saw that no bed was worn over it, as if there was usually a river here in the spring. He looked upward at the cliffs which overhung the crevice, which seemed covered with smooth perpetual snow, and observed that the upper surface of that which was accumulated below was rough and broken, and the startling question arose in his mind, "Could this have been an avalanche?" If so, he trembled to think on the consequences.

As he gazed on this perplexing irregularity, he was struck by the sight of something red floating in the wind; and, weary as he was, he threw down the trunk, and commenced climbing up the snow. Unlike the rocky wall which bounded the ledge, it lay somewhat sloping, and with a stout stick, and his knife to cut steps, he succeeded in mounting about a hundred feet above the ground, and then in making his way over the wet and slippery snow towards the patch of red which had attracted his attention.

As soon as he approached it he uttered a cry of mingled terror and joy, for he recognized a red handkerchief belonging to his cousin Mike, which was nailed to a spar. "Dick has nailed it! They must be alive! But where are they?" he exclaimed, as he attempted to draw out the flag-staff. He found it was of great length; but at length he succeeded in extracting it.

He knew the pole to be one they had used for the litter; it was about eighteen feet in length; but he was

sure, if his friends were living, they must be lower in the snow than that. After a little reflection, he took a leaf from his pocket-book, and with a pencil wrote upon it, "Can I help you? W. A." This he tied in the handkerchief signal, and, inverting the pole, again inserted it into the opening, gradually lowering it till the whole had entered, driving it forward with his own stick. Suddenly his stick slipped from his hands, and slid out of sight, and he trusted his message was on the way to the captives below.

A long delay followed; then the welcome red signal slowly rose again, and he hastened to read the note which it contained, which was in the writing of Mr. Rodney.

"Draw up the pole; a rope is attached, and a spade; you must drag it through, and then both try to enlarge the opening."

From this he saw that they concluded his father was still with him; he did not, however, waste time in attempting any explanation; he drew up the pole, and fixed it firmly in the snow, till he cautiously, and with great exertion, drew up the rope; but the resistance of the hard snow below made it very difficult to get the spade safely brought through. At length it appeared; and seizing it with great joy, he began at once to work at the hole which its passage had already enlarged, throwing the snow behind him as he proceeded.

He formed an opening of about two feet in diameter, and managed very well to throw up the snow till he had sunk it four feet deep. Then the difficulty was, how to dispose of the shovelled snow. If he had had a companion, they might have divided the labor; but the

toil of ascending with each shovel of snow was immense; and he soon felt his strength failing. He sat down and wrote on the back of Mr. Rodney's letter, "I am alone, and almost famished. Can you send me some food, or I cannot work." He lowered this paper by the rope, and waited ten minutes; then he began to draw it up; but now the labor was greater than ever, the weight was so much increased; and when his toil was at last ended, he found attached to the rope the large iron kettle well packed with meat, which was now covered with the snow it had gained in its ascent.

The passing through of this large vessel had, however, formed a good-sized tunnel, through which William heard the whistle, and then the welcome hail of Dick. He was too weak to reply to it till he had eat heartily of the dried meat and biscuit; then he cried out as loud as he could, "Are all safe?" "Ay, ay," answered Dick, "all right! lower down the kettle; it works well."

The kettle was drawn up and down several times, removing a good deal of snow, which fell below; then William called, "If I throw the snow down, have you room below to dispose of it?"

The answer was favorable; and he now worked rapidly, cutting a resting-place for his feet, at the several stages, as he descended; but six hours of alternate labor, rest, and refreshment, passed before Dick, who was working upward, and he met, at some distance from the bottom of the tunnel.

"God bless you, my lad," said the delighted man; "you've helped us rarely. Now come down and see

our jail, and then we must weigh anchor and sail, before another broadside strikes us."

The next minute William had descended into the midst of the pale, agitated captives, who wept as they welcomed the blessed light of heaven, from which they had been so long shut out.

"Sure, Will," said Mary, "wasn't I the girl was telling you'd be saking us out; barrin' yer father wasn't tying ye up, and himself the man to be sendin' us all into this same snare and pitfall, God forgive him for that."

"You are wrong, Cousin Mary," replied William; "my father could not foresee the fall of the snow, though he certainly sent you forward that he might tempt me to make off with him, or at all events, to be ready to join him. But that could not be; though it half broke my heart to see him so set upon a bad course. I even ran after him till I was quite lost, and have wandered about these three days trying to fall into the road again, hungered and wearied, and terrified that I should never see you again. But, God be praised, that's over; and now the sooner you're out of this dark prison, the better."

The travellers had been sheltered in a spacious lofty cave, which was now half filled with the snow which they had thrown in to open a way of escape; no wonder all looked pale and ghastly, enclosed for three days in this dark and dreary dungeon, with little hope of ever escaping from it.

But now further explanations and details were deferred till they should be safely extricated from their painful position. First, the women and the old man



were assisted from step to step till they reached the day; the rest followed cautiously, lest they should displace the snow above. Harold insisted on remaining to share with Dick the last duty of sending up the heavy baggage. They attached the cumbrous boxes, kettles, and baskets to the rope, and as they were hauled up they struck and grated against the walls of the tunnel, threatening to bring down another avalanche on the brave men below. But though portions fell upon them, and the water streamed from the upper surface, rendering the ascent every moment more difficult, after sliding back several times, they happily reached their friends, well drenched with wet, and were soon once more down on the stony ledge from whence they had diverged into that unlucky cleft.

## CHAPTER XVI.

William's Explanation. — The Tale of Horror. — Buried alive. — Three days in the Snow. — The Merciful Rescue. — Climbing the Mountains. — The Fiery Eye. — The Indian Guide.

ONCE in safety, the assembled friends, wearied with their extraordinary labors, were glad to sit down on their packages and listen to William's sorrowful tale.

"I think my father was tired of the monotony of our life," he added; "he labored under the idea that he was a captive, and he desired to be free."

"What he wants is to fetch them Injuns down on us, and carry off our guns and powder," grumbled Dick; "and as sure as death he'll do it. But you could make't no better, lad; it were an awkward job; and if ye'd had a gun in your hand, it's not to be thought as how ye could have shot your own father."

"Don't speak so hardly on him, Mr. Marlin," said Will. "I don't think he means any harm to them that saved his life; he stopped to deliver up to me Mr. Crofton's portmanteau, which I have brought safe to him, thank God."

"My dear lad," said Harold, "it was not worth while that you should run the risk of breaking your back to preserve these garments of civilized life. I could, though unwillingly, have dispensed with them in these regions where a scanty wardrobe is the approved fashion. Still

I have some lingering prejudices in the matter of my toilet, and a fear comes over me, William, where is my dressing-case?"

The boy turned pale, and clasping his hands, cried out, "I see how it happened, sir, it was hidden beneath the bear-skins which were spread over the horse. I feel sure he did not mean to rob you."

"Nevertheless it was a convenient portable booty," sighed Harold. "All my gold and valuables, and alas! all my razors and brushes! all the little requisites without which civilized man sinks into a savage! all gone! Eheu! I am now a red man."

Rodney laughed as he said, "We must use my slender toilet requisites in common, Harold, at least such as are necessary; but who needs a razor in our wild life?"

William remained, however, deeply mortified; the dressing-case was fitted with silver, and was valuable, independent of its contents; and though he did not himself believe that his father was knowingly a thief, yet he felt assured that such was the opinion of Captain Scruton, and he feared, of John and Dick.

"Never think more of it, boy," said Harold, good-naturedly. "I have bills of exchange in my pocket-book that will enable us to pay our way, if we ever arrive at the regions where money is available; and I shall be no worse for roughing it a little without eau de Cologne, or pomade regenerative to waste on my already profuse curls. Certainly, I should like a pair of scissors; but I see your aunt has a comely pair depending from her girdle, which she will lend me for all-work. Two days ago, when we were buried alive, how lightly I should have regarded these privations."

William shuddered, as he thought on their situation then.

"Ay, ay, lad," said Dick, "it were bad to bide; but things is never so bad but they might be worsen. If it had fall'n atop on us as we filed into yon creek, we'd all have been crushed as flat as a flounder afore we'd known what ailed us. But, ye see, we'd lighted on that there dark hold, and stowed away our freight, and thought as how we'd rig it up for a night's lodging, and John and me we'd fetched in a heap of dry sticks for a fire. And just then that unlucky lad Pat he'd been clambering and tugging at a bush reet over again our place after a bird's nest, when down he drops, and runs in shrieking out, 'It's all coming down;' and, sure enough, that very minute came a row like thunder, and the ground we stood on shook, as if our ship had struck on a rock; and all turned as dark as if the varra day of judgment had come on us then and there."

Peggy and Mary sobbed loudly, as Dick described the sad catastrophe.

"That's nought to how they went on then," continued he. "I never in my born days heard such skirling and roaring. Then John and me — more shame on us — did a bit of swearing; but Mr. O'Reilly he spoke up like a Christian, and he says, says he, 'The hand of the Lord is on us.'"

"It was, indeed," said Harold, "a most awful moment; death was in that 'horror of great darkness,' and I felt stunned and deprived of all power of thought or exertion, till I heard Rodney's commanding voice say, 'Let us pray.' We did, I believe, all join earnestly in prayer, and listen while he repeated the whole of the beautiful psalm, 'Lord, thou hast been our refuge from

one generation to another.' We remained long silent with humbled hearts; then Captain Scruton, with the energy we all seemed to have lost, said, 'I have been many times face to face with death, in storm, in battle, and in pestilence, and I could always put my trust in God, while at the same time I could use the faculties he has bestowed on me — the head to contrive, the hand to execute. We are cast down, not crushed: let every body lend a hand; you women, light a fire, and let us see the worst.'

"The women did light a fire, and a sad sight the flickering flames revealed in that vast dreary dungeon. Such a set of cadaverous faces my eye never before rested on. We realized one of the pictures in Dante's *Inferno*, and on every countenance was painted the death of hope. But at the command of Captain Scruton we crowded round the fire, and even eat as if we meant to live. This exercise of the functions of life somewhat revived our energy, and we ventured to talk of experiments. We tried to move the snow at the mouth of the cave, and found it firm and solid; then we took up our spades and began to excavate, depositing the snow we removed at the furthest extremity of the cave. When beyond our reach, we cut steps, and worked above us, the snow being too compact to be dangerous, though this rendered our labor more tedious; and, alas! our first twelve hours' labor had not opened more than six or eight feet. We had noticed the height of the snow-crowned rock as we entered the cleft, and if it was entirely filled up, we dreaded that our food and our strength should be exhausted before we could work to that height. Besides, the want of air was terrible, though, happily, a narrow crevice or two above, admitted

a small portion, and relieved also the misery of total darkness.

“You may conceive our nights of anxiety, followed by the labors which we never relinquished as long as we could hold the spade — dismal labors, almost hopeless! for when we had labored till the morning of the second day we had not formed an opening more than fifteen or eighteen feet high. Then Dick projected the plan of passing a signal through the solid snow that lay above us, for he insisted on it that your father would be quite aware of our condition, and might obtain help for us. The difficulty of driving the pole upwards through the snow was tremendous, though near the surface it was fortunately not frozen so hard as below.

“We lashed one spar to another as we drove them up, till we used all we had; even then we were fearful the signal might not have risen above the surface; then we continued to labor without hope, to eat without appetite, and to rest without refreshment, till our own signal appeared and fell at our feet. For a moment we were all speechless with emotion; then we snatched up the banner and found your note, and a faint cheer of joy rang through the murky cave.”

“Worra! worra!” interrupted Mike, leaping up with excitement. “Wasn’t it my own illegant red tie that did it all? And sure, mother dear, won’t we be kaping that same, put by as long as we live, and won’t we all have it buried with us in our own coffin, seeing it was saving our lives, this same blessed red rag!”

“Sure, then, Mike, darlingt,” said his mother, “wouldn’t it be the Lord God himself that saved us, and niver the red handkerchief at all! And He putting it into Will to dig us out, praise be to His name!”

"You are quite right, my good woman," said Mr. Rodney; "to Him alone belongs the praise and the glory. We had fallen into the pit, and He drew us out. But, after offering up our thanksgiving to God, we must be grateful to the untiring hands that worked out His will."

"Now it would be advisable to move forward," said Captain Scruton. "I am sorry to wound your feelings, young man; but I think it not improbable that Arncliffe may again join his marauding associates against us. But, should he do so, and find the avalanche, he will conclude we are lost, and may abandon his dogged persecution. It would be well that he should not discover that we have escaped."

"I cannot believe him capable of this," replied William hastily. Then he remembered what cause of suspicion his friends had, and he said no more.

They resumed their burdens, and continued to march along the side of the rocks till daylight failed, and they gladly sought shelter under a cliff, feeling the loss of the bear-skins to rest upon, Peggy especially declaring that she was sure that "villain of the world" Arncliffe had all along had his eyes on them.

The sun was very powerful the next day, and the melting snow fell in showers from the high rocks over their pathway, making their march difficult, and often perilous. At length they reached a spot where a newly-formed torrent poured down in a cataract, and rushed foaming through a deep rocky bed, forming an impassable barrier for foot-passengers.

"I foresaw, my friends," said Mr. Rodney, "that we must inevitably be thus arrested; and perhaps it is well: why should we not attempt to ascend and work

through these mountains? We seem to arrive at no easier pass, and we lose time by thus aimlessly journeying along the side."

"But my father said it was hopeless our attempting to cross without a guide," said William.

"I've carried many a ship through unknown seas without chart or pilot," said Scruton, "and we'd better trust our own judgment, than be in the hands of one who might run us into a fleet of pirates."

"Very good, Captain Scruton," answered Rodney: "then we commit the helm to you; rely on our obedience."

"It's little he knows of land voyaging," muttered Dick, in a discontented tone, to his friend Mike; "but it's like we must wait orders."

"Then we'll begin by boarding this hulk of stone," said Scruton, climbing the steep rocky wall that bounded the ledge, as coolly as a fly pursues its miraculous way up a pane of glass.

Pat followed him like a monkey; Mary looked appalled, and Dennis sat down, groaning in despair.

"We passed a cannier bit a while back," said John; "what think ye, Dick, of getting 'em up thereaway?"

"We'se manage to haul 'em aloft somehows, man," answered Dick. "Come, lads, are ye for trying?"

But William had also remarked the canny bit, which formed an easier ascent; and not considering themselves bound absolutely to follow the captain, they turned back, and contrived to scramble upwards with various degrees of skill. The women were helped up without much trouble, though with a good deal of shrieking, but John and Dick were compelled to lay violent hands on the old man, and to carry him up



bodily. When this was accomplished, and they really rested on level rock again, they discovered that they had only surmounted one of a succession of gigantic steps, each of which occupied so much time to ascend, that the whole day was spent in the labor of reaching a height not many hundred feet from the terrace they left in the morning. Even then, though they descended into a sheltered hollow for the night; in the morning they still saw before them the mighty wall of rock, unbroken, and almost inaccessible. To add to their distress, the meat was exhausted, very little flour remained, and the potatoes, though most grateful to the poor emigrants, afforded imperfect sustenance to men who required strength for their great undertaking. As they sat disconsolately round the fire, Pat dropped from the bushes that covered the rocks, crying out, —

“Will ye be helping, Mike? Sure they’re illegant, and talk like the Ingins themselves, and maybe Will would be telling us what they’re maning, seeing he’s clever at his book. And maybe they’d be askin’ me to lave their eggs alone, the cratur, which same I’d not be agreeable to, at any rate, seeing we’re needing them ourselves.”

The boy produced a bag filled with the small eggs of the parrots and pigeons who frequented the bushes, and Mike and Dick readily joined in a more efficient invasion of their domains. They succeeded in taking a dozen young green parrots, and though necessity compelled them to feed on the birds, Mary mourned over the pretty creatures, and Mr. Rodney shrank from such a wholesale slaughter for one small dish of stew. Still the stew was thankfully eaten, as well as an omelette of eggs, by the hungry travellers, and after this refresh-

ment, they all declared they felt stronger for the next day's fatigue.

Another lofty step was ascended next morning, after a few hours' labor, and a broad, extensive valley which lay beyond the ledge, and which stretched far to the south, tempted them to proceed along it for two or three miles, hoping they might thus come on some easier ascent. Pat, as usual, was on before them, and they saw him pause near a thick wood. Harold hastened up, on the watch for game, with his gun charged; but when he reached him, the boy whispered in an awe-struck tone, — "Was yer honner iver seeing a spurrit in the daylight?"

"Never, Pat," answered Harold. "I can safely say; nevertheless, I am quite ready for the encounter, and would be glad to have one pointed out."

"Sure, wasn't I seeing the big fiery eye in that black bush with the red roses, yonder," said the boy. "Musha! sure yer honner wouldn't be shooting, barrin' ye'd be havin' a silver bullet."

"My dear lad, point out the bush," replied Harold. "It will certainly be a bear or an elk, and we cannot afford to lose it."

The boy trembled as he showed a thick cactus-bush, already covered with red buds; and though Harold did not see the fiery eye, he levelled his piece at a venture, at the bush, and was just about to fire, when a rustling sound was heard, and an Indian, with his bow and quiver at his back, and the usual scanty clothing, crawled from the bush towards Harold, and lay down before him, with his face to the ground, in an attitude of humiliation.

By this time the rest of the party had come up, and

William, in great agitation, addressed some words to the man in his lately-acquired Indian dialect. The stranger started up, his face lighted with hope, and replied quickly, at the same time pointing to his right arm, which hung uselessly at his side, and at his head. Then William interpreted his answer, — “ He says that he was out on a hunting expedition with his people, that he had left them in pursuit of — I think he means the great bear ; that when he was alone he fell from a snowy height, and hurt his arm and his head so much that he lost all recollection for some time. He cannot, even now, remember where he is, and he is almost famished, and has been long lying unable to provide himself with food, and waiting for the Great Spirit to call him away.”

All were anxious to aid the unfortunate hunter. William was employed to tell him that they were his friends, that they would try to restore the use of his arm, and make him strong again. He readily allowed Mr. Rodney to examine his arm, asking William if this gentleman was the great medicine man of the tribe. The arm was dreadfully swollen, and fomentations were applied ; then Peggy and Dennis, on their limited field, gathered such herbs as they thought good for a poultice, Mr. Rodney submitting to an experiment which might be beneficial, and could do no harm. There was no wound in the head, and Mr. Rodney hoped that the concussion which had confused his senses, was now of no consequence : he therefore contented himself with administering a sedative medicine. Then they gave him some tea, which seemed to be very repugnant to his carnivorous appetite, after which he slept ; and thus compelled to wait, they ranged about

with their guns, and were fortunate enough to shoot an elk, which was speedily skinned and cut up; and when the Indian awoke, a stew had been cooked, of which only a moderate share was given to him, for William ascertained that he had not eaten any thing for three days.

Unwilling to move the helpless Indian, they continued another day on this spot, when Mr. Rodney and John managed to set the broken arm, and to enclose it in a cradle of bark, which they slung round the neck of the patient, who never moved a muscle during the painful operation; but when it was completed uttered these brief words of acknowledgment, — “It is good; the white strangers are my brothers.” They were now in a condition to set out, and the Indian was asked to guide them through the mountains, which he eagerly undertook to do, though he pointed to old Dennis, and said, — “The red men leave their weak fathers at the lodges; the young brave only hunts, the old sleep.”

As they proceeded slowly along the valley, Harold and Mr. Rodney recalled some of the words they had acquired from their first Indian friends; and finding that, though different in pronunciation, they resembled the corresponding words in the dialect of their new acquaintance, they were soon able to understand, and, with a little help from William, to talk with the young Indian, who had a mild, intelligent countenance, and who seemed grateful and happy, though he said he must return to his squaw when he had brought them through the mountains.

Then, through winding defiles, over sloping ridges, and along narrow and perilous shelves on the mountain-

side, the agile Indian led his benefactors for two days, during which they obtained a scanty supply of birds and eggs, very insufficient to support the strength they needed for their daily toil.

## CHAPTER XVII.

An Onslaught among the Bears.—More Perilous Journeying.—  
An Alarm.—A March in the Water.—The Secret Fortress.—  
The Enemy at the Gates.

ON the third day of their journey with the Indian, he paused in a narrow valley, and said in his own language, "My brothers must stay here to kill the dark bear; it is here he has his lodges. The red man lives many days without food; his pale brothers must eat daily, and must have died had they gone up yonder." And he pointed to the heights which they had vainly attempted to surmount.

The travellers were then aware how thankful they had reason to be that they had by their charity secured the services of the experienced native, as they might have perished miserably in the cheerless solitudes of the higher ranges. It was their guide too, who, with the keen observation of his race, detected and traced the bear to his den; and after pointing out the entrance, and discharging several arrows into the cave, they ascertained that he had not deceived them, for his unwelcome salutations were answered by a growl which signified that Bruin was at home.

"Now," said the Indian, "let my brothers burn him to death with their fire-spear," and the man shuddered as he pointed to the weapon which he had seen arrest the bird in its flight, and bring it dead to the ground. The men advanced one after another to shoot

into the den, the animal still refusing to appear, and answering each shot with a deeper growl than the last; till at length a death-yell, followed by silence, indicated that their attempts had been successful.

Then the Indian crawled through the narrow opening, armed, however, with Harold's long knife; for he observed, "The red man does not trust the black bear, he is a liar; he says, I am dead, then he rises up to kill his enemy." And it appeared this bear was not more sincere than the rest of his race; for the man quickly drew back, saying, "My brothers must send more fire. The black bear lives, he says nothing;" and the man writhed to express the dying struggles of the beast. In mercy, then, they fired two more shots; after which the Indian once more went into the cave, and drew out the body of a large black bear.

"It is the squaw bear," said he, "the brave yet lives. He bleeds; he wants more fire."

This was bloody work, and Harold felt sickened at the slaughter; especially when a faint and plaintive cry was heard, and two cubs, both wounded, tottered from the den, and lay down by the dead mother.

"Surely we have shed blood enough for the present," said Harold throwing down his gun. "Here is meat enough for many days. I care little for shooting animals at liberty in the open fields; but truly, Rodney, I revolt from this secret and cowardly assassination."

"But if we don't finish him, sir," said Dick, "if he has a bit of pluck left in him, he's sure to finish some of us. I say, in for a penny, in for a pound. So if you're not again it, sir, I'll have a touch at the old fellow myself."

So Dick put an end to the struggling animal, and John completed the butchery of the cubs. Then they brought out the huge animal, and all hands were employed in skinning and in cutting up the meat, of which the abundant supply especially delighted the Indian, who gladly bore his share of the burden; and after the skins had been cleansed, he rolled them up and carried them off too, signifying that they were much too valuable to be abandoned.

After their hard work, they made a forced march of some length, which brought them to a road plainly known to the Indian; for he led them to a cave, the mouth of which he showed them, he had himself filled up with brushwood, to prevent the bears and wolves from taking their abode in it. They had evidently however, attempted to remove the impediment; but the skill of man had triumphed, and they had not succeeded. The cave was foul, damp, and dark; but after being ventilated and warmed, by making a large fire of the brushwood, the travellers took possession of it, cooked and ate an enormous supper of meat only, and then filled up the entrance with pieces of rock, to guard them while they slept; a prudent precaution, for the fierce howlings of an animal, which the Indian said was the great black wolf, were incessant and alarming.

The next day they scrambled over bare rocks piled on rocks, sometimes compelled to draw up the baggage by ropes; while from the snow-crowned peaks far above them, showers of melted snow continually deluged their path and fell upon them, and occasionally they narrowly escaped an avalanche. Their progress was slow, their fatigue very great, and when darkness came on they



slept heavily at the foot of a cliff, and only discovered when morning broke that they had rested in a narrow defile, between two walls of black rock, which seemed to rise to the very clouds, the upper part being formed of masses of eternal snow.

When the women were about to light a fire, to prepare breakfast, their guide stopped them, pointing upwards, and saying, "It is good to go on very quick; the sun will come hot, then the snow will fall down on us, and whither can my brothers fly?"

The danger of lingering in the narrow cleft was obvious, and they set out to walk briskly before the sun should attain its full power. The gloomy pass, which gradually ascended, wound through the solid rock as if it had been cut by the art of man; and from hour to hour they walked onward, looking forward vainly for the termination. Late in the day, wearied and famished, they ventured to rest in a wide basin, surrounded by rocks, where neither a particle of vegetation was to be seen, nor a dry stick found to make a fire. Fortunately, more meat than was consumed had been cooked on the previous evening, and after making their supper on this, they lay down on the hard rock, with such covering as they could collect, to obtain the sleep necessary to fit them for the labors of another day.

They left the rocky hollow to enter again the defile, along which they continued to travel for some hours, when it gradually widened, and they came on an open rocky descent, which extended far below them, till dark woods shut out their further view. They eagerly inquired of the Indian if they had completed the ascent, and he replied, —

"My brothers may now descend, even to the prairies ;

but the red man does not love the open grounds. Wherever the Great Spirit has planted the forest, the red man seeks the forest, and raises his lodges out of the sight of his enemies. My people are peaceful; they love not blood, though they have not small hearts, for they hunt the great bear, and hang his claws round their necks. The treacherous Pawnee, the bloody Sioux, the wandering Crow, sleep with their eyes open, and the scalping-knife in their hands, to wait for the peace-loving red man. My people are poor; they are robbed of their horses; but they choose to remain poor; they will not be robbers, they will not be scalp-hunters, — they are bear-hunters."

"It is most fortunate for us," said Mr. Rodney, "that our friend belongs to the Peace Association. I feel my head cooler, since I have no longer the dread of that remarkably unpleasant operation of scalping. I think, Harold, it would be advisable for us to pay a visit to the people of our guide."

"I earnestly wish it," answered Harold. "I should like nothing better than to join these hunters in a regular foray; but how unlucky it is that they should be a dismounted people!"

"I fear," said William, "it would be hopeless to make inquiries about my father amongst these peaceful Indians. He is mad about war."

"It's about shedding blood, you'd be saying, boy," said Dennis. "It's not the great bears, nor the wolves themselves, that he's caring to slay; but it's just man, man in the image of his God, that he turns his hand against. God forgive him for that same."

They continued to descend over the rugged path till they reached the region of the pine woods; then the

restless eye of the Indian sought in every direction the trail of friends or enemies; but none appearing, they plunged into the wood. The thick bushes now looked green with April buds, the trees were wound round with masses of the tough tendrils of creeping shrubs, which spread from trunk to trunk, interwoven, and formed impediments fatal to the garments of civilized life. The unclothed Indian looked with contempt on the rent and entangled dresses of the women, and even the more compact clothes of the men did not escape. Pat alone triumphed in his rags, and defied every obstacle, having little more clothes left than the Indian, to whom he attached himself, and with whom he boldly conversed in a dialect compounded of many tongues, but which was soon comprehended and answered by the good-natured savage.

On the second day of their comparatively easy descent, the Indian suddenly stopped, put his ear to the ground, then plunging into a mountain stream by the side of which they were moving, he waved his companions to follow him, saying, —

“The cowardly Sioux are on the trail; we must fly. They would scalp all, even the women and the child. They are more cruel and sly than the wolf. They will carry away the guns, and the knives, and the iron vessels of my brothers, and will give their bodies to the hungry beasts of the forest. It is good to deceive them. The water leaves no trail; my brothers must walk through it. I will mislead the cowardly dogs.”

Then he sprang out on the opposite side of the rivulet, trampling down the bushes, and forcing his way into the depths of the forest, till they lost sight of him,

greatly to the alarm of Captain Scruton, who persisted in believing that he had abandoned them.

"I don't believe it," exclaimed Harold. "He is an honest fellow; I can read it in his face. Let us continue our cold and comfortless water march. Depend on it, he will join us again; but, at any rate, we must not wait here till those scalp-hunters come up, who might prove too many for us."

Scruton could not be convinced that they were pursued, for he had heard no sound; but Mr. Rodney had read of the sagacity of the Indians, and, trusting their guide, begged that they might hasten forward. The water, though even at that advanced season it was piercingly cold, was fortunately not deep, and they were able to march on through it, following its devious course among the masses of rock, which continually changed its downward direction. When they had proceeded about three miles, they were alarmed by a rustling sound amidst the trees, and made ready for action; but the next moment their faithful guide dropped from the branch of a tree into the water, and, with hurried action waved them to hasten onward.

"It is good," said he, "the Sioux dogs go on a false trail. Peshoo has made that trail, and come back to his pale brothers like the squirrel from tree to tree. But the Sioux are cunning; when they lose the trail, they will come to the water. Peshoo is also cunning; he will lead his pale brothers to the lodges of safety."

Then leaving the water, Peshoo, as he named himself, directed them to follow him in Indian file, each stepping exactly on the track before him, that the trail might be as slight as possible. Thus they went on for

a hundred yards through the woods, till they reached a lofty wall of rock, thickly covered with brushwood even to the ground. Before this barrier Peshoo threw himself prostrate on his face, and disappeared beneath the trailing branches for a short time; then, returning in the same way, he said, —

“It is good; here is the lodge where my brothers shall be at peace; for the fierce Sioux know it not. My brothers must steal in like the snake in the prairie grass.”

This promised to be a formidable adventure, but Harold, who followed next to the guide, lay down, while the Indian carefully raised the branches, and showed a low opening, through which Harold crawled, winding through a low, narrow cleft for a considerable distance, and at length emerging into a spacious hollow surrounded by rocks of immense height, which were covered with green bushes. Huge fragments of rock lay scattered over the ground, and in the midst was a basin, which a channel of rock worn from the sides had filled with the water of the melted snows of the upper regions.

By the time Harold had surveyed this impregnable fortress, his companions, one after another, had issued from the passage, and expressed in various ways their wonder and satisfaction. Peshoo remained some time after the last, having announced that he must obliterate the trail, that the Sioux might not suspect that they were concealed near; but, finally, they were glad to see his active form appear to complete the party. Pleasure shone on his countenance as he looked on his rescued friends and said, —

“Only the people of the Black Bear know this

secret lodge; the Sioux are blind, they cannot see it. It is here the squaws, and the little ones, and the aged come, when the young braves are out on the hunting track, to slay the bear and the buffalo. My pale brothers are good men; they will not make Peshoo mad; they will not say to the Sioux and the Pawnees, 'Come with us and slay the women and the children of the Black Bear in their peaceful lodge.'

Harold took the hand of the young Indian, and in his imperfect language assured him that they were brothers for ever, and pledged himself that they would never betray, but would, if possible, help him and his tribe. Even Scruton could no longer distrust the grateful man, who had saved their lives by disclosing the important secret which involved the safety of the whole tribe.

"My brothers must remain here many days," said Peshoo; "till the Sioux return to their lodges with small hearts, for they bring no scalps to show to their squaws. It is good, my brothers bring the flesh of the bear, for the pale-face does not fast long like the red man; and see, your squaws may sleep well on the mats of my people." As he said this, Peshoo raised a curtain of streaming creeping plants and disclosed a hollow in the rock, in which were piled numerous clean, neatly-woven, reed mats, which the women gladly brought out and spread round, that all might rest after their day of toil and anxiety. Heaps of dry bushes enabled them to make a fire, Peshoo assuring them the smoke could never rise over the cliffs to betray them; and, in spite of the certainty that they were surrounded by formidable foes, never had the travellers enjoyed their supper with a greater feeling of security and peace.

"Don't you think, Peshoo," said Harold, "we had better fill up the mouth of the entrance with one of these huge stones? Not but I defy invasion, for only one foe can enter at once, and we could easily shoot them as they appeared."

"It is good to close the opening," answered Peshoo; "but it is not good to kill the Sioux. Peshoo wishes for no scalps; he says, let the Sioux live; but let them not find the secret lodge of my people. Then would Mosquaw, my father, say, 'Why did Peshoo lead the pale strangers to the peaceful lodge of the women?' Then my face would be turned from my red brothers; my heart would become small, I must fly to the thick woods and lie down till the Great Spirit sent to carry me away."

"I should indeed be grieved if we were the means of making your retreat known," said Harold, "and I will, at all events, try to close the entrance."

Then selecting such a fragment of rock as would pass through the narrow passage, which certainly a good-sized man, clothed, could not well come through, he forced it on before him till he reached the entrance into the wood, and was arranging it in a natural position behind the leafy curtain, when he was startled by the sound of voices outside. Not daring to move, he tried to understand the Indian words which he plainly distinguished, for the speakers were certainly not many yards from him; but the variation of dialects in the different tribes made it difficult for him to comprehend the meaning. He made out, however, that the speakers were really tracking them; that they had fallen on the trail from the water to this spot, in spite of Peshoo's attempts to obliterate it, and

that they were now discussing the probability of the fugitives having ascended the precipitous cliffs. Harold was vexed also to hear the trampling of horses ; for he foresaw the difficulty of escaping from mounted foes. In great anxiety he remained listening till the voices grew more distant, as the people probably spread round to endeavor to recover the trail ; then leaving the stone wedged in the opening as near to the outer surface of the rock as he dared to venture, he drew back dejectedly to report to his friends all that he had heard.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

Besieged in a Hole.—Piping to Quarters.—An Attack from the Ramparts.—The Dispersion of the Besiegers.—The Prizes of Victory.—The Land of Promise.—Peshoo's Embassy.

NOTWITHSTANDING the accustomed immobility of the Indian countenance, a spasm crossed the face of Peshoo, as he said, "The Sioux will not find the trail; they will return to the spot where it was lost; they are cunning; they will say, 'Our scalps must be found, let us seek them.'"

Scruton looked uneasily round, and said, "This man has led us into a trap. Now we are at his mercy."

"By no means, Captain Scruton," answered Harold. "Not a soul can enter so long as we have a bullet left to stop him."

"But they can starve us out, Mr. Crofton," said he. "How long will our provision hold out?"

This was true; and Rodney endeavored to learn from Peshoo what was the probable number of the pursuers. In reply, the Indian repeated several times "many, many;" his words not enabling him to express positive numbers. Finally, he held out his hands with the fingers extended ten times, from which they concluded he estimated the number of the enemy to be about one hundred. He could not be sure that they had not fire-arms; their arrows were many and dangerous, and their tomahawks cut deep.

"I will die like the son of Mósquaw," continued the Indian. "The Sioux shall not see me tremble, nor hear me groan. But let my good pale brothers, who know how to talk with the Great Spirit, tell Him to be pitiful to the women and children of Peshoo's people; tell Him to blind the cruel panthers of the prairies, that they may not find the way to the peaceful lodges of the weak."

Mr. Rodney, observing the reverence shown by the Indian when he saw his friends engaged in devotion, had, as far as his limited knowledge of the language permitted, tried to enlighten the poor man in the knowledge of the true faith; and he now induced Peshoo to kneel down with the rest, while he repeated a short and simple prayer in such Indian words as he could recollect, entreating God's mercy on those peaceful children of the mountains. The man was earnest and attentive; and after the concluding prayer, he repeated the words, "Our Father."

"It is true," he said; "the Great Spirit is the Father of all who are good."

"He will also become the Father of those," answered Mr. Rodney, "who leave evil ways, and desire to become his children; those who grieve over the past, and earnestly mean to do good for the future."

Peshoo reflected silently for some time; then he seemed more tranquil, and said cheerfully: "God will listen to the words of the good pale-faces."

Harold then walked uneasily round the spacious hollow for some time, surveying curiously the bush-covered walls. He paused at length at one spot, and said:

"Captain, Scruton, you belong to the tribe of

climbers; what do you think; could not you and I, and two or three more plucky fellows, mount this wall with our artillery, and drive away those fellows that are lurking round our retreat? They will take fright at the attack; and, situated so far above them, they will not discover the weakness of our force."

"We shall be short-handed, Mr. Crofton," answered Scruton; "but pluck goes a great way. You see, my maxim has always been, 'Better fight than run; and better either one or the other, than strike.' If they carry no guns, I think we may reckon on chasing them. But we must call out our own hands; we cannot get any fight out of yon white-livered Indian."

"Leave my name out, if you please, Captain Scruton," said Rodney; "I am too rigid of limb to perform monkey feats, and too much averse to the shedding of blood to perpetrate slaughter, except when roused by aggression. Let me see the grinning head of an armed enemy appear through that entrance, and I should feel no compunction in blowing out his brains; but to lurk in secret places, and shoot down unwary men, is not in my way. Don't argue, Harold; you will waste time. I am a pertinacious fellow in my scruples and prejudices, as you choose to call them. Go on; be as merciful as your hot blood will let you; and when you have swept us a clear path, I will not refuse to make use of it."

"I vow, Rodney," said Harold, "that, to be a brave fellow, you take more rousing up than any one I ever heard of. Well, no matter; I know, at the same time, you would not hesitate to risk your own life to save a fellow-creature in danger; so we must bear with you. Who *are* to be our companions, captain?"

"We must take Marlin and your stout servant, Mr. Crofton," replied Scruton; "and one of these lads might handle a gun usefully."

"And wouldn't that same be myself, av it plaze ye, captain," replied Mike; "isn't it thankful I'd be, and a fair hand at a shot; barrin' Will wouldn't be called out; seeing he might be fearing his bullet would be hittin' his own father, and no other at all; and he just broken-hearted with that same, and no wonder; God save us!"

"I can conceive the feelings of the poor boy, Captain Scruton," said Harold; "though I don't think it at all probable that we should again fall in with Arncliffe in such an extraordinary manner; therefore, I propose that we leave Will and Mr. Rodney to guard the entrance, while we pelt the fellows from the ramparts. I don't see why we should delay a minute; are all ready?"

Dick and John had been busily employed in knotting together all the stout rope they possessed, which they now rolled up in a coil. "You see, Mr. Crofton," said Dick, "there's John and you, landsmen like, you'd hardly be fit to be running up and down the yards like an old salt; so I've just haul up this here cable, and belay it to a stout tree aloft, to sarve for a guy; it may happen ye've to run down sharp, if the enemy come down on us with a broadside."

Each man was armed with a double-barrelled rifle, powder, and bullets. Captain Scruton and Dick, with the fearlessness of their profession, ascended first, drawing the rope after them, the end of which they secured, with the practical knowledge of sailors, to a stout pine-tree at the edge, and let the rope down, which, though

it fell far short of reaching the foot of the rock, certainly afforded support and confidence to the three landmen, as Dick had named them, who made the ascent after the sailors, by means of the firmly-fixed creeping plants, with tolerable courage, though not without a sensation of sickness, for they had not been accustomed to be thus suspended in mid-air, where the failure of the twig which they grasped must have doomed them to a terrible and certain death, but for the additional protection of the rope.

But one after another they reached the summit safely, landing amidst a wilderness of low bushes, stately pines, and American cedars. Then, clinging to the bushes, Harold ventured to look below, and could calculate the height they had climbed, when he saw the diminutive appearance of the moving, anxious figures in the glén. Their care now was to make out the situation and the force of the enemy. They spread round, and cautiously descended to a lower height, where they could ~~make observations, and yet be near enough to secure~~ their retreat, if they were exposed to danger. Then they finally ascertained that a party of wild, naked, mounted Indians, armed with bows, spears, and tomahawks, were assembled before the rocky wall, through which the pursued had escaped, looking up, as if considering the possibility of the fugitives having ascended there; while some men were dismounted, scattered round, and plainly engaged in searching for the lost trail. The whole number of men certainly did not exceed sixty; but this was a formidable force, which could only be successfully opposed by stratagem; and Harold held a consultation with Scruton, and then said to Dick, —

"Are you up to a famous loud shout, Marlin?"

"Try me, master," answered he; "I've sent my pipe miles afore now."

"And John has had some practice in the view halloo in the hunting-field," continued Harold. "Mike, my boy, when I give the word, mind you scream like a dozen fellows."

"Won't I do the same, yer honor," said the boy, with great glee; "won't I be givin' them the ullaloo to be sarving for their wake, the thaves! And which of them will I be hitting, please sir?"

"I please, Mike, if Captain Scruton does not object," replied Harold, "that each man shall shoot down a horse; except myself, and I will undertake to wing yon swaggering chief, with the feathers in his ugly head."

There was a general murmur of discontent; and Scruton said, "Mercy is thrown away on these scoundrels, Mr. Crofton. If we dismount them, we shall only exasperate them to scale the cliffs, and assail us with the power of numbers."

"Very well, then, Captain Scruton," answered Harold; "if our first round fail to put the fellows to flight, we will direct the second barrel against the men themselves. Now, my men, make ready; and when I hold up my hand, give a jolly good cheer, and fire away, keeping an eye on the effect."

Certainly, when the English cheer reverberated from the rocky heights, it seemed to arise from a little army, and the simultaneous volley was likewise multiplied by the echoes most wonderfully. The chief fell mortally wounded; another man was also prostrated, and three horses overthrown. The panic among the surprised

Indians was tremendous; the dismounted men leaped behind their more fortunate companions; two horsemen stooped to secure the bodies of the fallen; and the next minute all galloped off, except four men who were at some distance, and who, not having seen the instantaneous effect of the attack, now rode up to the spot, looking with dismay at the prostrate horses and the disappearance of their comrades. They talked together for a moment, then pointing upwards where the ascent was not so precipitous, rode towards it.

"Another shout and another shot, my good fellows," said Harold. "Aim at the two first horses only, and spare the men."

The shout and the volley were successful; the two horses in front, and one of the riders fell; but the survivors carried off the dismounted and the wounded man, and promptly followed their companions across the river and through the wood on the opposite side.

"Now, Captain Scruton, shall we make a dash after the cowards?" asked the impatient Harold.

"Of course not," replied Scruton. "A chase is waste time when there is no prize to gain. On the contrary, we should but expose to the enemy the weakness of our force. Sail off quietly, men; you have done your duty; you have put the enemy to flight. It is a victory, Mr. Crofton."

"At all events, Captain Scruton," persisted Harold, "allow us to descend and examine the field of battle. There may be some poor wretch lying wounded."

"Mr. Crofton," answered Scruton, "we all observed that these savages, after the custom of civilized warfare, carried off their wounded. But should they even have left one man behind, we should not be justified in

introducing an enemy into the secret hold of the peaceful Indians. Therefore, Mr. Crofton, please to return."

"I'd like to have gi'en a look at them horses, captain," said John, bending over the bushes. "I niver can bide to see 'em, poor beasts, lying yonder, may-be groaning like Christians; and if my master were willing, one might likely have doctored 'em up a bit."

"We'll hear what Peshoo says about it, John," answered Harold. "It's fair that he should be commander on his own ground, as Captain Scruton is here. Now for the best scramble down we can make; here goes, my boys."

Harold, young and active, soon slung himself down the steep, and was followed by the rest; Dick remaining to the last to cast down the rope, which, he said, was too good to lose, and he didn't need it; he'd make no hand in grappling it to help him down.

All were rejoiced to hear of the dispersion of the Sioux; and as they had carried away their wounded, Peshoo had no apprehension of their return; but granted the request of John to withdraw the stone from the entrance, that he might look after the five horses left lying. Having ascertained that no one was visible, John and his master emerged from the passage, and examined the animals. Of the two which had been shot last, one had been so slightly injured, that it had already risen, and was quietly grazing. Two were quite dead; one was wounded past hope; the fifth had received a ball in the shoulder, which John skilfully extracted, and applied some plaster to the wound, and the horse, after neighing its gratitude for the good office, managed to rise and graze with its companion.

"They'll be fit for work in a day or two, sir," said



John, rubbing his hands exultingly; "and there's blood in 'em; though they're small make I'll warrant 'em stannin' a good bit of work."

Then John stroked their shaggy coats, with a longing desire to brush and trim them into that order and neatness which he thought essential in a horse.

"We'se have to leave 'em here, sir," continued he; "there's no chance of getting 'em through yon rat hole; but I'll answer for't this poor fellow never aims at straying; he's sartin to wait for his doctor; there's that sense in 'em all, sir; and it's likely t'other'll bide with him for company."

Harold proposed to hobble them; but John's compassion for the suffering animals pleaded against the restriction, and they left them at liberty, hoping this small act of humanity might not be without its reward. Peshoo then intimated that they must remain only one day longer in the secure hold, and then depart for the lodges of his people, whither it was plain he was anxious to return. It was with some impatience the younger men submitted to the confinement another day; but they were well supplied with bear's flesh, and they contrived to spend the time profitably in improving themselves in the language of Peshoo, while they in return taught him English words, and instructed him in the principles of religion and morality. Mr. Rodney especially became greatly interested in observing the natural endowments and simple truth of this child of nature.

But there was a general rejoicing when they at last left the retreat, and slowly moved forward with their horses, leaving Peshoo to close the entrance, and to obscure the trail as far as possible. The two horses

were in good condition, one quite able to work, and Dennis, with a reasonable weight of baggage, was placed upon it. The other was led forward, limping a little, but in a fair way to recover and become useful.

The travellers continued to descend through thick woods, till before evening they had reached a more open region, and next morning they saw before them a wide and extensive valley, guarded on the west by the towering mountains, and on the east by high wooded hills, and winding between the ridges far to the south. There was an appearance of solitude and repose in this valley, perfectly refreshing to the hunted fugitives. The fresh green herbage, the spring flowers, the chattering of birds, the rustling of squirrels and opossums in the trees, and the shy deer peeping from the bushes, with the goats or dark huge-horned mountain sheep on the heights, proclaimed a region of plenty; and Mr. Rodney no longer wondered that the Indians who inhabited this oasis in the desert should desire to remain at peace.

The eyes of the Indian glistened as he waved his arms round and said, "The lands of Peshoo's people are pleasant lands. It was not well to go far in the mountains to kill the bear. It is good to say, here the Great Spirit has given enough, has He not given the antelope and the big-horn for food, the cold water when the sun is hot, and the firewood to warm the people when the snow falls. The Black Bear loves to see his people so happy."

"God's name be praised!" said Dennis. "Sure, isn't this country Canaan itself, and we, that murmured in the wilderness, have been brought into the promised land, sinners as we are."

"And that's thrue for you, masther," said Peggy, "for a weary man and an uncontented is yourself, when the pain and the hunger is on you. And you niver thrusting, sure, to Him as always sends back the sun after the storm is gone by. Worra! may-be it's the way with the ould altogether, and don't we hould faster when the staff is breaking away entirely?"

"We're all thankful as we ought, mother dear," said Mary, "for His mercies; but some shows it quiet, and some talks. Sure, won't Will, poor lad, be thanking God in his heart, seeing his father wasn't among you savages. Isn't it that same, Will?"

William blushed as he answered, "Indeed, cousin Mary, I was just then thinking over my vexations, and forgetting his mercies. I was wrong, I know; but I'll try to be what I ought; to have more faith; you set me a good example, Mary."

"That's what she does for us all, lad," said Dick. "A bonnie lass, and a true she is! and that chap will come in for a prize as she takes out mate, God bless her!"

Mary blushed, but did not reply; for she prudently preserved an equal behavior towards her two great admirers, John and Dick, fearing to cause dissension amongst the harmonious community; though the amused observers were of the opinion that Mary's eye rested with more complacency on the frank, rough sailor than, on the dull, honest groom.

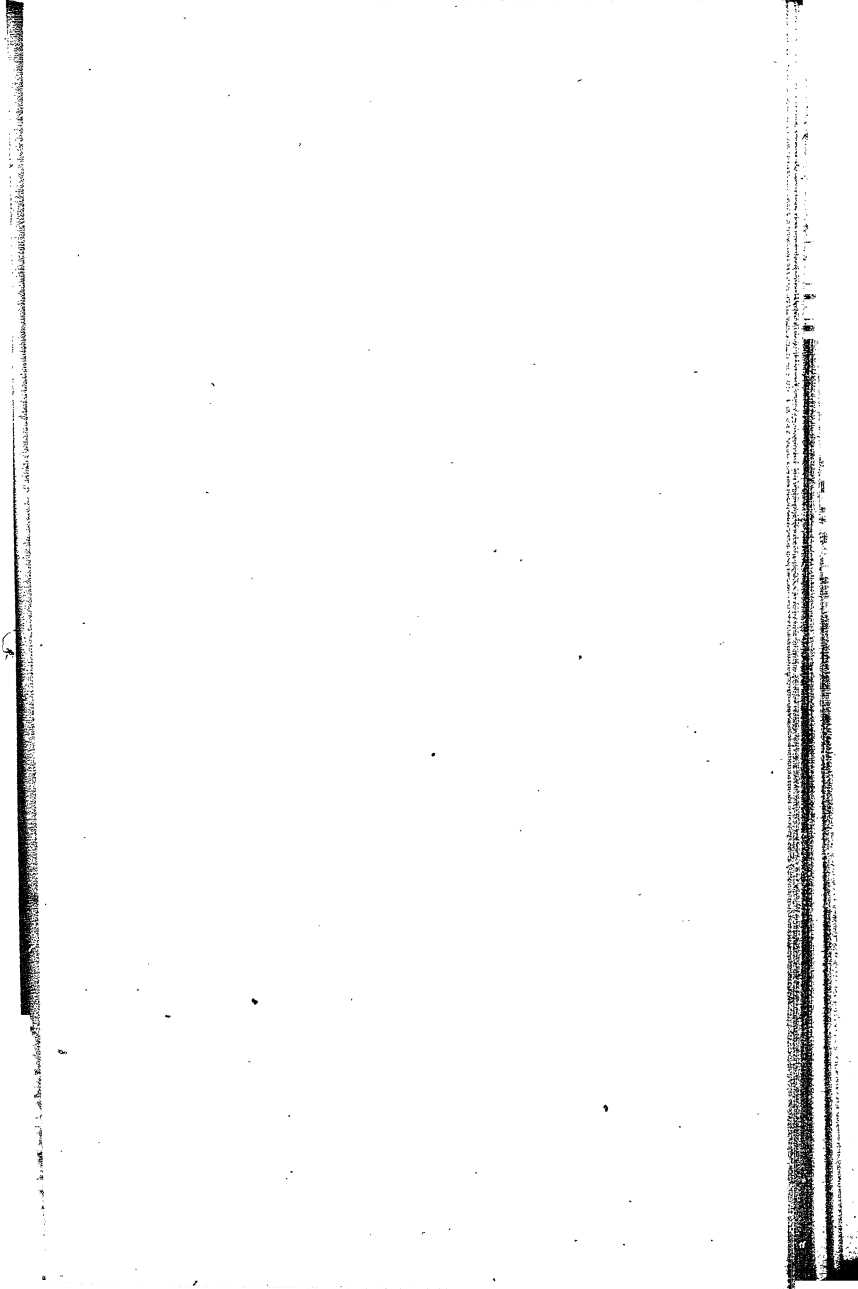
"And after all," said Mr. Rodney to Harold, as they noticed the conversation, "John is at present as much interested in the good points of the two horses as in the charms of Mary, and he will be reconciled to a disappointment more quietly than our fiery friend Dick."

After they had roamed six or seven miles along the pleasant valley, Peshoo, pointing out to Scruton some distant objects, said, "It is good; now Peshoo must go on, to say, my father will see a people from a far land, pale of face, and kind of heart. They are great medicine men. They save Peshoo from death. Shall they not come and eat meat in the lodges of the Black Bear? Then will my father come to meet my brothers, and bring them to smoke the pipe of peace in his lodges. Peshoo has spoken."

"And spoken very well, too," said Scruton, when the speech was interpreted to him. "It is a good plan that he should precede us as an envoy, else who knows but our first greeting might be a shower of arrows. At any rate we shall, by this means, gain time to arrange our defence, which may be needed. But I see Mr. Crofton thinks this Indian has not the usual treachery of his race."

"I would stake my life on his faith," said Harold impetuously. "There is honesty written on his brow; and, moreover, I believe that we shall find his people all friendly towards us."

And Harold shook hands with his Indian friend before he set out, with his usual speed, on his errand.





NOSQUAW'S WELCOME.

111. N. 11.

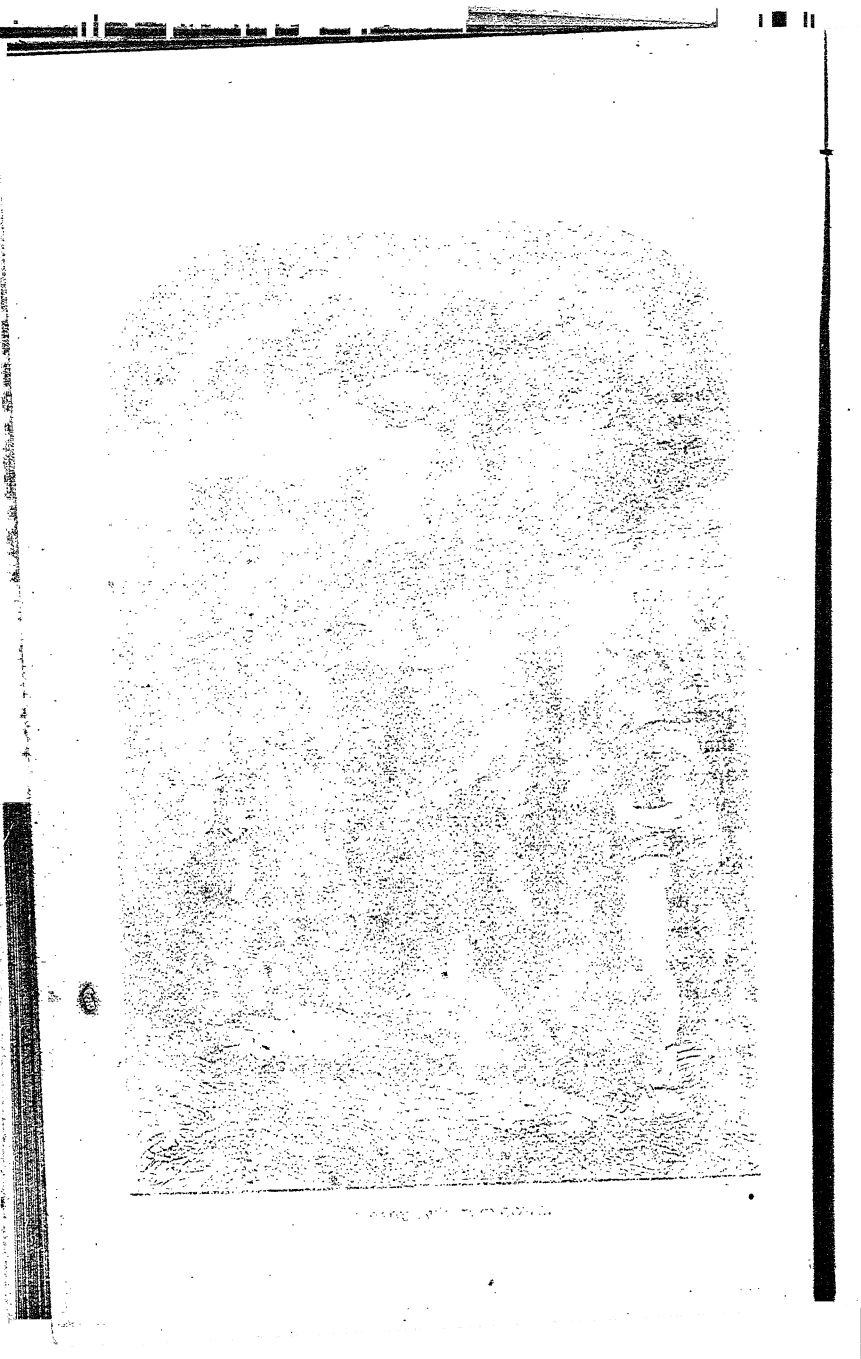
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## CHAPTER XIX.

Dressing for the Reception.—Mosquaw, the Indian Chief.—A Hospitable Welcome.—Indian Life.—A Substitute for the Potatoe.—Sporting in the Woods.

"It is the custom of civilized people," said Captain Scruton, "to appear in full dress on formal occasions like this. It would perhaps be advisable that I should unpack my dress-coat," and he looked ruefully at his torn jacket.

"By all means, Captain Scruton," replied Harold. "We must all do honor to the chief. Down with the portmanteau, John; be alert, my good fellow. There, that coat will do. But—no—I see something more appropriate: that very absurd brocaded silk dressing-gown, which it pleased my senseless valet to pack up. This will have an imposing effect. When we reach a church and a priest I will give this to you, Mary, for a wedding-dress. I insist on you young scoundrels not laughing; I consider myself grand. But, Rodney, you have surpassed me."

Mr. Rodney had clothed himself in his professor's gown, brought out to distinguish him in learned societies, and, with his fine, portly figure, he really looked dignified enough for a prince.

"Ought we not to prepare a present," said Harold. "I think such is the custom. What shall we offer, Captain Scruton?"

"Why do you ask me, Mr. Crofton," answered he. "You know my destitution. The sea, and the Indian robbers have swept away my all. I am a man doomed to misfortune."

"Sure, thin, captain," said Peggy, "it's thanking God ye should be, and not complainin' at all. Wasn't He savin' ye from the say, and the bears, and the Injuns, and the famine, and bringin' ye to plenty and green fields agin, blessed be His name. It's not misfortunate, sure, at all!"

"I say, Rodney," asked Harold, turning over his possessions, "do you think the chief would accept a couple of shirts? It's hardly likely he should have a large stock of linen."

"I think one will be sufficient, Harold," answered Rodney. "One of the characteristics of the Indian is, that he is not given to change; one shirt, and that gold-banded cap, will form a noble offering. Replace the garments you hold; he would not understand how to enter them; neither would he appreciate the comfort they bestow. For my part, I shall present him with this handsome, scarlet, knitted comforter, the work of a fair lady, who has endowed me with many tokens of her industry, and of her esteem for an ungrateful object. I shall not be sorry to lose sight of this memorial of my stony heart."

By the time the travellers were dressed, and had arranged themselves in an imposing line, with the presents ostentatiously displayed, a crowd was seen approaching, and the little band marched slowly forward, in good order, to meet them. At the head of the Indians was a tall, fine-looking old man, wearing a head-dress of colored feathers, and a robe of tanned skins, while round

his neck hung a heavy collar, composed of the paws of the great bear. At his side walked his son, a youth, similarly habited, and immediately after them came a troop of men, more or less clothed in buffalo or deer-skins. In the distance might be discovered a crowd of moving figures, which the travellers pronounced, by a bold figure of speech, to be the representatives of the fair sex, and who would be naturally curious to behold that strange anomaly in creation — a white-faced man, covered with a superfluous and cumbrous variety of garments, as Peshoo would doubtless report.

When near enough to be heard, the old chief, in a dignified manner, gravely addressed his visitors in his own language: — “My sons from a far land are welcome to the lodges of their great father. Mosquaw is a great chief, he has slain many bears; he wears these trophies that the Sioux and the Pawnees may know that he is a brave. But Mosquaw is very pitiful; he does not love to kill the feeble woman or the helpless child; he wears no scalps at his girdle, though his arrows are sharp to slay the bad men that would bring war to his peaceful lodges. The pale-faces come in peace; they are his children. Mosquaw has spoken.”

Harold, who was the most ready speaker, replied in a complimentary oration, arranged with as much skill as his slender stock of words permitted. He eulogized the humanity of the chief, and commended those peaceful habits which were so much beloved by white men; yet as he said this, Harold sighed to think how much evil had been introduced among the native tribes by men who called themselves Christians, and secretly resolved that he at least would act up to his profession.

Then the presents were offered to the chief, with a

petition that he would for a short time extend his hospitality to them; that those who needed it might have an interval of rest. Mosquaw looked with admiration on the gifts, and immediately invested himself with the order of the scarlet scarf, which he flung over his shoulders with some grace; the rest of the treasures he committed to the charge of his followers, while he invited the travellers to follow him to the lodges.

Great was the wonder, the terror, and the admiration excited by the appearance of the strange people; the children screamed, and the women divided their attention between the pale-faces, covered with the beards and whiskers, untrimmed through many weeks, and the extraordinary and, as they thought, unnecessary amount of clothing. Yet many exclamations of admiration were uttered at the sight of Rodney's robes, Harold's splendid brocade, and the small black silk bonnets worn by Peggy and Mary, which were evidently considered to form part of the natural woman.

The travellers looked with pleasure on the picturesque scene of the Indian village now in sight. The lodges were scattered over the sloping side of the valley, facing the east, and protected at the back by the mountains; before them extended the green sward, dotted over with tall timber trees, now wearing the livery of spring. But before they reached the lodges, it was necessary to cross a considerable river, which flowed from the mountains, crossed the valley, and effecting a passage through the opposite green hills, poured down to the lower prairies.

Two large canoes were in waiting for the expected guests, and they were paddled across by the attendants

of the chief, who, with the rest of his people, passed over in smaller canoes, all of which were carefully moored when they landed; and Captain Scruton pointed out to Mr. Rodney and Harold the secure position of the village, protected by the hills at the east, the mighty mountains, and the deep river. It was only accessible at the north, and on this frontier they afterwards discovered that a formidable defence of impenetrable cactus had been planted, and ran a considerable way across the valley.

Mosquaw then announced that some of his people were already employed in erecting the slight lodges necessary for his visitors; and in the mean time he conducted them all to his own dwelling, where they found already spread on mats upon the ground a feast of broiled or baked bear's flesh, served on platters of wicker-work, and some cakes composed of bruised roots; and in defiance of the irrepressible suspicions entertained by the fastidious that the cookery might not be conducted with scrupulous cleanliness, hunger or curiosity induced them to eat all of the cakes, which the wholesome effect of their laborious and healthy life caused them to enjoy; and though bitter, they agreed that this preparation was a very tolerable substitute for bread.

Then the Indian women brought water from the river in buckets of wicker-work; and when the tin drinking-cups of the travellers were produced, renewed expressions of wonder were extorted, for the ingenuity of the simple Indians had failed to produce any thing better than a smaller basket of wicker-work for a drinking-vessel.

"If I can fall on a good bit of wood," said William,

"I can cut some cups out with my knife, and some trenchers too; for it is a disgusting plan for all to eat out of the same dish."

"Sure, William Arneliffe," said Peggy, "isn't it overly nice you're being, and English altogether. Wasn't it in the ould cabin in our own blessed land we were atin' the best of pratees, iv'ry soul of us, out of the big bowl, and thanking God we were to see them there; and wouldn't it be friendly to be atin' good mate with these same savages, having the open heart and hand, the cratur's? And sure wouldn't we be niver mindin' them being badly off for clothes, more's their sorrow!"

After all, they made a hearty repast, rude as it was; then Dick and John unloaded the sound horse, dressed the wound of the sick animal, and hastily fenced off, with bushes cut down from the mountain, a corral or enclosure for the horses, where they left them to feed and rest, and be stared at by the children, who had never yet seen the strange quadruped; though many of the older people remembered bitterly the days when they possessed the useful creatures. Then all assisted at the huts, which were soon completed; and beds of twigs and fresh grass invited the wanderers to sleep, and dream happily of home and distant friends.

Early next morning they gathered outside their wigwams, to look round the new locality, and consider their prospects.

"What are we to do, my boys?" said Harold. "Are we to establish ourselves quietly amongst these Indians, and adopt their life of freedom and idleness? If so, we might as well commence in earnest, and doff

our superfluous draperies. What do you say, Rodney? Are you willing to become a red man?"

"My excellent pupil," replied Rodney, "I am prepared to submit to any extravagance you may propose, perfectly aware that your madness will have but a short existence. I consent, then, to remain here while the frenzy rages, retaining, however, the decent appearance of civilization, and hoping always that, escaping the claws of the bear and the tomahawk of the Indian, I may yet once more see my own beloved retreat, from whence I purpose never more to ramble, God willing."

"Sure then, Mr. Rodney," said Dennis, "it's in my mind that a good dale can be said for this same, seeing it's lying snug and warm it is, and them having mate and a free hand, and needing instrunction altogether, the haythens; and maybe wouldn't be objecting to resave a man of larning into their town, and give him his kaping and lodging at the laste. It's an unquiet life, this we're lading, sir; and, plase God, I'd be changing."

"We must certainly remain to repair and take in provisions," said Scruton; "and really, Mr. Rodney, if the place pleases him, I don't see why we shouldn't leave the old man here. It would lighten our vessel, and we should make better way without him."

"I must know more of the people and their mode of life," said Mr. Rodney, "before I give my consent to abandon the poor old man in this wilderness, leaving him to live and die in the worst kind of solitude, alone among so many."

"Is it lavin' the mather behind?" exclaimed Peggy indignantly. "Then, would ye be harder than the agents themselves, niver caring about the sowls and

bodies of the poor! Worra! worra! wouldn't I be carryin' him on my back, and Mike and Will helpin' sooner nor lavin' him to be eaten up by the haythen savages?"

"And a tough meal he'd be to them, mother," said Dick. "But you be easy, I tell you, the old fellow shall do just as he pleases, and we'll all lend a hand to get through the reefs and sand-banks as we're sartain to run on afore we come to port. So you just keep a canny tongue, honey, while we lay at anchor. Time enough to pipe to quarters when we hear the first gun fired."

"At any rate, we may find some amusement here for a time," said Harold. "For my part I intend as soon as we have attended the levée of our monarch, to take my rifle to the mountain woods, and forage for the camp. Who will join me?"

Dick was engaged in finishing the huts after his own fancy, and John was rubbing down the horses, to make them, he sagely observed, "look like Christian beasts."

"Sure, wouldn't I be willing to make one," said Pat the ragged, looking boldly up to Harold, and waving a stout stick as tall as himself.

"You little rascal," answered Harold, laughing, "what could I do with you? Some of the monkey tribe would be carrying you off, taking you for one of their own cubs dressed in borrowed plumes. Stay at home, my boy, and help the women to fetch water."

Pat looked sullen and rebellious; and Mike said, — "Wouldn't I be helpin' yer honner finely? Wouldn't I be vexin' the baste, and bringin' him out of his den? and wouldn't I be the boy to give him the other shot through his heart, barrin' yer honner wasn't killing him



dead out with yer first bullet? It's a sure shot I am, and that's thru altogether!"

"And you shall be my henchman, Mike," said Harold; "but we must remain at home for this day to become acquainted with our friends. Here comes the terrible Mosquaw with his ugly necklace, most likely to invite us to dinner."

The chief was as profuse in his complimentary speeches as a Spanish host, offering to his guests all his property, and even his people; but they contented themselves with shelter and friendship, and assured him they hoped not only to provide themselves with meat, but even to assist their kind friends.

"But do you bring the fire-water that drives the red man mad?" asked the chief. "I do not wish my people to drink it, and shed blood, like the wandering Sioux and Pawnees. Yet a great chief like Mosquaw might look on the medicine water and remain unmoved."

But Harold prudently declined to produce the "fire-water;" in fact, a small flask of brandy, which was placed amongst the medicine stores of Mr. Rodney, was all the remains of their stock, and this was carefully reserved for emergencies. The chief seemed somewhat disappointed, and Harold rejoiced that he was able to deny him this great temptation to evil which would probably have produced much vexation to themselves. But the curiosity of Mosquaw for unknown things passed away, and he then entertained his guests with stories of the desperate encounters which won him his trophies from the formidable bears. Mr. Rodney proposed, however, that now his party should try the safer and more exciting sport of buffalo-

hunting; but Mosquaw explained that such an expedition must inevitably lead them nearer to the haunts of dangerous tribes; the great security of this secluded valley being owing, in a great measure, to its distance from the buffalo grounds.

The chase was then reluctantly deferred, and in the mean time every hour improved their acquaintance with the language and habits of each other; and Mr. Rodney was convinced that a little instruction bestowed on this intelligent and peaceful people would lead them to the acceptance of that blessed faith, the good fruits of which are "peace on earth, and good-will towards men." The women employed their time in cooking, and in repairing the damages the journey had effected, in the garments of Mike and Pat especially, who had no surplus stock to fall back on. They were usually surrounded by a crowd of wonder-stricken and admiring Indian women, with whom they soon began to hold intimate communion.

William, after consulting the authorities, and at the earnest desire of Dennis, dug a patch of ground on a sunny slope, and planted in it the small remains of the potatoes, which Rodney believed would grow rapidly in this soil and climate. But this state of repose could not last long, for the noonday repast of the travellers was attended by so many visitors, that it was plain they must soon seek fresh supplies, or throw themselves entirely on the hospitality of the Indians, who showed no desire to seek food till it was absolutely necessary, but, with the usual improvidence of wild tribes, alternately feasted and fasted, indolently careless of the morrow.

Therefore, knowing their visitors had not yet exhausted their meat, the Indians were reluctant to join

them in the chase; and when, at length, they set out, Peshoo was the only red man who was willing to accompany Harold and Mike. Mr. Rodney remained to botanize on this new ground; he had been tempted to this by the Indian women pointing out to him the plant from the root of which the cakes were made; and in its spring livery he recognized it as *Psoralea esculenta*, the root somewhat resembling the radish in form and the potatoe in substance, though, even after baking, the taste was rather bitter. Pat, who was the attendant of Mr. Rodney, dug up a basketful of these roots to take to Peggy, who speedily roasted them. The women were much gratified with the experiment, and ordered the boy to collect a store for present use, "seeing they'd be much like the raal pratee itself, barrin' the forrin shape."

Harold and his attendant Mike carried each a rifle, and Peshoo was armed with his bow and spear. He guided them over tortuous paths through the ascending wood to a considerable height to reach a grassy glade, through which the narrow stream flowed which became a river below, and on the banks he pointed out to them the footsteps of animals.

"This is the bear," he said; "he is very sly; he hides from the red man. See here, the elk; he is swift; he flies like the wind. And this, the bighorn of the small heart; he runs to the river, to the wood, to the foe; he is blind. The fire-spear of my pale brother will kill many bighorn."

"That would be poor sport, Peshoo," said Harold. "Is the Puma to be found here?"

But Peshoo "knew not" the Puma, till Harold, on a leaf of his pocket-book, sketched the form of the ani-

mal, which he recognized by the Indian name of *Gouazouara*, and which the Americans call the panther.

"The Gouazouara," he said, "is fierce and cowardly; he watches for the red man in the thick wood; he springs upon him and drinks his blood. He comes not to the mountains; he hides in the forests when the sun shines at mid-day," and he pointed towards the south.

"I should like to have a shot at the long-named beast," said Harold; "but just now my business is to look after something eatable. Are we to follow this trail, Peshoo?"

"See where my brothers must hide," said the Indian, placing Harold and Mike each behind the thick trunk of a tree; then adding, "Peshoo go away round, round, to drive the moose and the mosquaw to the fire-spear of his pale brothers."

"But you must also choose a tree for a shield, Peshoo," said Harold, "or we might shoot you instead of the deer."

"The pale face shoots well," answered he; "he shoots straight; he will not shoot Peshoo, for he will be down the mountain;" and stealing softly through the woods opposite to the station of the hunters, he disappeared, leaving Harold rather dissatisfied with this irregular mode of sporting, though he thought it prudent to yield to the direction of the Indian; and therefore Mike and he retired to the protection of their respective trees.

"This is cowardly sport, Mike," said he; "we don't give the poor animals a chance. Nothing like an open field and a stirring chase, fair and honest."

"But where would we be gettin' the mate to kape us alive, yer honner," replied Mike, "av we were bein'

so purlite to the bastes? and sure wouldn't every sowl of yon lazy haythens be lying down and dying altogether of the famine, barrin' we didn't bring the mate to their mouths, the craturs? Musha! but it's an asy life they're ladin', it is!"

For nearly an hour they remained at their post, watching; Harold very restless, and muttering resolutions to follow his own plans for the future; while Mike climbed his tree to seek for nests, and gathered and tied up bundles of dry wood for fuel, looking from time to time at his gun to see that all was ready. At length they heard a rustling in the opposite thickets, and raising their guns, waited to see a herd of deer, one after another, spring gracefully from the bushes and make towards the water. The sportsmen had time to fire both barrels before the terrified animals fled, leaving two of their number dead on the field, and such a track of blood, that Peshoo, who immediately joined them, told them to remain with the spoil, while he pursued the wounded deer.

## CHAPTER XX.

Pat in a Mischief. — A Fall from a Tree. — The Spoil of the Chase. The Bighorn. — An Expedition to the Plains. — The Enemy in Sight. — An inglorious Retreat. — An unhappy Sneeze. — The Capture.

PESHOO had not been long gone, when Harold was startled by hearing a shrill cry at some distance. "Some accident has happened to the poor man," he said. "It won't be Paychew, by no manes, yer honner," replied Mike; "isn't it Pat himself, the gossoon, in some thrick? sure isn't he always that same, worra! always afther the mischafe entirely?"

But there was distress in this cry which assured Harold it was not uttered from mischief; and hastily reloading their guns, they abandoned the game and set out in the direction of the cries. When they reached the spot from whence the alarm had proceeded, they saw it had been really sounded by Pat, who was perched on the extremity of a slender branch of a tall American cypress tree, which a heavier weight than his must have inevitably snapped; while a large bear had ascended the trunk of the tree, and was growling and grinning furiously. As soon as the terrified lad saw his friends, he cried out, —

"Musha! musha! Mike, darlin', will ye be puttin' yer knife in him behind his back, the baste? and will ye be gettin' my shillala out of his ugly mouth, and him



CHAPTER IV.

The first of the bear-hunters was a man of middle age, with a weathered face and a pair of eyes that had seen many a hard day's work. He was dressed in a simple, practical outfit, and he carried a rifle slung over his shoulder. He was the leader of the party, and he had a way of speaking that was both firm and kind.

They had been out for several days now, and they had not yet seen a bear. The weather was not good, and the ground was very muddy. The men were getting impatient, but the leader was patient. He knew that a bear would come, and he was sure that they would find it. He had a plan, and he was going to stick to it. He was a man of his word, and he was a man of his word.

It was a dark day, and the men were huddled together, trying to keep warm. The leader was looking around, and he was looking for a sign of a bear. He was looking for a sign of a bear, and he was looking for a sign of a bear. He was looking for a sign of a bear, and he was looking for a sign of a bear. He was looking for a sign of a bear, and he was looking for a sign of a bear. He was looking for a sign of a bear, and he was looking for a sign of a bear.

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PAT'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE BEAR.



aten it altogether? Och! the villain, won't I be gettin' his skin for aunt, Mike, seein' I was hittin' him first?"

The coolness of the boy, almost in the very jaws of the bear, amused Harold, in spite of his critical situation; he ordered Mike to stand aside, and fearful of injuring the bold boy, he cautiously directed a shot into the side of the animal, as it was awkwardly wheeling round to descend head-forward. The bullet took effect, and the wounded bear roared frightfully, and shook the tree till poor Pat lost his hold and fell. Fortunately, Harold was near enough to catch hold of his ragged garments, which, however, gave way; and though his fall was broken, he was uncomfortably deposited in a thicket of thorny bushes. There was scarcely time for Harold to discharge his second barrel more effectually into the jaws of the descending bear, before it reached the ground, when, bleeding and shrieking with agony, it rushed blindly on the prostrate boy, striking its sharp claws into his rough, ragged jacket, and lacerating his back. Seeing his extreme danger, Harold rushed forward and plunged his knife to the hilt in the shoulder of the beast, which then turned on him, and he had only time to swing himself into a tree, and call on Mike to fire, before the bear was ascending after him.

Mike had a bold heart, and was a sure shot; his first ball prostrated the beast, then he walked up and coolly blew out the brains to make all sure. "We must charge again, Mike," said Harold, descending from his refuge, "for this vexatious urchin may bring more bears on us. Now let us see how much there is left of you, you troublesome little dog."

The boy rose, looking very pale, the blood trickling

from his back, and looking round rather wildly; he, at last, picked up his favorite shillala, and kicking his fallen foe, said,

“Wouldn’t it be altogether spite in him to be atin’ my shillala, and it not being Christian mate at all? But sure, Mike, wasn’t I thumping him nately, afore he tore my trousers, and me never having another!”

It appeared from Pat’s story that, with his usual pertinacity, he had secretly followed the sportsmen; and, threading among the bushes, leaving his tatters on his way, he had inadvertently come on the lair of the bear, which, at first, had contented itself with giving him the gentle pat, which had torn his ragged garments away from his limbs. The reckless boy, instead of making his escape as speedily as possible, had retaliated by giving the bear a thrashing with his stout stick. This was not meekly received by the powerful beast, which erected itself on its hind-legs to execute revenge; and if Pat had not been so skilful in climbing trees, he would assuredly have fallen in the encounter. When he saw his foe climbing after him, he thought he might be excused for crying out for help; and when his danger was imminent, he had escaped by venturing to the extremity of the slender arm of the tree, along which he knew Bruin could not follow him.

“And didn’t I aggravate him,” continued he, “and call out to him, and tell him he was a big thafe, and a bloody villain, and he’d better be makin’ his will, seein’ it was his life I’d be havin’ altogether, the spalpeen?”

The appearance of the triumphant boy was not that, however, of a conqueror; for, except the remains of his sleeves, the covering of one leg, and a fragment of shirt, he was as much unclothed as his Indian play-

fellows, and as utterly regardless of the fact. The last piece of his shirt was used to bind up his wound, and he was then commanded to keep close to the rest, — the very thing the lad wished for.

By this time Peshoo, attracted by the firing, came up to them, and looked complacently at the spoil, which held out so large a promise of feasting.

“We have much meat to take to the lodges,” he said; “it is far to go; the mosquaw and the moose are heavy, and my brothers are not strong; it is well that we should set out.”

Harold shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the bear; he enjoyed the sport of shooting the game, but he certainly did not enjoy having to carry it away. It was then proposed that a messenger should be despatched to bring up a relay of Indians to be the porters; as there was no fear but that they would gladly leave their indolent ease to obtain an immense supply of meat, without the trouble of shooting it. Peshoo dragged the bear to the spot where they had left the deer, a third animal being now added, which he had overtaken and despatched. This last he placed on his shoulders, and set out to bring up his people, while Harold and the boys rested beside the other game.

But the sport of the day was not yet concluded: for, as the hunters reclined under the trees, Harold caught sight of a little herd of animals on a grassy height within shot; and, pointing them out to Mike, they succeeded in bringing down two of the argali, or bighorns, the flesh of which is so much esteemed for its venison-like flavor. They were nearly as large as a young cow, and the horns, curiously twisted, and

broad enough to cover the forehead, were above three feet in length.

Great was the delight of the Indians when they came up, to see the bighorns, in addition to the heap of game; for not only the meat was excellent, but the horns were useful for domestic utensils; and the procession to the lodges was met by the chief and his people with due honor.

"The pale-faces are wise," said Mosquaw graciously; "they know all things; they have always much meat. They say, 'To-day we will kill the deer and the bear; to-morrow we shall not find them.' It is good. The red man is not wise; he eats to-day all his meat; he says, 'We will hunt to-morrow.' To-morrow, he no longer finds the deer or the bear; he must fast. The red man dare not ask the Great Spirit to send him plenty and peace. My pale brothers must stay with me; my people shall build them pleasant lodges; they wish to learn, that they also may be wise, — may know the Great Spirit; then they will not fear the paws of the bear, nor the scalping-knife of the Sioux or the Comanche. Mosquaw has spoken well."

Rodney had been really engaged, during the absence of the hunters, in conversing with the chief and some of the most intelligent of his young men, and endeavoring to instruct them in the advantages of civilization, the laws of morality, and the simple doctrines of that pure religion which is the only firm foundation of wisdom and power on earth, and eternal happiness in a future life. The men listened eagerly, and comprehended wonderfully. A religion of peace and love suited their quiet habits; and they were delighted to grasp the hope of obtaining this perfect

peace in a world where fear was unknown. No wonder, then, that they should wish to retain with them the men who could at once protect them from aggression, provide for their daily wants, and lead them to everlasting happiness. But Rodney was alarmed at this suggestion; he was by no means willing to spend his whole life in this lovely but savage wilderness; and he endeavored to compromise the matter, by promising to remain till he had taught them the good things which, by the help of God, they must retain.

The distressed condition of Pat, however little it affected his own comfort, occasioned lamentation and reproaches from the women, and much amusement to Dick and John. But Harold bestowed on the boy some worn garments of his own; and Peggy declared that Mary was so clever at "shaping," that she would soon fit him out like a Christian, if he would promise to behave as he ought, and not run after the gentlemen into the woods.

"We mean to try the open plains next, Peggy," said Harold, "where the young monkey will have no chance of skulking after us unseen. John says that in another day or two the horses will be in fine condition for riding; then, Rodney, we must have a scamper, and see what the lower world, beneath these eternal hills, looks like."

When Mosquaw fully understood the plan, he said, gravely: "The prairies are bad; there the Pawnee, the Sioux, the Comanche, ever ride over the plains on all sides; they seek guns and scalps; they will shoot my pale brothers to carry off their scalps, or keep them as slaves to guard their horses. They are very cruel; they cut their slaves with the knife; they tear their

flesh; they are Gouazouaras. It is good for my brothers to hunt in the woods."

But the restless desire of Harold for a variety of sport was not to be repressed; and some days after, he collected a party for a long expedition over the intermediate hills to the sloping grounds below. The two horses were led out, and mounted by Rodney and Harold. Their followers on foot were John, William, Mike, Mosquaw, with a dozen of the young Indians. The pale-faces carried their rifles; the red men, bows and quivers. The game was to be any thing they could meet with; buffaloes were expected; deer were certain; turkeys<sup>3</sup> possible. The perfumes of spring scented the air; the cries of the birds, though not always melodious, amused the ear; and the bright blossoms of the season touched the rugged hills and dark bushes with patches of beauty.

"If it were always thus, Rodney," said Harold, "I believe I could get through another month at the lodges; but a wet day and an empty larder would be intolerable."

"And even a full larder, Harold," answered Rodney, "when you have no choice, is revolting; when, like the Israelites in the wilderness, you eat flesh 'until it come out of your nostrils, and it be loathsome to you.' Alas! 'why came we forth out of Egypt?'"

"Be comforted, Rodney," said Harold, laughing; "I mean to shoot a fat turkey for you. Or, see that pool covered with water-fowl. Perhaps a pair of ducks might satisfy your fastidious appetite, seasoned with these wormwood leaves, which the women politely term sage."

"It is an artemisia, certainly," answered Rodney,



plucking a leaf, and putting to flight a flock of prairie fowl. "Never mind, Harold; they are all flown now! Well, the birds did look tempting; fattened partridges, doubtless, with a game flavor from feeding on these young buds. We were not prompt, my boy!"

"Because, Rodney," answered Harold, "a keen sportsman should keep his eyes and ears open, and his mouth shut. I shall not speak again till I have bagged my first bird."

But Mike, who was a real sportsman, and never missed an opportunity, had already shot a brace of the prairie birds, which were as large as full-grown fowls; Harold then turned his attention to the ducks, and shot three couple before the unaccustomed attack put them to flight. The reeds were, however, filled with nests, and Mike promised to collect a store of eggs as they returned, as they were not convenient carriage in the game bags.

They had now reached the lower grounds, and found these long-desired plains almost as inconvenient for equestrian excursions as the rough mountains, for they were for many miles covered with the sage bushes, united by the tough tendrils of some creeping plant now bursting into white flowers, mingled with the beautiful blue convolvulus. Urging their horses over, or through the entangled maze, they proceeded to the south-east, and came at length on a clearer spot, when they rode pleasantly over the thick grass, shaded by tall trees; and, delighted with the freedom they felt, the two friends, in great glee, dashed forward in a gallop, forgetting even to look after game, in the excitement of the ride.

At length, in compassion for their followers, they halted, and looked round as they rested. Harold drew out his pocket glass to have a wider view, and then suddenly cried out, with a look of dismay, "A troop of Indians is in sight, mounted and armed."

"Let us turn and flee, my good fellow," said Rodney. "I have no mind to be scalped, and we must signal the poor men on foot, that they may find some avenue of escape from the certainty of being seized by these flying savages. Not a word, boy! onward!"

As they galloped forward to their friends, they waved to them to turn round; and the watchful Indians, readily interpreting the signal, fled at once with precipitation. Then they stopped suddenly; and when the equestrians came up to them, they found that the chief had stepped into one of the burrows of the prairie dog, and sprained his ankle till he was unable to walk, and he was too heavy to be carried by his attendants.

In a moment Harold had alighted. "Mount my horse and away," said he, after he had described what he had seen. "You are old; I am young and active; I will escape through the mountain woods, where the horseman cannot easily follow me."

"It is well," said the chief, calmly, as his men assisted him to mount. "I am the father of my people. The Sioux, the Comanche, the Pawnee thirst for the scalp of the great Mosquaw. They must not wear it."

Then he rode swiftly away, followed by his attendants scarcely less swiftly. For a moment Rodney looked confounded with the affair; then Harold lifted Mike behind his tutor, saying, "Be off, Rodney, the

lad will only impede our escape; carry him with you. Depend on our cunning; we will follow as soon as the coast is clear. Here, take my game-bag."

With a deep groan, and a tear glistening in his eye, Rodney left his beloved pupil, who followed with John and William, feeling that all contrivance must emanate from himself, for William was unpractised in field-craft, and John was somewhat dull and heavy; and he now almost wished he had detained the shrewd little Mike in preference.

He looked anxiously round as he retraced the beaten track, for a convenient opening to reach the hills without exposure to the observation of the Indians, who must be gaining on them; but he saw with vexation that the sloping hills that led to the woods lay so much exposed to view that it would be impossible to reach them unnoticed. Then glancing behind, he saw that the dark body advancing would soon be near enough to discover them.

"There is but one course for us, Will," said he. "We must wind as well as we can among these taller sage-bushes, and hide ourselves beneath the thicket till the Indians pass. Are you both loaded?—for if they detect us, we must make a struggle for our lives. Take care you leave no trail leading to the bush; but spring forward into the midst from the beaten track we have kept."

As they had carefully retrodden their first track, Harold trusted that the crafty Indians might be misled, at all events; and now vigorously springing amidst the tough tall bushes, they crouched and wound beneath them for about a hundred yards. Then settling themselves in a thick covert, Harold ventured

to make an opening through which he might observe, while secure himself, the movements of the formidable Indians.

It was not long before the trampling of the horses fell on his ear, accompanied by a tremendous whoop from the riders, which was, he concluded, the war-cry of the people, and signified that they were on the war-path — some scalping expedition; and Harold almost feared, from the vindictive triumph of the yell, that they were exulting at the discovery of the trail. Soon he heard voices, and even distinguished and understood some of the words, which merely differed in accentuation from the dialect of his peaceful friends. He made out that they had struck on the trail, which they believed to be that of their enemies the Sioux, or the Black Feet, both of which tribes they seemed to regard with bitter hatred.

Already Harold had numbered about fifty men ride past, all painted with bright colors, and wearing buffalo-skin cloaks, some carrying muskets as well as spears and tomahawks; and he breathed a sigh of thankfulness, trusting that they should now escape. William lay perfectly still and silent, but John was awkward and uneasy in his unaccustomed position, and in his restlessness nervously plucked the leaves of the bushes which surrounded him, and the pungent, volatile aroma of the artemisia, thus set free, acted on his olfactory nerves, and caused him to sneeze. The endeavor to repress this unlucky emission only rendered it more audible and startling, and the attention of the Indians nearest to them was immediately arrested. They halted, and rode directly into the bush towards the spot where the unlucky men lay concealed.

"It's all up now, my men," said Harold. "Rise and stand boldly to your arms, but don't fire a shot, unless they fire on us; and I will try if I can make terms with the fellows."

Then plucking a branch of the unlucky sage-bush, Harold sprung to his feet, followed by the other two men; he extricated himself from the tangled bushes, while the Indians, stupefied by the sudden appearance of white men, remained inactive, watching for more to follow. Harold had thus time to walk up to one, who, by his scarlet blanket and head-dress of brilliant feathers, he judged to be the chief, and with his pacific sign in one hand, and his rifle in the other, he said boldly in the Indian dialect, "Is it peace or war?"

"The Pawnee people hold no words of peace with the pale-faced tyrants," replied the chief, vindictively. "My people spit on them. They make them slaves; they thirst for their blood. Give your fire-powder. The Pawnees want powder and balls to kill their enemies the Sioux; then they will come to their lodges to dance the scalp dance, and to burn the treacherous pale-faces."

As twenty guns were levelled at them already, Harold, in hopes of obtaining time, at any rate, delivered up his powder-flask, and a bag of bullets which John carried. The chief in the mean time had selected a dozen of the least warlike of his people, put the rifles of the prisoners into their hands, and ordered them to return to the lodges with the unfortunate captives.

"My warriors will return with many Sioux prisoners," said the chief; "then the pale-faces shall see how brave the red man is in bearing the knife and the fire, and my

people will see the pale-face tremble, and hear him cry out, when it is his turn to die."

This was a dismal prospect, and Harold was thankful that John, who was far from heroic, did not understand the words of the chief. William was composed when he heard his sentence; and now, while the war party proceeded onward towards the north, the dejected prisoners were placed behind three of the mounted guard, an ignominy greatly felt by Harold and John, William submitting with more humility to his degrading position.

"It is a comfort to think, Will," called out Harold in English, "that the rest have had time to escape. Keep up your heart, my boy, I have some hope yet. The garrison is not likely to be strong just now; and if our friend Mosquaw should bring up his forces, we may break our bonds before the Pawnee chief return to inflict the tortures he threatened us with."

## CHAPTER XXI.

The Pawnee Lodges. — Another English Slave. — The lawless Arncliffe. — The Midnight Signal. — The Flight and the Pursuit. — Arncliffe's Welcome. — The Fate of the Dressing-Box. — First Signs of Repentance.

THE men who had charge of the prisoners were brutal and stupid wretches; they reviled the unfortunate Europeans for being the cause of their losing a share of the plunder and scalps of the Sioux, and threatened them with unheard-of tortures. All their taunts were, however, received in prudent silence, Harold and William employing themselves in considering various plans for escaping from these merciless savages.

It was night before they reached a number of scattered huts, formed like beehives, and covered with the long prairie-grass, into one of which, through a narrow entrance, the captives were thrust, watched by a crowd of women, who looked on the strangely-clad pale-faces with exclamations of wonder.

For a quarter of an hour they remained speechless and stupefied, but were then roused by the sound of heavy blows and groans, followed by curses, uttered in the English language. Harold started up, and rushing to the entrance, he cried out loudly, "Who speaks English in this den of thieves?"

William, pale and agitated, caught his arm, and said,

"Oh! Mr. Crofton, I know who it is; that is the voice of my unfortunate father."

Moved with compassion towards the amiable lad, though he heartily disliked the unnatural father, Harold addressed a woman before the hut, who was nursing a baby, asking her why the pale-face cried out.

"Pale-face say to red man, he will not work," answered the woman. "He loves not to rub the horses, to feed them; he speaks loud words; then the red man laughs, and beats down the pale slave."

"Why did not the Pawnee chief torture and burn the pale-face?" asked Harold.

"Pale-face is the slave of the Pawnee," answered she. "Pawnee sleeps, slave brings wood, he makes fire, he cooks buffalo meat. He cannot go away; he cannot walk," and the woman imitated the halt of a lame man, to the great amusement of her sister squaws. Harold remembered the accident of Arncliffe, which had probably been the cause of his being reduced from the condition of a chief to that of a slave; for it is necessary that an Indian chief should be vigorous in body and imposing in appearance, as well as superior to his tribe in mental endowments.

"This infirmity must be the cause of his still being a prisoner, Will," said Harold, "or, with his sagacity, he might have escaped from this loosely-kept garrison, as I trust we shall do."

"Not without my father, Mr. Crofton," replied William, imploringly. "I must endeavor, certainly, to effect his escape, and you are very kind, sir: surely you will assist me?"

"You are a good lad, Will," said Harold; "but this will sorely cramp our movements; and you must see



that your father, like all evil spirits, carries ill-luck with him. But I will see him, boy, and try if I can find a spark of grace in him."

William sighed; he did not anticipate any change for the better in his lawless father; and no obstruction being offered to the captives wandering through a camp which swarmed with watchful women, children, and aged men, they walked up to the corral for the horses, where they saw a man, with the scanty remains of English garments clinging to his wasted limbs, unbridling the horses of their guards, rubbing them down with grass, and turning them, one after another, into the enclosure.

"My groom shall help you, friend," said Harold to the astonished man, directing John's attention to the work, which he readily stepped forward to share; for John only recognized the Indians as fellow-creatures when he saw them the owners of horses.

"Who are you," said the man, "who have been unlucky enough to fall into the hands of robbers and murderers?"

"You know who we are, Arncliffe," answered Harold. "We have had, like yourself, the misfortune to be taken prisoners; but we are not without hope, for God is with His people everywhere."

"Can you fancy God is here, among these demons?" said the unhappy man. "You must have strong faith. And you have brought Will here too! What for did he leave England, where men believe they have souls to be saved, to come and fling himself among the heathens?"

"He owes all his misfortunes to you," replied Harold. "He followed you from England; he follows you still;

never giving up the hope that he may at last regain a father, and a wandering soul to God."

"I'm not worth looking after," exclaimed Arncliffe bitterly. "A cripple, evil-minded, lost wreck of a man. Nothing can save me, body or soul. I have tried to aggravate these savages till they should strike me dead; but they won't; they'd rather keep me a tortured slave. What are you whimpering for, lad? Think of yourself, and get off, if you can: never heed me."

"It's for you I grieve and pray, father," answered William, "and I believe God will hear me. Mr. Crofton is planning a mode of escape, and you must go with us. And once free from these savages, surely, father, you will not leave me again, to return to this life of wickedness and misery; surely you will turn to God, and live the life of a Christian?"

"You talk like an idiot," said the man impatiently. "What can I do? I had gold; it was stolen from me. I had power and strength; they were taken away from me. I had freedom and plenty; all is gone! I am an outcast. Man and God disown me. Death is all that is left to me."

"Death is not an end, but a beginning, Arncliffe," said Harold. "Are you prepared to enter on that new life, which is to extend to eternity? Is your mind subdued to obedience, your soul raised to love, towards that God, who spared not His own Son, to extend hope and salvation to the sinner who believes, and loves, and obeys?"

"I believe," said the man in a low voice; "but I dare not say that I love, where I have scorned; and I have never obeyed. It is now too late."

"It is never too late, father," said William. "Remember the cry of the penitent publican, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' You used to like to hear mother read the parables once, before you took to gambling and bad company."

"She was too good for me, lad," answered the father. "She learnt at last to shun me; and naught has weighed so hard on me as the thought of my bad conduct to her."

"Her last words were a prayer for you, father," said the boy, "and a command to me to follow and bring you back to God."

"And her prayer has turned into a curse. Look at me, lad!" said Arncliffe.

"Not so," answered he. "This affliction is a blessing, father. It is only through much tribulation we reach the kingdom of God."

"Thy mother has made thee like herself," said the man; "fitter for another world than to fight thy way in this, among rogues and cheats. Thou'rt over soft and green ever to do good to thyself, lad."

"Don't speak so lightly of serious things, Arncliffe," said Harold. "You have no reason to believe that the way of sin is that of prosperity."

"Maybe I've been unlucky, Mr. Crofton," replied he; "but I've seen some worse than I am leading a jolly life."

"Come, come, Arncliffe," said Harold, "you are a man of sense; you are quite aware that the jolly life of the wicked is not one of happiness and security. Do they not know that adversity would banish all their jovial associates? Do they not tremble to think on the inevitable hour of sickness and of death?"

"Does not every one?" replied Arncliffe. "Yet no; she didn't: but she was always half-way to heaven when she was living, and I was always half-way down to perdition, and we've both gone on in our own roads."

"God be merciful to you, sinner as you are!" said Harold, "as He has been and will be to the greatest of sinners. We can only pray for you."

Here they were interrupted by their guards, who ordered them into the hut, into which Arncliffe silently followed them. No food was given to them, but, fortunately, John's game-bag was well stored with solid slices of roast mutton and venison, and the hungry party supped heartily, and, with thanks to God, lay down on the bare earth to sleep. Harold had slept for two hours when William, who had been more watchful, awoke him, saying, "Would you please to listen, Mr. Crofton; I think I have heard Pat's whistle."

A low, bird-like whistle sounded at that moment, and Harold, springing up, said, "They have followed us! Look alive, my men. Arncliffe, you go with us; tell us, is there a chance for us to join our friends unseen, and thus avoid bloodshed?"

"You can do it, Mr. Crofton," replied the man; "for you are all young and active, and the Indians are heavy sleepers. I cannot escape, crippled as I am, on foot; but I think I can get horses from the corral."

"But wouldn't that be a theft?" asked William.

"Are you mad?" said his father. "Havn't they got your guns? But, as you like. It can be no theft to take my own horse that they robbed me of."

"Certainly not," answered Harold. "And at all

events, we might each borrow a horse, and, when we have got a start, drive him back again. It is a case of life and death, Will. Now, who should go out to reconnoitre?"

"You, certainly," said Arncliffe. "Will is over timid, and that man of yours over dull. You'd better have had Mike; he's a sharp lad. I'll hobble off to the corral, and fetch out the beasts to you."

Harold left the hut, and stole softly through the thick trees that encompassed the encampment, towards the spot from whence the signal proceeded, and when he had successfully attained a safe distance, he ventured to answer the signal by a low echo. On this a form started up from among the tall grass, and the welcome brogue of Pat was heard through the darkness.

"Will you all be here? Isn't it I myself will guide you out of this. And, sure, wouldn't we be able to fight them; barrin' that Mr. Rodney, he's again that same altogether."

"God bless you, boy," said Harold, joyfully. "Stay here till I bring up the others." And rapidly and cautiously he retrod his steps, and soon returned with his two companions. By this time they heard the trampling of the horses, which could not be muffled; and it was evident the Indians also had heard the sound, for whoops and cries resounded through the encampment. Then torches blazed up, and showed the dark figures, careless of clothing, rushing about wildly to search for guns and bows. Already some arrows whizzed through the air at random, and happily without doing harm. Harold hastened to meet Arncliffe, who, mounted himself, led three

bridled horses, and, following Pat through the trees, they came up immediately with Mr. Rodney and Mosquaw on the two horses, and Captain Scruton, Dick, Mike, and a body of the friendly Indians, all armed, and on foot.

"All right, Rodney, you plucky old fellow," said Harold. "Leap on behind me, Will, and give Captain Scruton your horse. Now, my lads, flight and not fight, if you please, for it would be cowardly to slaughter these poor wretches, who are now the weaker party."

"Better have silenced the dogs," muttered Arncliffe; "they can bite as well as bark, and they'll do it."

Captain Scruton started when he heard the voice, and said, "Is that unlucky fellow here again, Mr. Crofton? How can we ever expect to come into port with such a Jonah among us?"

"But we cannot throw him overboard, Captain Scruton," answered Harold. "Besides, the man has helped us, and mounted us; we must not desert him. Hallo! Arncliffe, are they after us? I surely hear horses."

"Ay, ay, you hear them, sure enough," said he. "I made a regular *stampede*, drove them all out of the corral, as soon as I'd secured what I wanted. They'll not easy gather them together again."

"It was by no means a bad *ruse*," said Scruton, "and quite fair, under the circumstances. The man does not want sense, Mr. Crofton, if he were only amenable to authority."

The swift-footed followers of Mosquaw kept pace with the horses, and when Dick and Mike were weary they were taken by the horsemen *en croupe*. Cries and arrows followed the fugitives; but the cries gradually

grew fainter, and the arrows never came near the pursued, as they pushed rapidly forward on their beaten track, while their followers, bewildered in the darkness, constantly deviated, and had to pause and listen for the trampling to guide them.

Still it was plain that the vexatious, though not dangerous pursuit was kept up; and the chief, uneasy about the security of his peaceful lodges, directed the horsemen to separate and make several trails to mislead their enemies, while those on foot sought the mountain woods, and by various paths reached the lodges.

Mr. Rodney then told Harold that on Mosquaw's return to the lodges on the preceding day, he had immediately sent out spies to watch the Indians, and report their movements. They returned to say that they were a party of Pawnees on the war-path, probably against the Sioux or Black Feet. Still it was not till some hours had elapsed that Mr. Rodney became fearful that captivity or death had overtaken Harold and his attendants; and the friendly chief, equally anxious, planned an expedition to the spot where the tribe usually had temporary lodges, and which he knew his own small and unpractised force might safely besiege, when the warriors of the tribe were employed in their distant expedition. But now Mr. Rodney suggested that, as it was necessary, for the peace of their friendly allies, that their interference in the escape of the prisoners should remain unsuspected, every means must be used to conceal the fact.

They reached the valley by different paths, the crafty Indians using every art to obliterate or disguise the trail, and, to the great joy of the weak garrison left at the lodges, were once more united without loss. And

though Arncliffe was certainly not warmly welcomed, he was tolerated by Peggy and Mary as a suffering man, and the father of their favorite William.

"You'd be usin' that bad leg, sure, before it were altogether mended outright," said Peggy; "and what for were ye, Arncliffe, runnin' off with his honner's combs, and scent-bottles, and his money — God save us from sin, — and lavin' the boy himself to be starvin' to death, seein' he was havin' no mate at all; and him lost among them big mountains, and niver findin' us at all, by rason we were all buried alive entirely undher the snow? Sure, wasn't it an ill deed?"

Arncliffe winced under the unsparing reproaches of his sister-in-law, but did not reply. He seemed shocked by Mary's recital of the sufferings to which his flight had exposed William, and had the grace to say to Harold, "You might well think, sir, that I was a common highwayman; but I've not come down so low as that yet. I'd forgotten your dressing-case was hung under the bear-skins, and I meant to take care of it for you; but when I was fool enough to trust myself boldly among a troop of Pawnees that I fell in with, the cowardly dogs sacked every thing, and set me to work on my weak ankle till they've crippled me for life."

"And what would the savages be makin' of the combs, and all Mr. Crofton's fine dressing things?" asked Mary.

"They knew the use of the combs and brushes, and such things," answered Arncliffe. "The pomatums and scents they swallowed up greedily, and the chief bagged the money to buy rum at the trading stations they wander off to. These Pawnees traffic with white men, and that's it that makes them such bloody-minded



rascals. Yes, Mr. Rodney; you think I'm wrong, but I'm not. It's the rum that does it."

"God forgive the men who devote souls to perdition," said Mr. Rodney, "when they might lead them to God. Corrupt and abominable is human nature when unvisited by that spiritual light which is given only to those who seek it!"

On inspecting the ankle of Arncliffe, Mr. Rodney found it dreadfully ulcerated, but, he trusted, not incurable, and he used simple means to avert danger, assisted by the practical knowledge of Dennis, — whose conceit, however, rendered him troublesome, — and by the neat and gentle management of the women: his principal reliance was on abundant cold water bathing, perfect rest, a little medicine, and regular diet. The man, now subdued by pain and humbled by his dependent condition, was quiet, and, Rodney hoped, thoughtful: he did not certainly join in the daily devotions, but he no longer scoffed, and was, at least, decently silent, and apparently attentive; to the inexpressible consolation of his anxious son.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Days of Rest. — The Potato Crop. — A Peep through the Telescope. — The Assassin's Fate. — The Death of the Chief. — The Dispersion of the Tribe. — Down on the Prairies. — The Raft on the River. — The Puma.

WELL supplied with provisions, the inhabitants of the lodges allowed some time to pass before they ventured beyond the river ; in the mean time, learning and teaching, they quietly did good. Even the women were tempted to imitate the clean and orderly habits of their pale sisters ; and Mary made for them, of their finely-woven matting, more decent garments than the buffaloeskins they usually cast loosely round them. Now the people loved to join the devotions of the Christians ; and accustomed from their infancy to regard with reverence a supreme and unknown Being, they were easily led to understand and believe all the wonderful mercies of Him who made all, and was unwilling that any should be lost for ever.

Silently, but not unprofitably, did Arncliffe, as he lay on a mat in the open air, listen to the simple lectures Mr. Rodney or Harold gave to the attentive Indians ; and the plain and easy persuasions fell on his wandering soul with more efficacy than the most eloquent sermon to which he had ever listened. In ten days he was able to walk, and though by nature he was stubborn and morose, he was no longer violent and abusive, but re-

ceived the attentions rendered to him with something like thankfulness.

Mosquaw had spies out on the watch, lest the disappointed Pawnees should track and pursue their lost captives ; but nothing had yet been seen of them, and the old chief concluded that they must have removed their encampment to seek new hunting-grounds, or to avoid the vengeance of the Sioux ; and that, therefore, there could be no danger in occasional expeditions to provide necessary food. They once more, then, descended to the lower ground, now brilliant in the full beauty of spring, and abounding in game. Even Mr. Rodney was induced to leave the quiet valley, and accompany the sportsmen, to inspect the beauties of vegetation, hoping to discover some edible root or vegetable, to correct the grossness of the eternal meat diet.

“ But sure, sir,” said Mike, “ won’t we have an illigant crop of pratees of our own soon, av they’d only be growin’ a bit bigger, seeing that they’re no better nor a good bite at this present, and not worth diggin’ at all ? ”

They all agreed with Mike that the potatoes were not yet fit for the table, and they must set out after some vegetable diet. Therefore Rodney and Harold, accompanied by Captain Scruton (who was anxious to take the bearings of the country over which they must inevitably have to travel), the chief, and his son, a bold and restless youth, about seventeen years old, set out, all mounted and armed ; and descending to the lower grounds, took this time a north-east direction. They enjoyed the delicious breezes of spring, admired the rich scenery of grassy, fertile land, covered with a carpet of many-colored flowers, the groves of noble trees,

and the sparkling rivulets, pouring over green slopes into quiet little valleys, where even the timid deer seemed to fear no enemy, and where peace seemed to have dwelt from the beginning of the world.

"This is wonderful, Harold," said Mr. Rodney. "I cannot help thinking that the wanderers from the east, who are in search of a home, have never proceeded far enough, or they must have peopled this Eden. This lovely region does almost realize the dreams of the poet. Look at that bank, now blue with violets, where the strawberries are already showing their scarlet hue. These people do not know their riches. Here are fruit-trees blossoming with a promise of abundance in due season; and if I could have the time to examine carefully I should doubtless find such vegetables as would agreeably vary our diet. For instance, here is a sorrel, of which I must pluck sufficient for a salad; do assist me, Harold."

"I am watching Scruton," answered he. "What is it you are looking out for, captain? Is there a sail in sight?"

"No, Mr. Crofton," answered Scruton; "but I see something I don't at all like. I'm no hand at the Indian lingo, but I'll trouble you to pipe out to the old commodore that there's a smoke lying off north-north-east."

This was startling information; and when Mosquaw was told of the discovery made by the "long eye," as they termed the telescope of their friends, he declared that they must return immediately, keeping under the hills, to escape observation and to insure a retreat if necessary.

The impetuous young Mahagan, the son of the chief,

turned to his father, and said, "Our tribe are not small-hearted; have we not the fire-weapons of death with us? Is it good that we should fly like the cowardly deer before the hunters? Shall we not chase the Sioux to their own lodges, who come to drive the buffalo from our hunting-grounds? The son of Mosquaw is not a cowardly deer."

"The son gives not counsel to the father," replied Mosquaw. "Why should I dig up the hatchet of war? It is good that my people should be happy. It is good that they should live like the Christian pale-faces, in peace and love to all in the world, till the Great Spirit call them to peace and love forever. I have spoken."

As the chief concluded, an arrow twanged from a thicket they were passing, and entered the breast of the good old man, who fell from his horse to the ground. With a wild cry, Harold alighted to assist him; while Mahagan, snatching the rifle from his hand, which he had learned to handle, fired both barrels into the thicket, and a deep groan announced that the shots had taken effect. Then he plunged through the bushes, and dragged forth the convulsed form of a tall, hideous savage, painted fantastically with red, yellow, and white; his hair plaited in long tails, and decorated with brass rings, while from his girdle depended a number of scalps. He had received two mortal wounds; but with fierce triumph, he yet endeavored to sound the fearful war-whoop; it was, however, too late; it turned into the rattle of death, and he fell back a corpse. Then, looking on his dying father, the distracted Mahagan drew out his hatchet to take the scalp of the murderer;

but with the last effort of authority, Mosquaw forbade him.

"Suffer him not to become like the Sioux, noble Christian," said the chief to Mr. Rodney; "if he should take one scalp, he will desire many, and my people will follow him. I know that the scalp-hunter has no place in the peaceful world I now see opening before me. Mahagan, it is not Mosquaw, it is the Great Spirit himself that now says, let none of my Christian people ever take a scalp. Take me to my lodge, that I may die."

With an immovable countenance, though evidently bent down with sorrow, Mahagan assisted Harold to support the old chief on his horse, while they made such speed as they were able, to reach the lodges before the report of the gun should draw the Sioux from their encampment to revenge the death of their spy; but even before they could place the venerable man on the ground in the midst of his wailing people, Mr. Rodney read in his face that when the arrow, which had entered deeply into his breast, should be withdrawn, death must follow.

Some of the old men of the tribe, who had refused to listen to the new doctrine of the pale-faces, brought the medicine man, a crafty-looking savage, who had invariably evinced a dislike to the strangers; but Mosquaw waved him away; he joined earnestly in the prayers Mr. Rodney read to him, and a holy resignation was spread over his countenance.

"I would yet speak some words to you, my children," said he faintly. "The Sioux are many; they are fierce and revengeful; they will follow the trail; they will

bring sorrow and desolation on this peaceful valley. I go to God; then must my people hasten to carry their little ones and their squaws to the secret refuge, where the Sioux cannot come. I have spoken."

Then, turning to his guests he proceeded: "I leave my pale brothers, for God calls me. It will be a short time, then they will come also. But they must not remain with my people. Mahagan is young and fiery; he looks with evil eye on the lovers of peace. My brothers must avoid on one hand the bloody Sioux, on the other the treacherous and enslaving Pawnees; they must turn their faces to the rising sun, till they come to the lodges of their pale brothers; then they must say, 'The red men also have souls; they desire to live in peace with the pale-faces, to whom God has given wisdom and all good things. Why should not all be brothers on the earth, for God will make all brothers after the end.'"

Amidst the unrepressed weeping of the strangers, the deep but dignified sorrow of his own people, and the prayers of the pious, the old man passed away. At the desire of Mr. Rodney, he was buried with Christian rites, beneath a drooping willow. Then the stern Indians gathered together their small possessions, and prepared for flight. The guests also prepared to take up their burdens; but Mahagan said: "Mosquaw has spoken; he has said the pale-faces must take the horses, for they cannot be brought into the retreat of the squaws."

Most gladly the travellers availed themselves of the offer. They bestowed on Mahagan, in return, a rifle and a supply of ammunition, together with various articles of dress from the stock of Harold, which the young

chief had long regarded with covetous eye. The rest all found some tokens to leave with their kind friends; William bestowed on Peshoo a wonderful knife, with hooks, and screws, and other useful additions; and the chief Mahagan, who had now painted himself black, to express his mourning, was won over, by many gifts, to part with his guests in a more friendly manner than they had expected; for the medicine man had artfully suggested to him that it was the visit of the pale strangers that had brought all the evil upon the tribe.

Taking leave of the young chief, and of the sorrowing and grateful Peshoo, the last who remained near the deserted lodges, the travellers set out, and the six stout horses carried not only the baggage, but Dennis with Pat behind him, Mike and John each carrying a woman behind, Captain Scruton, Mr. Rodney, and Arneliffe; Harold choosing to walk with Dick and William. After due caution in looking out for enemies, they reached the lower grounds, and pursued their journey to the east, not pausing even to provide food till they had gone twenty miles; then, horses and men alike fatigued, they rested for the night amidst the willows on the banks of a river swarming with fish, and with hooks, nets, and spears, procured a good quantity of the large American white fish, *Corregonus albus*, which weighed four or five pounds each, and were, when broiled, most delicious to the flesh-sickened travellers.

"It was little I'd iver be thinkin' mather," said Peggy to the old schoolmaster, "that we'd be tirin' of good mate; but sure, it's not shutable it is to the raal Irish, like the blessed pratee. Ochone! and didn't Mike, the gossoon, and myself see that same; and didn't we dig up ivery taste of a pratee, barrin' them pay-sized; and



filling up the two bread-bags we were, and hanging them across the horses; and the bastes niver saying a word agin the load!"

The prudence of Peggy and of Mike, fired to unwonted exertions by the love of the *pratee*, was highly satisfactory to all, who gladly accepted the half-ripened potatoes as a pleasant addition to their diet. The next morning, full of hope, they forded the river, and continued their journey, unmolested, over rich and fertile plains, interrupted only by the numerous mountain streams, which, however useful in supplying them constantly with water, required patience and time to ford; and they could not help dreading that some deeper river might cut off their progress in the direction they desired to keep.

For several days the journey was easy and agreeable, over a grassy undulating prairie, rising and falling like the waves of the sea, never level, but never mountainous, except that occasionally they came in sight of an isolated wood-covered mountain, which rose on the wide plains like a work of art. These mountains, Arncliffe told them, were universally shunned by the wandering, superstitious Indians, who looked on them as the haunts of demons. Therefore, these spots were generally chosen by the travellers as resting-places, in order to be secure from nocturnal attacks.

Still they did not neglect to keep up a fire, as a protection from the wild beasts, the howls and cries of which they frequently heard in the night. During the day they were usually successful in shooting a deer, or sometimes water-fowl, or the lovely little crested quails; but their extreme beauty, and the small amount of nutriment on each delicate little frame, secured them

usually from destruction, unless they could not meet with other game, or were not near the water to obtain fish.

At length one evening they came on a deep river, flowing south, which effectually cut off their progress, unless they had chosen to deviate from their course, and travel along its banks; and this would have subjected them to the danger of encountering the tribes of Indians who choose the neighborhood of rivers for the site of their temporary villages.

"There's lots of good timmer about, captain," said Dick; "is it your orders as how I should rig up a raft?"

"Raft let it be; nothing better," said Scruton. "Call out the hands. Now, work with a will, lads; and, Marlin, remember, if you have to drive in any nails, draw them out when we've done with the raft; there's no occasion for extravagance; we don't know yet what we may want."

"Ay, ay, captain," replied Dick, "leave me alone for reckoning 'em over; a nail's a nail when a ship's so far out of port. Come, John, my man, thou canst hannel an axe better nor these here wakely lads; and look sharp, man, that thou doesn't chop thy legs off."

Before they slept, some willows were cut down, and early in the morning all hands were employed in binding them together, and overlaying them with branches placed transversely, to form a safe resting-place for the passengers and the baggage. To the end of the raft a stout rope was attached, and Harold insisted on swimming across with this rope. In the mean time the horses were tied together in a line, and John plunged in to swim across, leading the reluctant

animals. But this proved a more difficult undertaking than was expected; the horses had not been used to the water; the stream was strong, and they became so unmanageable that Harold was compelled to swim out to meet and assist John, and after much struggling they succeeded in landing five. The last had broken loose, and had been carried down the river so rapidly that though the boys on the opposite side ran at full speed down the bank, they only came up in time to see the poor creature whirled round in an eddy, formed by a rocky isle in the midst of the river, and then sink exhausted in a deep pool beyond their reach.

Then John and Harold attached the towing-rope to the horses, and they easily and safely drew over the raft with the baggage; and much dejected at the loss of the useful horse, the travellers slowly and silently resumed their way, — for now one more was necessarily added to the pedestrians, and they walked forward gloomily anticipating similar misfortunes.

The ensuing day was hot, the road more hilly, and the travellers spiritless and weary; they drew near another of the solitary mountains, or *Buttes*, as the French settlers named them, and night being at hand, selected it for their encampment; and finding a hollow cave, commodious for their baggage, they lighted a fire, and contenting themselves with a supper of cold venison, sought for rest after their cares and toils.

Harold and Arncliffe took the first watch; it was almost a silent watch, for Harold was weary, and Arncliffe was, as usual, gloomy, and suspicious that his companion regarded him with contempt or aversion. After some time, Harold, feeling very drowsy, began to

walk to and fro at one side of the fire to keep himself awake; Arncliffe choosing to pace on the opposite side. Suddenly a rustling in the wood alarmed Harold, who called out to his companion to come up, and made to that part of the wood from whence the sound proceeded. The glare of a pair of fiery eyes through the bushes, directed their aim, and they both fired. A fierce yell was heard, then, with glowing eyes and gnashing teeth, a large animal sprung out upon Arncliffe. To fire on it was dangerous; therefore Harold drew his knife, and plunged it into the heart of the beast. A momentary, but fearful struggle followed; the yells of the animal and the shrieks of the man mingled in horrible confusion, and roused Dick and John, who assisted Harold in extricating Arncliffe from the beast, which, even in death, grasped him firmly. When released, he was bleeding from gaping wounds inflicted by the strong beast, which they now saw was the puma of many names, the representative of the lion in America.

Leaving the animal, they all turned to assist Arncliffe, now supported by his distressed son. "Never heed me, Will," said he; "I'm well out of your way. Old Dennis is always muttering his evil bodings about me; they all keep off me; they say I'm the Jonah that brings on all the trouble. It's hard on you lad; but you've better blood than mine in you, and you're sure to get on right if you keep with the right sort, which is more than I ever could manage to do. This is bad to bide; but maybe, as Mr. Rodney says, it's sent for good; and who can tell, if I suffer a deal here, I mayn't have less hereafter."

"Don't talk that way, father," said the shuddering

boy ; "it's sinful. When God gives grace and His pardon, it is a free pardon ; nothing that we can do or suffer is worth any thing before Him. But suffering is good for us, because it humbles us, father, and leads us to cast ourselves wholly on His mercy, not on His justice."

"I know it all, boy," sighed the man ; "but I cannot keep down this pride that's in my heart — God forgive me." But the struggles and prayers of the sinful man were not unavailing. Amidst his sufferings, his mind became more peaceful, and he even submitted to thank the kind friends, who delayed their journey, and remained at this post of danger several days, waiting till his deep wounds, under careful management, were so far healed as to make it safe for him to be moved ; his own improved tranquillity of mind favoring his recovery.

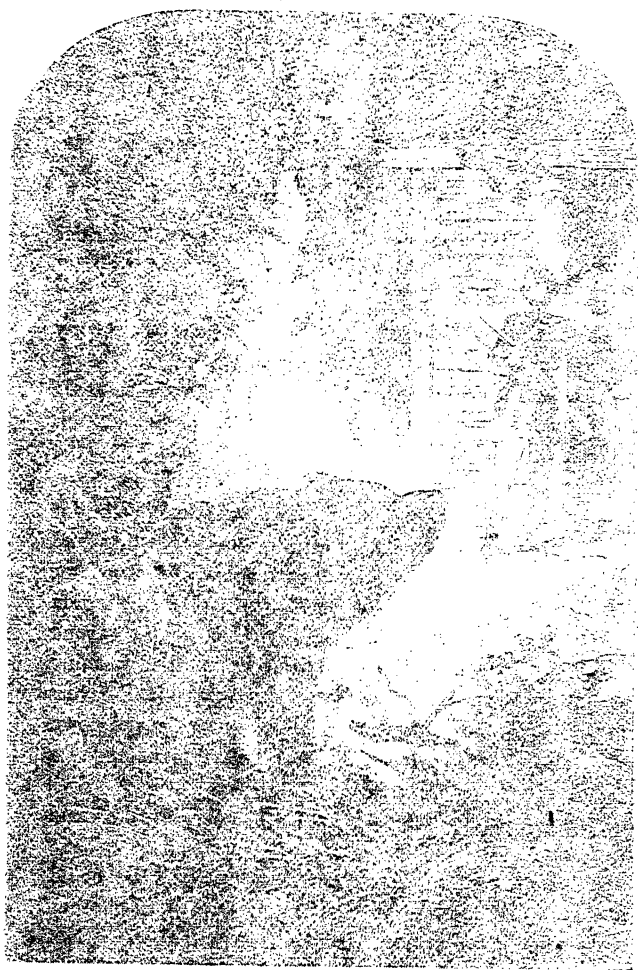
## CHAPTER XXIII.

Another Raft. — The Trapper's Hut. — The Conflict with the Grizzly Bears. — Harold's Discomfiture. — The Foray in the Corral. — Mr. Rodney a Delinquent. — An Outcry for Pat.

DURING this time, the men had skinned the tawny monster, in color certainly resembling the lion. Arncliffe recommended the flesh as being as good as veal; but though it looked white and delicate, no one felt tempted to feast on the cannibal—especially as the mountain wood supplied them with deer abundantly. Still they were compelled to keep a strict watch, for the wolves kept them in alarm by their howling, and to this was added a fear of pumas in the wood, or Indians on the plains. At length they were able again to set out on their tedious journey; but on the second day they were once more stopped by another foaming river, or rather by the junction of several small rivers at one spot, from whence the deep water poured down an unusually rapid descent with the noise and force of a torrent.

"We must try some sort of craft again, Marlin," said Scruton.

"Ay, ay, captain," answered he; "and I'd be bould to say, we'd be safer to rig up a tight raft at once as would carry us, and sail her down right ahead. Not that I'd be houlding out as how these fresh-water cuts can come up to open sea? how should they; narrowed



THE GRISTLY DEAR ...

STATE OF NEW YORK

In SENATE, January 10, 1917.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE, IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE, APRIL 2, 1915, CONCERNING THE LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE.

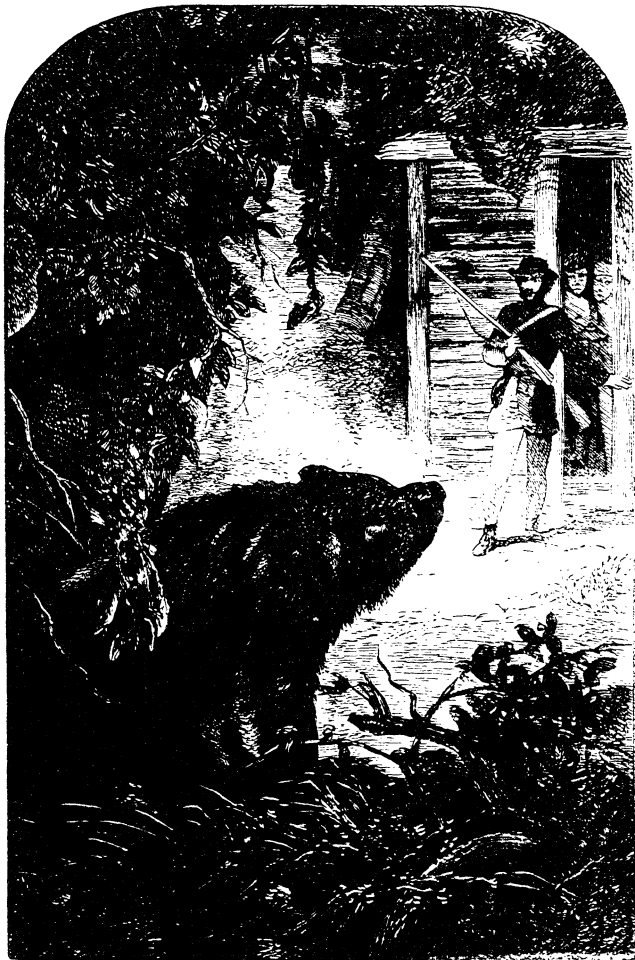
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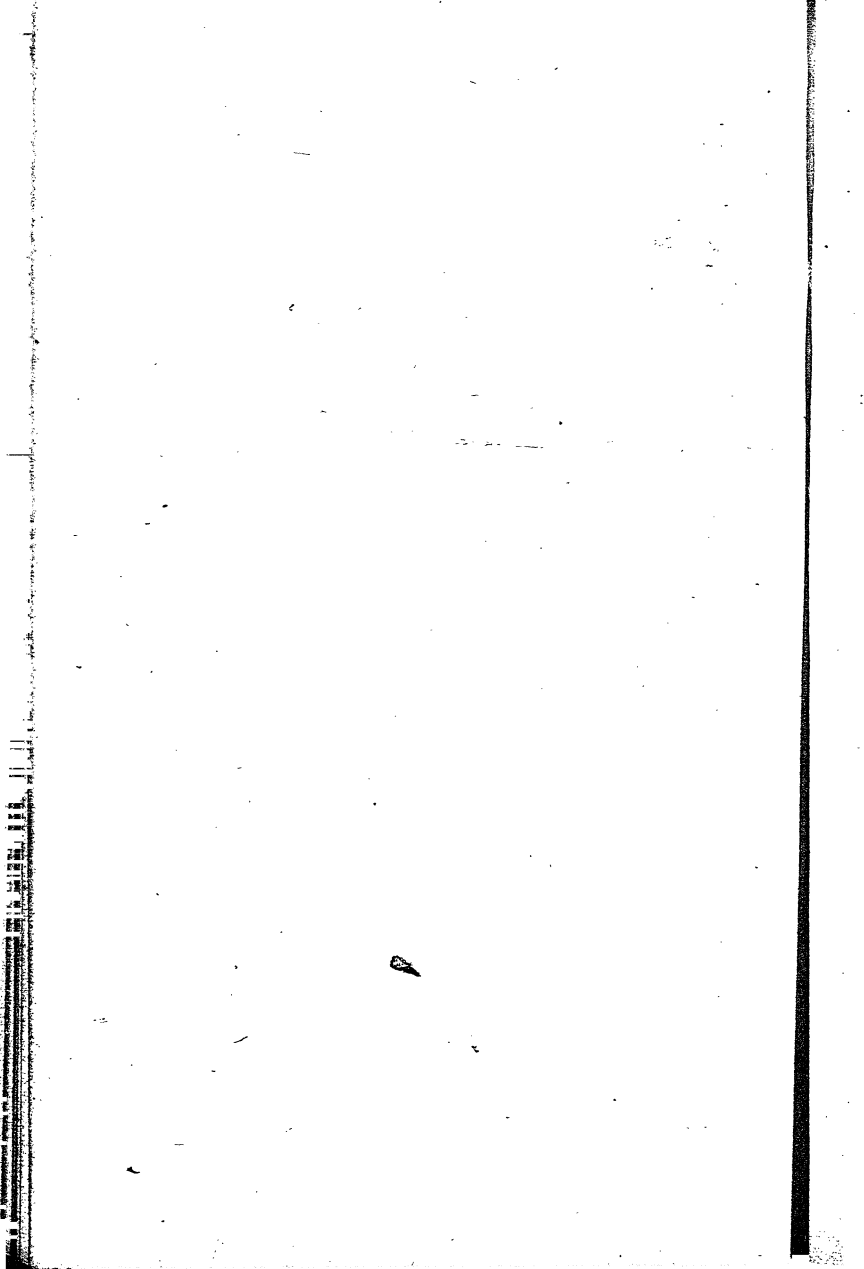
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THE GRIZZLY BEAR WATCHING THE HUT.



in as they are with banks and rocks, and no matter of water more nor you can see through. But a raft draws little, ye see ; and we might manage to steer her clear of them reefs and banks, and have a bit smoother voyage nor atop of them crazy animals as is given to founder, or else wearing out one's shoes trudging over hard stones."

"I don't think the suggestion of Marlin is to be despised, Mr. Crofton," said Scruton ; "if we were only sure of the course of the river ; but it must run into some sea ; and only let us come in sight of salt water again, I shall feel at home, and will take care not to turn my back on it any more."

"My dear Captain Scruton," said Rodney, "I much doubt your carpenter being able, under such adverse circumstances, to construct a raft sufficiently commodious and safe for a dozen passengers and all their baggage. Could we victual such a vessel — could we induce the timid women to risk their lives on it — is it probable that we should ever land in safety? And above all, if the state of the river compelled us to abandon it, how should we proceed without our useful horses? Even at the commencement, I should myself fear to descend those rapids in a raft — and we seem to be gradually approaching lower ground by a succession of declivities. It would be well to defer such an attempt."

"At all events, Diek, we must have a ferry-raft," said Harold ; "so get to work, my men."

It was disheartening toil to have to make a new raft at every river that crossed the plain ; but the men did not flinch : they cut down the tall timber-trees, lopped them, and formed the flooring of the raft ; but it was

not till the noon of the following day that they succeeded in launching the cumbrous craft, which was constructed more solidly than the last, that they might convey the horses across. And, after all, it was with much difficulty and danger, and the labor of many hours, that all were safely carried over; the horses having to be placed on the raft by force, so much were they alarmed by the noise of the water. It would have occupied more time than they liked to waste, to have extracted the nails from the raft, which they reluctantly allowed to float down the river.

"It's not unlikely but it may cast up again," said Arncliffe; "for I learnt among the wandering Pawnees that some of these rivers wind in and out like snakes; and it's odds but we may have to recross this before we've done with it."

Very anxiously the travellers went forward, for some time descending, till again they saw before them a wooded mount, or *butte*, situated in a lovely little vale, which was watered by a gentle stream, and covered with rich verdure and bright flowers.

"Sure isn't it a pratee-ground intirely?" exclaimed Mike, stopping in admiration near a patch of intermingled plants of ranker and taller growth than the rest, amongst which, unmistakably, the white flowers of the potatoe predominated.

"This certainly looks like cultivation," said Mr. Rodney; "though it is evidently not of recent date. What have you met with, little one?" asked he of Pat, who had been rambling round the wood, and who now returned, with a face full of staring wonder.

"It's a raal house, yer honner!" exclaimed he; "and niver a cabin at all, at all; and the door stannin'."

open. Sure, wouldn't we be saking if the mather be in?"

As the easiest mode of solving Pat's mystery, the whole party followed him round the foot of the mountain wood, at the east of which they really beheld a rough log hut, totally different from the temporary wigwams of Indian construction, and formed to be solid and permanent.

"It's the hut of some of the hunters or trappers from the east," said Arncliffe; "they irritate the tribes by intruding on their grounds and driving off their game. But they've hard lives of it; and in the end it's odds but they lose their scalps. I'd have you see what sort of folks live yonder, before you offer to put up there."

But Harold had already boldly entered the hut, and found it contained but one large room, which was now deserted and desolate. The dust and dried leaves of more than one season had accumulated on the floor, through an opening left to admit the light. Some logs of wood, which had apparently been used for a table and seats, and a rude frame of wood, with a buffalo-skin stretched over it, for the purpose of a bedstead, formed the whole of the furniture; but the roof of shingles, and the substantial walls, gave the place an appearance of homely security that was attractive to the weary.

"His name be praised," said Dennis. "Sure, then, won't I be spared yet; for hasn't He brought us through the tents of the ungodly, and out of the mouths of lions, and set our feet down in a pleasant, and in a Christian cabin, where we'll be finding rest at last."

Harold felt grieved at the necessity of urging the old man forward on the toilsome journey; but to leave him behind, even in a region of plenty, would have been still more cruel, however reluctant he might be to go on. At present, however, all agreed to rest in this tempting shelter.

Peggy was immediately busy in directing her workmen; and while William shovelled out the *débris* of successive autumns, Mike constructed a large broom of brushwood; then the women swept, and cleared the dwelling for the reception. John and Dick, in the mean time, unloaded the horses, and secured them in a slightly-fenced corral at one end of the hut. After this work was completed, Mike eagerly called on Will to assist him in digging up the potatoes, which were running to waste in the wilderness. They were much larger than the unripe tubers they had brought from their own potato-ground at the lodges; an ample supply was taken up, and speedily cooked; and the travellers thoroughly enjoyed, in the Irish fashion, a smoking bowl of potatoes.

"Wouldn't he be Irish, sure," said Peggy, "and he plantin' his pratee-ground in this same wild country, just to be mindin' him of home and them he'd left behind him?"

"More likely some Yankee hunter," answered Arncliffe. "They're as fond of a potato with their hard buffalo beef as ever an Irishman can be."

"And where will he be, Arncliffe, are ye thinkin'?" asked she.

"His scalp will likely be hanging at the girdle of some Sioux chief," replied the man, "serving him right for hunting on other folks' grounds."

"They transport 'em wi' us," said John. "I reckon it's all one as poaching, isn't it, Mr. Arncliffe?"

"Ay, ay," answered Arncliffe: "thieving, the Indians call it; fair play, the hunters and trappers say. It's much the same with our poachers and gentry; I leave it to wiser heads to say which is right."

"In England, my men," said Rodney, "we are bound to obey the laws that protect poor and rich; and by these laws poaching is a crime. Doubtless, also, the Indians consider that intrusion on their hunting-grounds is an aggression, and we cannot wonder that they resist it. That their resentment is shown by bloodshed is the result of their savage and unconverted nature. It is the duty of Christians, while they strive to win them to milder practices, to conform to their laws. That is, Harold, I believe we are justified in killing animals for food, or in self-defence; but not in wantonly destroying them, as some travellers boast of having done; not in slaying them in hundreds, as the trappers do, to make money of the skins. Now, my friends, let us thank God, who has brought us thus far on our strange journey, and given us a roof to shelter the feeble. For my own part, I have learnt to prefer the open air in this mild season."

"And we must keep up the watch, Mr. Rodney," said Scruton; "it is my duty to see that is not neglected."

The first two on watch did not think it necessary or expedient to keep up a fire; but resting one against each side of the open door, they alternately slumbered and started, neither dreading danger, nor in good condition to oppose it after their day of fatigue. Will and

John, the second watch, after two hours' sleep, were more alert, and after a short time, they fancied they heard the sounds of movement, and even a low growling. They lighted a brand and looked round, but found nothing alarming. The night was extremely dark, and though they considered their own position quite secure, they collected a few sticks and set them on fire before the door, in case any wolves should come down from the wood.

About three o'clock, when a dim light was spreading over the sky, Harold and Dick came on watch, and throwing a glance round to see that all was safe, they beheld a strange form, immovable, not more than a dozen yards from them. The glittering eyes could not be mistaken, it was plainly some fierce beast; but Harold hesitated a moment before he would fire on a creature that waited so coolly to be shot. Besides, Arncliffe, stretched on a bearskin, was sleeping outside the hut. To him, therefore, he turned first, saying,

"Rouse up, Arncliffe; there's danger. I'm going to shoot yon beast, whatever it may be, and if I should not succeed in killing it, you are not in a very safe position."

"Hold your hand, Mr. Crofton," replied the man. "Yon fellow's a grizzly. Ten to one you'll miss him altogether in this perplexing light, or, worse than that, maybe only wound him. He's bad to kill: it takes half a dozen men to be a fair match to a grizzly."

"I should say a very unfair match, Arncliffe," said Harold. "Come in, all of you, I'll hold the entrance; and it's but a retreat if I miss him. I think he'll



hardly squeeze that huge body of his through this opening; but it's unlucky there's no door. Now then, you're all in."

Before Arncliffe could repeat his caution, Harold had fired and retreated, but not so quickly as to escape the spring of the animal, which with one blow of his sharp claw, tore the gun from his grasp, and the skin and flesh from his hand; then turning round, the beast walked slowly away, carrying the gun in his jaws. But this could not be permitted; three or four shots were fired at him; and though the enraged animal charged furiously at each shot against the narrow opening, shaking the strong posts in his wrath, he finally sank down, just as the alarmed mate appeared, stalking with the usual shambling but swift step from the woods, shaking its huge body to and fro, as it rapidly made up to the prostrate body of its companion. Then uttering the single low, deep growl, so dreaded by the hunter, it turned its glaring eye on the heads which regarded it from the opening, and in a moment was close to it; the men retreating in such haste that they fell over each other in a heap; and if the beast could have forced its enormous body through the narrow aperture, many must have fallen victims to its ferocity.

"A pretty set of poltroons the beast will take us for," said Harold, rising from the ground hastily. "Has anybody a loaded gun, and a sound right hand, which unluckily I have not? That's right, Mike, my boy! Give the bold brute a hint that we don't like intruders. Sharp! it's going to turn away!"

But Mike's ball had first entered its breast, and as it turned, Mr. Rodney fired another ball into its shoulder. Infuriated by pain, it flung its immense form with such

violence against one of the stout log door-posts, that it was torn up, and fell inwards, leaving a wide space, which the bear again turned to take advantage of. Already half its body was within the hut; already, with one blow of its heavy, sharp-clawed paw, it had demolished the leather portmanteau of Harold, and scattered the contents, when Harold, seeing that the unexpected peril had paralyzed all the best hands, and forgetting his own wounded hand, snatched a rifle from the trembling grasp of John, and fired into the head of the bear, which fell immediately. Then the men, recovering their energy, speedily despatched it.

But Harold had no sooner made the unfit exertion than he fainted with the anguish of his deep, bleeding wound. Mr. Rodney turned to him in great distress, and by the application of proper remedies revived him, and, aided by the much-affected boys, washed the wounds, poured in brandy, and bound them up. Then he prevailed on Harold to swallow a spoonful of the brandy, and while the brave youth made light of his suffering, and laughed at his fainting like a lady, Dick and John had skinned the huge beasts.

They found them to measure more than eight feet in length, the frightful paw, which had done such execution, being at least eighteen inches long, and the sharp claws five inches. No wonder the creature was powerful. The thick hides, covered with long, gray fur, were spread to dry, but no one, except Captain Scruton, anticipated the possibility of carrying them away, now that the stud was reduced to five.

"By the by, John," said Harold, when broad daylight enabled them to look round, "it is time for you to look after the horses. These bears were doubtless at-

tracted hither by scenting them; I earnestly hope they are safe."

It was with a rueful countenance John returned from his mission. Not a horse was left living; two had entirely disappeared; doubtless carried off by the bears or wolves; the rest lay struck down dead, at once, by the powerful and piercing stroke of the fierce animals, and were now stiff and cold.

"Mike and I had the first watch," said Mr. Rodney, "and I plead guilty of sleeping at my post; but I have a dreamy recollection of Mike saying drowsily, — 'Sure, ain't the bastes uneasy; can't they be takin' their slape anyhow.'"

Will and John allowed that they had also heard some sounds; but they had really looked round, though they had never thought of the horses.

"And the beasts would have fetched money," exclaimed Scruton, regretfully, "if we could have carried them safely into harbor. We may look on it as a dead loss of capital! Besides that, there will be the time we must now necessarily occupy in our long trip. It is a vexatious and culpable thing."

The poor women looked aghast at the prospect, and the old school-master, as usual, resigned himself to a sort of quiet despair.

"All men are unwise, Mr. Rodney," sighed he; "that's what they've been, as the Scripture spakes of it, from the beginning; barrin' Solomon himself, and he not being without his faults and backslidings, low be it spoken; and an illigant scholar he was, sure! But, you see, Mr. Rodney, it's not illigant scholarship that saves us from our throuble at all. Didn't he set that down

himself,—‘He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;’ and isn’t that the truth, ochone!”

“But we have a purer knowledge, and brighter hopes than Solomon had, my good man,” said Mr. Rodney, “therefore be of good heart. God has provided a certain rest for his own people.”

“Never say die, old chap,” said Dick; “we’ll give you a lift in a bear-skin; we’ve some able hands among us yet.”

“But here is one disabled,” said Mr. Rodney; “therefore it will be necessary, Captain Scruton, that we should remain here a few days, till Mr. Crofton’s wound be healed; and if our ingenious men can make that entrance more secure, I think we cannot do better than make the hut our quarters; and I will engage to keep my eyes open when I am appointed to mount guard again.”

“Rely on me, gentlemen, since we must be detained,” said Scruton, “to take care that the watch be properly kept for the future. It is a mockery for a man to accept a duty which he does not scrupulously fulfil. I beg your pardon, Mr. Rodney, but I am a disciplinarian.”

Mr. Rodney was not sure that the stern captain was not about to order him to be mast-headed; but at this moment Arncliffe said, “I’m hardly easy about this station, Mr. Rodney. You see, one would like to be sure what came on the trapper that raised this hut. This is a bad country to sit down in; it’s safest to keep moving; and that’s what I’d like us to be about; but, unlucky as I always am, here I may lie. I can never trail on without help.”

A sensation of uneasiness pervaded the party; the guns were loaded, and placed in readiness; and as soon as the unwieldy carcasses of the bears, each requiring three men to move it, were dragged to a safe distance, they all withdrew into the hut, determining to keep a strict guard.

“But where would ye be sendin’ the gossoon then?” exclaimed Peggy. “Sure isn’t he missin’ and maybe some of them same big bastes aten him up at this time, and you, Mike, niver heeding at all, ochone!”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The White Dove. — The Warning. — Making a *Cache*. — The Siege. — Terms of Capitulation. — The Tents of the Indians. — Mrs. Avondale's Story. — The Rocky Mountains and the Prairies. — The Indian Massacre.

It was plain that Pat, with his usual recklessness, had stolen out on some wild expedition. Mike suggested birdnesting; and with some anxiety the boys proposed to set out to seek him. First, however, Mike walking up close to the wood, gave the shrill whistle which they generally used to call up the stragglers to the camp; and at that moment the delinquent appeared walking coolly round a turn below the wood, not as they expected, alone, but accompanied by a strange figure, a child of about his own height, dressed in a short tunic of prepared white deer-skin, embroidered with the delicate quills of the porcupine, and confined round her waist with a silken girdle of European fabric; her arms were bare, ornamented with bracelets of colored beads; she wore pretty white moccasins on her feet, and a tasteful head-dress of white feathers. As she drew near to them, the boys saw that her complexion was light, though tanned by the sun, and her hair of a beautiful yellow hue, fancifully plaited in long tresses. She carried in her hand a light bow, and a quiver, embroidered like her dress, hung over her shoulder.

All the party came to the entrance of the hut to meet the two children. "The unlucky lad has come on

an Indian camp," said Mr. Rodney. "We can only hope they may be peaceful."

The girl, with perfect ease and self-command, preceding the boys, stepped into the hut, and then turned round to gaze with curiosity and interest on the inhabitants.

"What is your name, young maiden, and why do you come here?" said Mr. Rodney, in his Indian dialect.

"The chief and the warriors say I am the White Dove," answered the child with dignity; "but my mother says my name is Ellen Avondale."

"She is an English child," exclaimed Harold, springing up from his bear-skin, and, turning to the interesting child, he said, in English, "Where is your mother? Why does she not come to us? and why are you dressed like an Indian?"

"You speak like dear mamma now," cried the delighted child recovering the English feeling, as she spoke in her native language; and throwing off her Indian formality, she danced, and clapped her hands with pleasure. "You come from mamma's home. How much I love you all! you are all my brothers! You will take mamma and me away in the winged-house that flies over the water, far away from the bears and the wolves, to those summer grounds where the flowers smell sweet, and the birds make music, and the people love each other because they love God. There they don't wear bloody scalps; they don't burn their prisoners: that is sin." The child spoke the last words in a low tone, looking fearfully round.

"Where is your mamma, you dear little creature?" said Harold. "Let her come immediately, you shall both remain with us."

"Dear mamma!" exclaimed the child in a tone of sadness. "My brother, she lies, like you, on the bear-skins; she is very sad; she weeps, although God has called her to come to Him and be happy. She is sad, because she must not take me with her, because I must stay till God wants me; she weeps to leave me alone with the people who are not the children of God. The warriors love not the pale-faces; they have heard many guns, and they say, 'These are the guns of the pale-faces; they are trappers, they are thieves; they come to drive away the buffaloes and the deer; we will come quietly on their lodges when the sun sleeps, and burn them.' The White Dove heard the words, and came to see her pale brothers, and tell them to flee into the woods, and hide, that they may not be burnt."

Flee to the woods! that was a vain hope; the strong and active might, by a happy fortune, escape, but what must become of the infirm and weak? Terror filled the hearts of the bravest. The prospect of death to the healthy is ever awful; but a death deserved and wantonly inflicted, a death of torture, was truly horrible.

"We must never strike our colors without firing a gun, Mr. Rodney," said Captain Scruton; "it is un-British,—it is a cowardly act to die ingloriously."

"Of course, Captain Scruton," said Harold, "we must fight the rogues;" then looking at his wounded hand, he groaned as he added, "What fools we are to be the slaves of habit, and train only one hand to be useful, when God has given us two. I don't believe I could deal a left-handed blow with my knife to any effect."

"The child must be kept as a hostage," said Arncliffe. "I judge, from her decorations, that she is a



favorite of the tribe, and this may be the means of our procuring better terms."

"If Captain Scruton insists on our holding out," said Rodney, "we may possibly defend ourselves for a short time; but the result must inevitably be captivity or death. It is pretty certain that these Indians must greatly outnumber us; don't you think so, Arncliffe?"

"I know of no permanent village of the Sioux near this part," answered he. "It is most likely they will be encamped here on a hunting expedition. I should think the girl might tell something."

But the child was unaccustomed to much questioning in English, and did not easily comprehend their inquiries; she seemed at a loss to compute the number of Indians or of lodges, and merely answered, "many! many!"

"The white man's lodge is not useful," continued she; "the women cannot carry it away when they seek new grounds. The red man's lodge is very pretty; it is not of ugly wood, — it is of buffalo-skins; upon it all his victories are shown. On the lodge is the fight with the grizzly bear; the fight with the Pawnees; the dead lying scalped; the poor prisoners tied to the tree, while the cruel women cut and burn them. When the White Dove looks on the lodge, the tears come. My white brothers shall not be cut or burnt; mamma will say to the Gray Wolf, 'The Great Spirit says He will make you die if you kill my people.' Then he will make you his slaves; but do not let your hearts be small; your sister Ellen will help you to bring the water, and cook the buffalo-meat."

Tears flowed from the eyes of the child as she spoke

of the cheerless alternative of slavery, and they looked at each other with painful indecision. The young and active would not have hesitated to take to flight immediately, but they turned to the old man, the infirm Arncliffe, and the weak women, and felt that such a proceeding was impossible. Besides, Harold was feverish and prostrated with his wounds; he certainly could not have walked far, and now, unhappily, all must walk.

"If we are captured," said Scruton, "we shall certainly be pillaged. I will, at any rate, conceal my property. Then, if we should be so fortunate as to escape, I may reclaim it. Marlin, bring a spade; let us bury all we can."

"Truly," said Mr. Rodney, "it is no bad precaution. I have myself papers and property I should be unwilling to lose; though, God knows, I may never want them. But if one only of the party here assembled be fortunate enough to survive, he may recover the property. Let us each make a *cache*."

They were soon all employed; Ellen looked with interest at their occupation, the purport of which she seemed to comprehend perfectly, and when Mr. Rodney requested it, she promised to be silent on the subject. "Ellen knows a safe hiding-place," said she, "but she has promised not to speak. She may not show it to her white brothers, till her mamma gives her permission."

The portmanteau containing the books, papers, and valuables of Mr. Rodney and Harold, and a large part of their clothes, was consigned to the earth in a deep hole dug beneath the huge log which served for the table, which was removed for the purpose, and then

replaced. The *cache* of Captain Scruton, of greater extent, was made beneath the bed. No one else had property worth concealing. Two of the rifles yet remaining of the stock Harold had brought out, and which were really not needed, were also hidden, along with a good supply of ammunition.

The remainder of the guns would be needed if they were driven to hostilities, and even if they were ignominiously captured, it was prudent to leave them in sight, for the Indians, having heard the report of the fire-arms, would not have rested till they found them.

They had scarcely concluded their melancholy task, when a trampling and whooping announced the approach of the warriors, whom they had not expected before night, and in a few minutes the hut was surrounded by a band of mounted Indians, armed with lances, muskets, and knives, presenting such a formidable appearance, that the small body of Europeans at once abandoned all idea of opposition; and Mr. Rodney, holding a white handkerchief attached to the end of a pole, as a banner of protection, issued from the hut, and with a bold front, but a sinking heart, walked up to the man he concluded to be the chief.

This man was distinguished from the rest by wearing a handsome white deer-skin cloak, fringed with porcupine quills, which was thrown gracefully over his tall form, while his long black hair was rolled round his head in the form of an Eastern turban.

In the best words he could recall, Mr. Rodney requested the forbearance and the friendship of the noble warriors towards a party of harmless travellers, among whom were aged and sick men, and feeble women, and who desired nothing more than to pass

unmolested through the country to the trading ports of their pale brothers, who were known to the red men, and who would liberally return the benefits that had been bestowed on their people.

"The pale-faces speak great words," said the chief. "They say to the red men, 'Bury the hatchet; are not we your brothers?' they drive the buffalo and the deer from our hunting-grounds; they drive the red man from the burying-place of his fathers; they raise their own lodges over the graves; they are liars. The Gray Wolf must have the guns which have destroyed his game; he will give the strong men to the squaws; they want slaves; he will slay the old and the feeble on the graves of his fathers. The Gray Wolf has spoken."

"We will not have our aged and feeble slain," said Harold. "We have with us a weak child from the lodges of our red brethren, whom we found in the woods; we take her to our lodge; we love her; we do not wish to kill her, or make her a slave. See, she is with me; she must stay with us; we will not restore her till the Gray Wolf says, in the words of truth, 'I will also spare the weak people of my pale brothers.'"

Harold had exerted himself to come forward in this emergency, and he now stood in the doorway, holding the pretty girl by the hand, who called out in her Indian tongue,

"The Gray Wolf shall not scalp the pale brothers of his White Dove. She will take them to her lodge and give them meat. They are very good; they are the friends of the Great Spirit."

"The White Dove speaks well," said the chief. "The Gray Wolf listens to her words; he loves her; she is his daughter. He will not slay the pale-faces; they

shall be his servants. But they must give the guns and the powder; then my braves shall lead them to the lodges of my people."

When this proposal was made known to Captain Scruton, he was very indignant, especially when he was told they all must agree to it.

"I protest against such a shameful surrender," said he. "You are excusable, Mr. Rodney, for you are a man of peace; but I have never been accustomed to strike in this cowardly manner. I must enter on my log this scandal on my country."

Captain Scruton was angry and unreasonable; but there was no time for discussion. The chief signified to his disappointed followers that no blood was to be spilt, and they sullenly permitted the sad procession of prisoners to pass on, guarded on each side, and headed by the chief, with Ellen by his side, mounted on the horse of one of the warriors, which she rode with the grace of a trained equestrian.

Winding round to the north of the mountain, and forward through a rich, wooded prairie, they had proceeded about half a mile, when, passing through a grove of trees, they came on the secluded neat lodges or tents of the Indians, about forty or fifty in number. They were covered with dressed buffalo skins, supported on tall posts; that of the chief being distinguished by its size, and by its being ornamented with banners and plumes, and painted over with rude designs, intended to illustrate the exploits of the "Gray Wolf" in hunting and in war.

A large enclosure or corral, on one side, contained a number of wild-looking horses; elevated on short posts, were the skins of bears, elks, and buffaloes, stretched to

dry; while on the ground were strewed bows, quivers, shields and lances. The women, decently arrayed in loose robes of dressed skins, were busily employed, some in scraping and dressing skins, some in cutting up or cooking meat in large iron-kettles, suspended from three posts, gipsy-fashion, over huge fires; and some nursing or watching the children, who were either stowed in bags or cradles, hung round the necks of the mothers, or scrambling about naked on the soft turf. All was noise and occupation till the procession of prisoners appeared; then all work was suspended; astonishment rendered them motionless and silent.

"See, brother Harold," said the little Ellen, riding up to him, and pointing out a large tent which stood behind, and at some distance apart from the rest, "that is mamma's lodge. She is the medicine-woman. The Gray Wolf himself obeys her. I will say to her that her white brothers have come to take her away; then she will call them to her."

The child rode forward to the solitary tent, while the chief showed his prisoners a heap of dried skins, and said they must raise lodges for themselves, and remain in them till they were called to work. Very willingly such of the men as were fit for work set about it. They soon constructed two tents, to the great admiration of the Indian women, who stood round to watch them, evidently expecting that no pale-face could raise a lodge like those of the red men. Dick had prudently placed his tool-chest in the *cache*; but he had hammer and nails in his pockets, and an axe in his belt, and with these appliances he rigged out, in his own language, a taught tent, into which they conveyed Harold, now in great pain, Arncliffe, and the old man. A

smaller tent John and William had finished for the women.

“Musha! musha! Mr. Rodney, yer honner,” cried Peggy; “sure, where will the gossoon be gone-agin? and me niver settin’ eyes on him, sin’ we left yon same unlucky cabin, and niver thinkin’ to be lookin’ behind me, more’s the pity for me, ochone!”

“Have no fears for the lad, Peggy,” said Mr. Rodney; “he can take care of himself. This is only one of his old pranks. He will find us when he is tired or hungry; or perhaps his little Indian friend has carried him off.”

Soon after Ellen entered the tent to say that her mamma had sent her to ask her brothers Harold and Rodney to come to her; and anxious to solve the mystery of the appearance of Englishwomen among these savages, the friends followed the light steps of the child to the solitary tent. When they entered it, they saw at once, by the order and neatness of the interior, that it was the residence of civilized beings. A woven mat covered the ground; on one side was a bed-frame, covered with a mattress, on which lay the emaciated form of a fair and lovely woman, still young, whose speaking countenance announced an intelligent and cultivated mind. Her dress was that of an Englishwoman, and her language, simple and ladylike, did not, like that of the child, fall into the Indian idiom.

“God’s name be praised,” said she faintly, with tears in her eyes, “that I am, before I am summoned to appear before Him, once more blessed with the sight of Christians, however I may grieve that misfortune has thrown them into the power of heathens and mer-

ceiless tyrants. Tell me, my countrymen, who are you, whom God has sent to close the eyes of an unfortunate captive?"

Mr. Rodney gave her the names of his companion and himself, briefly narrated the circumstances that had led them into captivity, and anxiously inquired if she was also a prisoner.

"Ten miserable years of my life," answered she, "have been spent, I fear, unprofitably, in the tents of the ungodly, of the savages who murdered my husband before my eyes. But my time on earth is short; let me hasten to tell you my sad tale before my powers fail me.

"The younger brother of a poor but proud family, my husband married me, as poor as himself, when we were both young. England offered no means of subsistence for us which the haughty Avondales would allow my husband to accept; but in the remote regions of America, the disgrace of earning his own living might be hidden, and my Alexander was sent out to a trading-station on the Columbia, where, amidst many hardships, and banished from the blessings of social life, we passed some years. There I buried two babes, there my Ellen was born, and, as we had then become more inured to the climate, we hoped we might be permitted to rear her. But when she had reached the age of two years, pleasant letters arrived to recall us to our native land; a distant relation had bequeathed to my husband a handsome estate, and in joy and thankfulness we prepared to leave our solitary and cheerless abode.

"It was not the season for any vessel sailing to England; besides, I had, unfortunately, a great horror of



such a lengthened sea-voyage ; and we therefore set out with mules and waggons, accompanied by three hunters and two servants, to cross the Rocky Mountains, and thence over the prairies, to proceed to the United States.

“ We happily accomplished our mountain journey, and had made some weeks’ progress over the prairies, when my husband remarked that our hunters led us through devious and tedious ways, and learnt that it was to avoid meeting some of the Indian tribes, with whom they had previously had some desperate encounters, and were therefore marked men. They boasted of the number of Indians they had shot down, as if they were numbering the buffaloes or elks they had slain ; and they justly dreaded the war of retaliation.

“ Alexander was annoyed and alarmed at the character of these men, and would willingly have dismissed them ; but they were necessary to us to shoot game for our provision, and to guide us over the wild and trackless prairies. He prayed them to be cautious, to avoid provoking the already exasperated Indians, and to shoot no more game than was absolutely required for our support. For the men had previously filled a wagon with skins, and continued to delay us till they shot the animals, and prepared the hides. Alas ! we were at their mercy.

“ At length, one never-to-be-forgotten night, as we were encamped, I, who was asleep with my child in my wagon, was awakened by the sound of fire-arms and horrible yells and the blaze of flaming torches, and looked out to see crowds of dark savage figures with hatchets and knives, finishing the bloody work they had begun. I saw some of the hunters still struggling with

the foe; I saw my beloved husband fall beneath the shot of a tall Indian, and our faithful servant James bury his knife in the body of the murderer before he fell himself. I saw no more; a happy insensibility hid further horrors from me."

## CHAPTER XXV.

The Story resumed. — The Captivity. — The Mercy of the Chief. — The Medicine-woman and her Privileges. — Plans of Escape. — Arncliffe in Danger. — The Worth of a Match-box. — The proposed Vengeance.

THE two distressed auditors knelt down by the mattress of the unfortunate Mrs. Avondale, and wept, as they prayed that God would still give her strength to support her sorrows. "You are kind men," she continued, "and I am now at peace, for I hear again the music of prayer, and I shall leave my child with Christians. But for the thought of her, I never could have survived that night of horror.

"When my senses returned, I felt that the waggon was in motion; I exerted myself with difficulty to look out; the dark crowd with their torches were still round me; but I saw no familiar face. I shrunk back, pressing my unconscious babe in my arms; I prayed to God that, if it seemed good to Him, He would call us both to Him at that moment, when the contemplation of the past or the future was alike terrible. Then I looked on my child, and again besought Him to spare and strengthen me for her sake; and He heard me. I felt that I must live on in faith and hope, that I might be the means of saving the soul of my child.

"Scarcely conscious of the flight of time, I saw,

at length, the light of day ; still no one opened the curtains of the waggon ; I was left alone in my great misery. Then I remembered that we might yet be rescued, and my child must be recognized as an Avondale ; and I hastened to conceal about my person the portfolio which contained valuable papers and documents belonging to my husband, which might be necessary to prove the identity of my child. I put some books in my pocket, and then, that I might live for her, I took, with a sad heart, the food necessary to support my sorrowful existence.

“It was noon-day before the waggon stopped. I heard the confusion of many tongues ; but though, in our residence in Columbia, I had learnt to understand the Indians who came to the fort, this was a strange language, and I regretted it. In a few minutes the curtain before the waggon was withdrawn, and I saw before me an aged Indian of a venerable aspect, with a highly-ornamented buffalo cloak folded round him. When he looked on my pale and heart-broken countenance, his face expressed pity ; he spoke to me in English, saying, ‘Enter our lodges ; the Sioux war not with women, neither with the unarmed pale-face. The greedy trapper, the destroying hunter — these are the foes of the Sioux.’

“‘My husband was good,’ I sobbed out. ‘He loved the red men, he was no hunter, he carried no gun ; yet he was murdered by your people.’

“‘It was not well,’ said he compassionately. ‘But why did he follow the path of the base and bloody hunters ? My people said, This is also a hunter, and they slew him. But you shall be our daughter ; your child shall become the wife of the son of our son.’

"I shuddered at this prospect, but I shrank from the horrors of an Indian execution; I was thankful to live. I was conducted to an empty wigwam; then the noble chief requested me to point out all the property that was mine, which he restored to me. My trunks, and all that I valued, were brought to me; the tribe dividing the skins, the horses, and all the remainder of the spoil.

"Left alone in my tent, I realized my desolation; and wept as I lay helpless on the ground, contemplating the miserable life that lay before me. From this distracted condition I was roused by the voice of my darling, who, looking out from her little cot, called out for papa and mamma. It was a salutary and warning answer to my sinful repinings, and at once 'I rose to walk in faith the darkling paths of earth.'

"I was soon visited by the Indian women, from compassion or curiosity; and my appearance struck them with awe. You perceive that I am unusually tall, and my figure was then erect and commanding. I was dressed in a long mantle of black velvet, lined with ermine, with a bonnet of the same material, ornamented with long black plumes. My appearance impressed them with the conviction that I was a mysterious and important person; and as I afterwards heard, I was immediately regarded by the Indians as a great medicine-woman, a character which succeeding events fortunately enabled me to support.

"My child was the wonder and admiration of the people, my tent was daily crowded with her admirers; her blooming complexion, her bright golden curls, her sweet smiles, and lisping accents charmed them; and as she had been accustomed to be nursed by the Indians

in her early home she held out her arms to the dark women without fear. I had no longer any alarm for her safety, for I saw the women would suffer no harm to befall her. They brought me abundance of food; certainly not delicate food; but I had been inured to a meat diet, and had still coffee and sugar that would last some time.

“But when I saw the chief again, he came to me in deep sorrow, to tell me that his son, his only son, had been wounded in the unfortunate attack on our party, and was now dying; he was speaking strange words, he had cried out to beg his attendants to throw him into the river. And now the medicine-man of the tribe, who had directed the treatment of the wound from the first, dared no longer to go near him, lest his patient should tear him limb from limb; for he was very strong.

“I had seen and understood the consequences of ill-managed wounds. I had frequently attended the sick and wounded at the fort, and I had still my husband's well-stored medicine-chest; therefore I requested the chief to take me at once to his son. I found him raving with fever, enclosed in a sudatory hut, filled with stifling vapor; his wounds inflamed, his tongue parched, crying out continually for water, which the ignorant pretender, the medicine-man, refused to allow him; his sole aim being, by a series of mock incantations, to drive away the evil spirit that caused the suffering of the youth.

“Filled with compassion and indignation, I demanded from the chief absolute power in the case, which he granted me, in spite of the denunciations of the angry and envious charlatan. Then I had the sufferer

brought into the open air; I washed his wounds, poured balsam into them, and bound them up; I gave him water to drink, and bathed his heated temples; I banished the noisy crowd, and had the satisfaction to see my patient sink to sleep. From that time his own vigorous constitution aided my endeavors, and he was soon convalescent. The gratitude of the father, the awe and veneration of the tribe, and the hatred of the medicine-man, were permanent; and since that time I have had every indulgence except the single one I pined for — liberty.”

“Mamma,” interrupted Ellen, “look at my dear brother Harold; he is pale and ill. Shall Hahnee and I bring your great medicine-box, that you may make him strong?”

“My boy!” exclaimed Rodney, much alarmed when he looked at Harold. “In the interest excited by your story, Mrs. Avondale, I had forgotten my young friend’s wounds, the consequences of a battle with the grizzly bear. I fear the exertion of walking from our encampment has exasperated the pain.”

“You see madam,” said Harold, “I had no idea that the heavy old fellow could have come on me so briskly; and afterwards I made the matter worse by handling my gun again, and tearing open the gashes. I do really feel very faint and lady-like.”

Ellen, assisted by a neat, quiet Indian woman, who seemed an attendant, brought forward a large chest, and then assisted Mrs. Avondale to rise. She opened the chest, which was still well stored, though it had been so long serviceable to the whole tribe. To explain the small diminution of her medicines, Mrs. Avondale

said, "The people are usually strong and healthy, and I have been chiefly called upon to aid the wounded, or to prescribe in simple cases of indisposition, which did not require much to be drawn from my valuable stock. My father was a physician; medical botany was one of his favorite studies, and he taught me to distinguish plants, and to understand their properties. This knowledge has been of immense value to me, and every year I have collected and prepared such herbal remedies as suffice for the common disorders of life; and have thus obtained fame and reverence at small cost."

"But in your own case, Mrs. Avondale," inquired Mr. Rodney, as she was engaged in pouring a cooling balsam over the inflamed wound of Harold; "have you sufficiently studied and attended to your own precious health? I see here invaluable medicines, peculiarly adapted to your condition—for I, too, know something of the healing art; and I pronounce your weakness to be the result of long-continued anxiety, a complete derangement of the nervous system."

"I have tried no remedies," she answered sadly. "I have believed that it was God's will, that, like my beloved husband, I should die far from all Christian sympathy; I have bowed to His will, and resigned my child to Him."

"Nevertheless, madam," said Mr. Rodney, "pardon my interference; you must try to live. This is not the pulse of a dying woman; and I shall take the liberty of preparing a potion for you from this precious chest, which I trust you will swallow before you continue your recital."

Mrs. Avondale shook her head, but took Mr. Rod-



ney's draught, and ordering Hahnee to spread a couch of fresh-gathered fern for Harold to rest on, she went on with her story.

"The chief, after the recovery of his son, told me to name any recompense short of my emancipation; but I had become too valuable now to be released. I asked, and my requests were granted,—that my child should be left entirely in my charge; that in every change of abode, I should have a tent apart from the rest free from intrusion; and that I should have the liberty to walk about wherever I chose, unwatched and unsuspected; for I promised the chief that while he lived, I would never leave him without his permission. Thus, for many years, my life, though one of solitude has been tranquil. I learnt the language, and have taught some of the women the love of God, and the practices of Christianity. The men are too fierce and savage to listen to the doctrine of peace; but the aged chief was superior to his tribe; he had traded with civilized men, and had acquired some of their feeling with their language. He came daily to my tent; loved to hear me read the precepts of the Christian faith, in which saving faith I truly believe he died twelve months ago.

"In his last moments, he bound his son to continue my privileges, and to protect me; and this promise he has faithfully kept; but bold, reckless, and scoffing, he ever derided the doctrines and observances of Christianity, and since the death of his father, has forbidden the women to attend and join us in prayer. He offered to take me for his principal wife, and my refusal made him my decided enemy. He then told me that my child must be the wife of his son, a violent

and wicked youth, whom she dreads and abhors. I pleaded her youth, and he has agreed to defer the sacrifice for twelve months; but from that time, I have never known peace, my health has gradually failed me, and I have felt as if God had abandoned me. May He graciously pardon my doubts, who has thus mercifully sent you to advise and aid me."

"Only give us an idea how we are to set about it, dear Mrs. Avondale," said Harold, "and we will get up a little rebellion and overturn the government of this tyrant."

"That will never do, Mr. Crofton," replied she; "he is too powerful to be openly opposed; it is only by stratagem that you can hope to escape; and this attempt I would gladly have you defer till my death takes place, which I think is near at hand; for my child would be unwilling to leave me whilst I live, and it is my earnest wish that she should accompany you."

"And you also must be our companion, my dear madam," said Mr. Rodney. "Believe me, that if you will only desire and try to recover, you will, by God's mercy, be restored. Allow me to be your physician, and have faith; and rely on it, we shall carry you off."

"Ellen will not go with her white brothers," said the weeping child, "if her mamma remain with the Gray Wolf. He is very wicked; he loves blood, and would kill her. Mamma will tell my brothers of our-chapel, where the Gray Wolf cannot come."

"It is most fortunate, my friends," said the lady, "that my child, in her wild rambles, discovered a secret and secure retreat, which we fitted up for our private devotions, and to afford us a shelter in the fearful emergency I saw before me. In a short time, the tribe intend to

move towards the west, to follow the retiring buffaloes to the mountains. It must be before they leave that your attempt be made; and if God grant me strength to crawl to our stronghold, we can remain there in security, till the Indians, tired of the vain pursuit after us, remove their encampment. But go, now, my friends; your words have inspired me with new life; to-morrow, Ellen shall show you our cave, and I must be introduced to the rest of your party. Remember to be submissive, and appear resigned."

The two friends left the unfortunate widow, and returned to their companions to talk over the strange adventure, and plan schemes of escape from their savage captors. John and Dick had already fraternized with the Indians, and were assisting them in attending to the horses; Captain Scruton was standing apart, moodily calculating the slender chance of saving his *cache*. The women were employed in cooking the meat they had brought with them, surrounded by the inquisitive squaws, who watched their proceedings curiously. William and Mike were trying to converse with the Indians in their own language; and only the wearied schoolmaster and the sullen Arncliffe remained within the hut.

"Sure then, Mr. Rodney," said Dennis, "it's glad I am to see you at this time; you being a raal scholar yourself, for it's beyond me altogether to put rason into Mr. Arncliffe. And he lying along there on the bare ground, and no better heart in him than Mary the girl, or the old woman herself; but worse it is he is, moaning, and taking the Holy name in vain, when it has pleased Him to save us from the bear and the savage, and give us a nate cabin, and mate enough, and potatoes

for better days. Sure then, isn't it thankful we should be, and not groaning at all." Mr. Rodney was glad to see the old man so unusually content, and turned to remonstrate with Arncliffe for his ingratitude to God for his mercies. The man impetuously answered, —

"It's well for you, Mr. Rodney, to be thankful and composed. You are in no great danger, as far as I can see, and likely a heavy ransom may free you. But it's different with me, though God knows it's no more than I deserve. I'm not turning coward, sir; I think you've seen that I've pluck enough in me, when my blood's up, and I shouldn't have minded so much being shot down by these savages; but to die by inches, under cruel tortures, the thought of that may shake any man's heart. I've seen them do it, Mr. Rodney; and God forgive me, though my blood ran cold, I didn't try to help the poor victims. My own turn has come now, for, as sure as you're living, they've marked me for their next bloody festival. Didn't I see the wolfish eye of the chief fixed on me, and I knew that he remembered me as one of the Blackfeet tribe; for I was with them when they captured and tortured, against my will, many of his tribe. There's no escape for me, Mr. Rodney. I'm a doomed man."

"I feel deeply distressed, Arncliffe," replied Mr. Rodney, "and I will not now heap coals of fire upon your head by alluding to past errors. But we are not actually under restraint; we are not fettered and imprisoned; you can ride well. Could you not, with your sagacity and caution, seize a horse in the night, as you have done before, and ride off on him? Take the road to the Platte river, and if it please God we should

also succeed in escaping, we will follow, and may re-join you. Do not lose heart; be prompt and determined."

Arncliffe seemed relieved by this suggestion; and by Mr. Rodney's advice, he feigned illness, and remained entirely in the hut; and in great anxiety for their own safety, since it had been discovered that they had so notorious a person in their society, Rodney and Harold sought the chief, in hopes of coming to some explanation with him. They found him leaning in a dignified attitude before his lodge, surveying with a keen eye the occupations of his people, as he smoked a red clay pipe. Harold had luckily in his pocket a case of curious cigars, which he politely handed to the chief, who hesitated, and looked with suspicion on his captives. Then Harold produced his match-box, lighted one of the cigars, and set an example by beginning to smoke. The eyes of the Indian glittered as he looked at the light-box, and he said, — "The pale-faces make light quickly. The Gray Wolf would try the medicine-box of the stranger."

This was exactly what Harold wished. There were an abundance of match-boxes among the property of the travellers, and he did not hesitate to sacrifice his pretty silver box as a conciliating present. He taught the chief to strike the matches, and he now willingly accepted the cigar, still more willingly the box, and they were soon on intimate terms.

"My brothers have many strange companions," said the Indian, shrewdly perceiving that the two friends were of superior rank to the rest; "they have women and boys, old men and sick men. Why do my brothers

go on the hunting-path with the sick man, who lies on the ground, with his head covered?"

"The sick man is a stranger," replied Mr. Rodney; "He is not our companion. We found him among the mountains, wounded and alone; he was of our country, and we, who are Christians, are bound to help our sick brothers. We placed him on one of our horses, and brought him away, that the bears and the wolves might not devour him. We only remained in the deserted hut to rest; but the grizzly bear came down from the mountain and destroyed our horses, therefore we could not pursue our way."

"Are not the pale-faces very wise?" said the chief, in a tone of terror. "Did they not know that the mountain is an evil spot? No one comes there to return living. The grizzly bear and the evil spirits only dwell there. The red man is very cunning, he will not raise his lodges near the mountain; he strikes not his hatchet against a tree in the wood, or the hatchet would be broken; he fires not at the game that hide below, the evil spirit would throw the bullet back into his heart."

Very much comforted to learn the chief's superstitious horror of this place, Rodney answered, "We were not wise, brother; we chose to rest beneath the mountain, and therefore became your captives. But, listen to my words, I will give you a writing to send to the trading fort of your great father, that you may have blankets, and powder, and dollars, in exchange for our release. Is this good?"

"It is good," replied the chief. "The Gray Wolf will tell these words to his people. But all the pale-

faces must not go; the sick stranger must stay with the Sioux. He has slain their red brothers; he has taken scalps; the wives and the sons of the slain ask for his blood. Make him strong and well, that he may die bravely."

Harold shuddered at this sentence, and would have remonstrated with the stern Indian, but Rodney, perceiving his intention, made a sign for him to desist. He saw plainly that any interference would be vain, and might only render the chief suspicious and irritable.

"The man is now sick, even unto death," said Mr. Rodney. "I cannot make him strong: shall I carry him to the tent of your wise medicine-woman? she will give him some potion to cure him."

The chief hesitated; then he said, "It is good; but let not my brothers tell the medicine-woman that the sick man is the enemy of the Sioux. She loves not scalping; she throws dark words of evil on the shedder of blood; she would refuse to make the man live, that she might rob my people of their rightful vengeance."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Arncliffe's Escape. — The Pursuit. — Pat in his Hermitage. — A Visit to the Mountain Caves. — Laying in Stores. — The important Plot. — The Vindictive Sorcerer. — The Start for the Chase.

SHOCKED and distressed, the friends hastened to leave the chief, and seek the wretched man, to whom it was necessary to communicate the designs planned against him. Then, that they might consult Mrs. Avondale, they got two of the men to carry Arncliffe to her hut, for he now affected to be quite unable to move. They communicated to the lady all that the chief had said, and when she heard the story of the reckless man, she spoke to him kindly, but unflinchingly, on the guilty life which had brought him to this dangerous position, and prayed that his suffering on earth might wake him from his sin before it was too late for repentance. And hoping that God might yet grant him time, she advised him to flee quickly, pointing out the road he should take, of which she had heard the people speak, and supplying him with some dried meat for his journey. Then they left her, and Arncliffe seemed to recover his resolution and hope, notwithstanding the cruel sentence of the chief.

The night was one of storm and darkness, and they all gladly sought the shelter of the tents, to escape the rain, which fell in torrents; and the Indians, who greatly dread rain, were all soon secluded in their



lodges, unmindful of any watch. In the dead of the night Arncliffe rose from his resting-place, stout and strong; he strapped round him his cloak of buffalo-skin, and threw over his shoulders the bear-skin on which he had rested. Then with his hunting-knife, he cut a large opening in the buffalo-skin covering of the tent, and trusting to the roaring of the wind to conceal the sound of his movements, he crawled slowly over the wet ground to the corral, towards a spot agreed on, where John and Dick had contrived, before they retired, to bridle a stout horse, and tie it to the fence, ready for his hand. The trembling man secured the bridle, and led the horse carefully among the trees, to some distance from the lodges, before he ventured to mount. Then he dashed forward, through the stormy wind and pouring rain, anywhere to be beyond the power of his cruel and vindictive enemies.

The situation of the prisoners left behind was far from enviable. It was perplexing to have to communicate the matter to the chief; nor could they hope by any means to escape the suspicion of having advised and assisted the escape of the man. They had many whispered discussions, and no sleep for many anxious hours, agitated with the dread of immediate discovery. At length, overcome with watchfulness of body and mind, after having agreed to preserve as far as possible the secret of Arncliffe's flight, morning found them all sleeping soundly.

It was with difficulty that the chief and his friend, the medicine-man, could rouse John and Dick — who were sleeping at the entrance of the tent — that they might point out to them the opening cut behind the tent, and inquire the cause. With counterfeited aston-

ishment the men started, and uttered natural exclamations in their own language. One after another the sleepers were roused, and received the news of the flight of their companion with such a well-feigned appearance of innocence, that even the sagacious chief was puzzled; but the crafty medicine-man, himself a deceiver, scowled on them with sarcastic incredulity.

"Let the pale-face be pursued," said he to the chief. "I visited him yesterday. It was I who spoke the words to make him strong to feel the torture; not to flee from it like a cowardly dog. I will now withdraw the strength I gave him. I will make him feeble; the red men shall overtake him, and bring him back to give to their squaws."

The chief confiding in the words of his counsellor, was soon mounted with his armed followers, endeavoring to discover the trail of the fugitive; but the flooded state of the ground rendered this impossible. They therefore separated, and rode off in different directions; the medicine-man, with a sufficient staff, being left to watch and guard the prisoners.

Though it was impossible, thus watched, to accompany Ellen to see her retreat, the prisoners visited Mrs. Avondale, and found her already somewhat recovered, and more hopeful. She suggested to them the possibility of their escaping, at any rate, to the cave; which, being situated in the much-dreaded mountain, would be secure from any search that might be made. During the day, Ellen, who roamed at pleasure in the woods, had met with Pat still living alone in the deserted hut, and subsisting well on the eggs and young birds he collected from the nests, and the potatoes from the adjacent plot. Ellen charged

him to remain in the hut till his friends should join him, and returned to her mother, to gladden the hearts of the poor Irishwomen, who now lived chiefly with Mrs. Avondale, with the information that the boy was in safety.

The Indians all returned in the evening gloomy and ferocious, for their pursuit had been unsuccessful. Even the medicine-man was regarded coldly by the chief, for he had failed to render the man weak, and to throw him into the hands of his enemies. The charlatan defended himself by artfully asserting that the medicine-woman must have given the man a counter-spell; but even if this charge was true, the chief dared not resent Mrs. Avondale's interference. He feared her power, and he was bound by an oath not to injure her, greatly to the vexation of the medicine quack, who longed for her death.

The two following days parties were sent out after the fugitive, but in vain; then the chief, angry and disappointed, gave up the attempt. In the mean time, Mrs. Avondale daily became stronger; she was able to walk about; and taking care to avoid the observation of the Indians, which the situation of her hut enabled her to do, she ventured out to enjoy the open air. Harold was her constant visitor, and on one of the days of the chief's absence, she sent Ellen with him to the retreat in the mountains. She led him through thickets and winding paths to the foot of the mountain, near the deserted hut; there they found Pat, and took him with them. Then ascending, they made their way among the tall pines and birches, and the thorny shrubs, stepping over the low underwood, till near the summit of the mountain she stopped before a perpendicular crag, completely

shrouded with clinging vines and various flowering creeping plants, which mingled their long tendrils in fantastic net-work. There lifting up a curtain of this net-work, the girl showed Harold a recess in the rock, into which they entered; but looking round, he saw with disappointment that it was not capable even of containing the party, much less of securing them from discovery; and the wall of rock on all sides appeared solid.

Ellen laughed mischievously as she looked on his fallen countenance, and advancing to the back of the recess, she put her shoulder against it, and a large stone fell back, and revealed an opening, through which they passed. She then pointed to heavy fragments of rock inside, which, when they chose, could be built up against the barrier, to render it immovable. From thence she conducted him through a narrow, dark passage, to several light and pleasant grottos, which extended through the interior of the mountain.

"Here is the church," said she, as they entered a small cave, in the midst of which, on a large stone, were laid some books of devotion, and around the stone some kneeling-mats. "Here mamma and I pray to God for ourselves, and for all the red men; even for the cruel Ammisk, that God may change his heart. And we pray for all mamma's dear friends in far distant England whom we shall never see till we all meet in Heaven, and then they will know me to be the little White Dove who has always loved them and prayed for them. Kneel beside me, brother Harold, and we will say the prayer for all the world."

Then the little girl repeated, with simple and earnest

faith, the prayer from the Liturgy for all sorts and conditions of men.

"Now I will show you which shall be your lodge, brother," continued she, as she led him into a spacious and lofty grotto, lighted like all the rest through crevices above. "Here you can spread fresh fern for your bed, and be safe from bad men, and bears, and wolves. No living thing comes here but the little birds, which build their nests above, and sometimes skim round the caves quite bewildered, till they find a crevice through which they can escape. Mamma is sorry for them, it is so sad a thing to be imprisoned; and she says, 'Shall we ever escape, and fly away like the birds?' And see, brother, this cave is very cool; for the water falls from the mountain above into this hollow, and it is pleasant water. We love to climb up here in the hot summer day; here is my own silver cup, which mamma left at the well to be useful to us."

"And sure, wouldn't it be useful?" said Pat. "And I would be diggin' up yer honner's big box, and the guns, and the books, and the powther, and bringin' them here nately on my back, and niver a soul settin' eyes on me at all; and me lavin' the captin's boxes buried snug, seein' he'd be thinkin' I was stalin' his dirty sticks, the nigger!"

Harold was amused at the assurance of the daring boy in proposing to bring up the heavy contents of the *cache*, but agreed that it would be very desirable that the valuable property should be removed to this place of perfect security, and, Ellen promising to watch against any surprise, he undertook at once to assist Pat in bringing up the things. A spade had been left concealed in the thatch of the hut, which was afterwards

more effectually hidden by Pat in the wood, and this he now produced. Harold uncovered the *cache*, and the stout little lad and he, with much labor, transferred the contents to the cave, selecting a different path every time they ascended, that they might not leave a too evident trail. In fact, Pat himself, when unencumbered, usually journeyed like the squirrels, from tree to tree, and certainly left no trail. They had not time, before it was necessary to return to the lodges, to remove Captain Scruton's property. This must necessarily be deferred till another favorable opportunity occurred; and Harold and Ellen hastened back, leaving Pat at the hut as a less gloomy hermitage than the caves, though the bold little fellow would have had no fears even in that solitary retreat, if he could have found occupation. It was desirable that the prisoners should individually learn the way to the caves, that, in case of separation, every one might have a chance to find refuge there; therefore Ellen led them off in detachments of two or three, during the following days, till all were familiar with the road; and Scruton, with the assistance of Dick, was enabled to remove all his property to the cave.

During this time Harold and Rodney had accompanied the chief and several of his men on various hunting expeditions, and being allowed to carry their guns, the experienced English sportsmen brought down a great number of deer, to the satisfaction of Ammisk, who bestowed two fine animals on them for their own mess. The haunches the hunters took to Mrs. Avondale's hut, and she directed the women to cook the meat, which was then secretly conveyed to the retreat, as well as many stores, valuable medicines, and other

property belonging to Mrs. Avondale. It would have been impossible to hide these preparations from the notice of Hahnee, her attendant; but the faithful woman who was a Pawnee slave, a childless widow, understood the motives which led her mistress to fly from the tyrannical Sioux, and she prayed that, as she was also a Christian, she might not be left behind. Mrs. Avondale could not refuse her request, for she knew that flight could alone preserve the Pawnee from cruelty, if not death, as she would be suspected of conniving at their escape.

“Don't you think it would be better to place the old man at once in safety, Mrs. Avondale,” said Mr. Rodney. “He would never be missed from the encampment, for he is seldom seen. Peggy might accompany him too; for we must not delay our attempt above a day or two, and at the last moment we ought to have as few impediments as possible.”

Mrs. Avondale agreed to the plan, and it was proposed that the removal should be accomplished that evening. Peggy wept much at parting from Mary and Mike; but she was cheered by the hope of having Pat for a companion in her confinement. “But, sure, it's only myself will be kaping the house altogether,” said she, “seein' the mather is no help at all; and me niver havin' a gun, and not knowin' how to let it off, and no powther nor bullets, and maybe the savages runnin' after us, ochone!”

But Mrs. Avondale assured Peggy the savages would not dare to venture near the cave, where she had nothing to dread but the solitude, and they hoped to be all with her in a day or two; and Peggy, being relieved from her apprehensions of savages and bears, began to

be pleased with the notion of "rightin' up the house" for the reception of the rest, and, tying up her bundle, she waited for Dennis and Ellen to accompany her.

In the evening one of the Indian scouts came to the lodges with the good news that the buffaloes were within a few miles' distance, at the east, in great numbers; and the chief immediately issued orders that his people should take a few hours' sleep, and that a large party of them, with the addition of the prisoners, should be ready for the chase at the break of day. The captain saw immediately that this chase offered the most favorable opportunity of escape, and they spent very little time in sleep, but made their final arrangements. Mike was not allowed to join the hunting party, on account of his youth, and Harold ordered him, as soon as the hunters departed, to set out to the cave to accompany Mrs. Avondale; Pat would keep guard at the entrance, to be ready to admit the refugees one after another, as they came up; the signal to be certain notes whistled, on hearing which he was to open the passage. Dennis, with Ellen and Peggy, were sent off at once; it had even been proposed that Mrs. Avondale should accompany them, but she herself thought it prudent to delay her departure, — a most fortunate decision, for the chief took it into his head to visit her previous to his departure for the chase.

"Tell me, woman of great wisdom," said he, "shall the pale-faces go with me on the hunting path. The wise medicine-man of the Sioux says, 'The pale-faces carry evil on the path; leave them at the lodges, that I may watch them, and drive back the evil spirit that comes to aid them.'"

"The tongue of the red medicine-man speaks lies,"



answered Mrs. Avondale. "The pale-faces know not the evil spirits with whom he talks; they talk only with the one good Spirit. Their guns are true; they will bring down the buffaloes, and make a great feast for their red brothers; the pale-faces must go. I will pray to my God for good to you, and to them. But take with you the lying medicine-man, or he will stay in his tent and call down evil on my brothers. Be at peace; I have spoken."

The chief yielded to the gentle power of the woman whom he feared and respected; he commanded the reluctant and sullen medicine-man to ride by his side; and allowing the six chosen prisoners to take horses and guns at their pleasure, they set out; a formidable cavalcade. The principal attendants of the chief carried guns; but the majority were armed with bows, and all wore in their belt a large knife and their arrows.

It was agreed among the prisoners as they rode on, that each should make his escape separately, at any moment when he could, galloping at full speed as far as it was safe to leave a trail, and then cautiously approaching the dreaded mountain on foot after setting free his horse to join its wild kindred on the prairies. "After which," added Mr. Rodney, "it would be desirable that all who are skilled in such feats should complete their journey, like Pat, squirrel-fashion, bounding from tree to tree."

"I don't see why we all should not be able to do that," said Harold.

"I shall certainly not attempt it," said Mr. Rodney; "I am neither slim, light, nor active, and could not undertake to skip with agility and security. I prefer

*terra firma*, and must take my chance. Now, my good friends, forbear caballing, for the eyes of that demonic sorcerer are upon us. Break away." It was too true, that though the chief kept his friend close to him, the malignant quack continually turned round to scan the followers, as if he suspected the plan of escape, and the conspirators began to tremble for their chance. Their single hope rested on the confusion that might occur during the heat of the chase, and they looked out anxiously for the appearance of the buffaloes.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

After the Buffaloes. — The Grand *Mélee*. — A Run for Life. — Trophies of Victory. — The Meeting at the Cave. — The Fate of the Quack. — The Indians at the Hut. — Protracted Confinement.

THEY had proceeded through woods and over plains about four miles, when they discovered at a distance a dark crowd, which they knew must be the buffaloes; and as it was needful to keep hidden as long as possible, the whole party made a *détour* to the windward, spreading themselves to cut off the retreat of the animals. They succeeded in approaching very near, still undetected, and saw that the plain swarmed with buffaloes. Then the mounted Indians shouted wildly as they dashed into the very centre of the throng, terrifying the powerful animals, which far from availing themselves of their superior force, plunged frantically from side to side, bellowing and rolling over each other, and finally taking to flight.

It seemed impossible for any horseman to overtake the creatures, which, especially the lighter-formed females, fled with incredible speed, despising all obstacles, dashing down steep ravines, and climbing rough stony ascents. But the hunters, dispersed in different directions, were able in some measure to impede or divert their headlong course, while showers of sharp arrows reached the fugitives, piercing four or five inches in depth; which, as the animals moved, produced intolerable pain, causing them frequently to lie down

and roll on the ground, in the vain hope of relieving themselves of the fatal weapon. Sometimes one buffalo, maddened with pain, would burst through the opposing foes, with red and furious eyes, tail erect, and blood pouring from its mouth. One of these fierce animals boldly turned on Harold, who was a little apart from the rest, and who, not being prepared to shoot, prudently resolved to run, and put his mettled little horse to its speed, pursued by the infuriated bull.

At first, all this was merely what Harold himself would have termed good fun; for the horse was as much alarmed as he could be, and required no spurring to put forth all its strength; and after they had raced three or four hundred yards, Harold looked back, hoping to see his wounded pursuer fall. But there was no such prospect; the beast, with its glaring blood-shot eyes, its nostrils covered with bloody foam, its broad threatening brow, was only a few yards behind him, and now, all at once, Harold felt that he must certainly fall a victim to this tremendous savage beast. He breathed a prayer, and made ready his gun, though he dared not pause to fire, resolving that his last effort should be a shot. Onward he spurred his now tottering horse, and again venturing to look round, he saw his adversary resting to gain breath; bleeding, roaring, staggering, yet furious as ever. He drew up his willing though trembling steed for two minutes, till he dismounted that he might aim more steadily, fired into the chest of the bull, and, springing upon his horse, again galloped off, while the hideous yells of the beast announced not only that his shot had taken effect, but also that the wounded bull was still at his heels.

With beating heart he went on; the roars continued, but did not seem so close behind him; once more he turned, and thanked God as he saw the bull wallowing in its blood on the ground. How gladly he now found that he was alone and safe. He remained a few minutes to rest his horse and to cut off the hump and the tongue of his fallen foe; the two delicacies of buffalo meat; these he slung across his horse, and once more put the poor animal to its speed, making towards the mountain, the crest of which, rising above the woods, formed a striking landmark. He proceeded unmolested on his lonely way till within a quarter of a mile of his destination, when he was startled by the sight of two horsemen before him, riding at a very leisurely pace. But he soon recognized his friends Rodney and Scruton, and rapidly overtaking them, he called out, "You lazy fellows! you deserve to be recaptured. Do you fancy you are riding in Hyde Park, you take it so coolly? But you must dismount now; take off the bridles, and then I will drive away these useful creatures very unwillingly, but it is a necessary precaution."

"Have we far to walk, Harold?" asked Mr. Rodney; "for truly I am very stiff. I have experienced some shocks from the iron heads of those frantic old bulls, and have not even had the luck to carry off a trophy, as I see you have done."

"It was a near thing, Rodney," replied Harold. "I was convinced at one time that it was the bull that would carry off the trophies; and I little thought then that I ever should see you again, old fellow. You take this hump on your shoulders till I help Captain Scruton, who is not well up to unrigging a horse; and though

we might look with disdain on these rough hide bridles on our own hunting-grounds, you see they may turn out useful to us here. Did you ever think, now, Rodney, that I should have become such a prudent, economical young man?"

"The blessings of adversity!" groaned Rodney, as he threw the rough heavy harness over his arm; while Harold, with a lash and a shout, drove away the emancipated horses, which trotted off with delight towards the richer prairies in the east, leaving a trail which the fugitive trusted might mislead the pursuit. Then separating, they cautiously made their way through the thick wood to the mouth of the cave, and giving a low whistle, they were delighted by the welcome sight of Dick's face at the entrance.

"All right it is, captain," said he; "all hands on board but Mike and the women folks, as is likely to sail slow through these here queer channels. What if we were to go off to convoy them, captain?"

"Let us have time to breathe and call over the names, Marlin," said Captain Scruton, as they entered the cave, though Mr. Rodney and Harold could not help feeling uneasy that any were missing. They found that the absent were Mrs. Avondale, with her daughter and servant, Mary, and Mike, who had not yet arrived; and they dreaded to think that they might have been arrested, and would then have to suffer for the escape of the rest.

"God forbid that they should yet be in the power of the savages," said William, "or I fear the poor lady's fate will be terrible. After we were parted, when you, Mr. Crofton, went off after that old bull, the Indians scoffing at you for wasting time on such a useless beast,

Mr. Rodney and Captain Scruton took after a lot that went south. Then we who were east of the mass of buffaloes, along with the chief's set, charged on them with volleys of arrows and balls; and I never saw any thing like the scene that followed. The whole herd started off like mad, as indeed they were; galloping like race-horses, the strong beasts overthrowing the weak, and running over them right forward to the wigwams. We galloped after them fiercely enough till we came in sight of the lodges; then Dick tapped me on the shoulder, saying, 'John's off, and mind you follow me as soon as the beasts get hampered among the huts, and frightened by the squalls of the women; that'll be our time. There they go; heard you ever any thing like that?' And truly, Mr. Crofton, you might have thought murder was going on, such yells were struck up at the wigwams of the poor women, who were gathering up their children out of the way of the maddened buffaloes, which had knocked down and wounded several men who had remained on the side of the huts; and we came up to the medicine-man, who had been trampled on and gored, and now lay bleeding and seemingly dying. The chief was leaning over him, and as I stood behind him, I heard the wretched doctor say, 'This is the work of the pale-faced woman; she has sent evil spirits to kill you and me. You must sacrifice her without delay, or your death is certain.' I heard the chief solemnly promise the dying villain to fulfil his wishes; and I then, not waiting to see the conclusion of the slaughter at the lodges, rode after Dick straight away here. But if I'd thought Mike and the women were still in the hut, I'd never have set out and left

them behind, for he's but a lad, Mr. Crofton, though he has all the pluck of a man."

"And a good deal of prudence too, William," said Mr. Rodney. "I think we may trust him, though I cannot say I feel very easy about their absence."

"And I'm determined to return even to the lodges," said Harold, "if I do not meet them on the way. Who will volunteer to accompany me?"

"I'm your man, sir," said Dick. "I'll never desert that lad in a fix, with three women to convoy. Please to pipe out, sir; sooner and better."

Every one was anxious to go; but it was plain that numbers would but increase the danger, especially if the unfortunate absentees should still be at the lodges, where opposition would be hopeless, and all must depend on stratagem. Each, however, took a gun to defend himself to the last; and leaving the cave, they took a new path to descend the wood. "Stop a bit, Mr. Crofton," said Dick, "till I give 'em another chance;" and he gave the signal whistle rather louder than Harold thought prudent; but he was satisfied when he heard it answered, though from a considerable distance. "Can that fool of a lad have gone and lost himself?" continued Dick; "and what were the women about to let him? God send they may be all safe."

They made their way through the entangled wood with much difficulty towards the signal, which was repeated and answered several times, till, at length, they were greeted by the voice of Mike, calling out from a tree, "I say, which of ye will that be, and will ye be runnin' down and helping them same tinder faymales? Sure, isn't it the mistress herself is bad, kilt outright



with runnin', and walkin', and hearin' such skrikes, and she sure and sartain the haythens were all after us?"

The boy came down from his roost, and lost no time in conducting the two men down to the lower part of the wood, where they found Mary and Hahnee supporting Mrs. Avondale in a fainting state; Hahnee was in deep distress, but Mary cried out joyfully, "Sure, Mr. Marlin, dear, thin isn't it a blessed sight to put my eyes on you; won't you be takin' the mistress on your back, and carryin' her up the hill, seein' she's kilt altogether? And Mike, the spalpeen, niver comin' back to help us, musha! And Mr. Crofton himself, with Miss Ellen, and Hannah behind you, and, sure, won't we defy the savages entirely?"

They were not long in beginning the ascent, Dick bearing Mrs. Avondale with ease in his strong arms, and Harold with Ellen and the trembling Mary. Hahnee, relieved by seeing her mistress in safety, followed them with Mike, who was somewhat downcast by the reproaches his sister poured on him for being so stupid as to lose himself in the wood. They reached the cave before they were expected, to the great joy of the tenants of the retreat, who were, however, distressed to see the condition of Mrs. Avondale. But they found restoratives in her own medicine-chest, and they soon had the pleasure of seeing her recover from a faintness brought on by anxiety and the unusual exertion after a confinement of some months. Mr. Rodney assured her she had no disease, and that she needed only a tranquil mind, a vigorous resolution, and a little tonic medicine to fit her for the fatigues of a long journey.

"Av ye'd been bringing the horses along with ye," said Mike, reproachfully, "we'd be havin' an easy time."

"Where would ye ha'e stabled 'em, lad?" asked John.

"Sure, then, I was niver thinkin' on that same," answered the boy; "and may-be av we were tyin' them up in the corral down yonder, nigh the cabin, wouldn't the bars be comin' agin to ate them?"

"And the savages would have guessed we were somewhere nigh hand, Mike," said Dick. "Nay, nay, lad, we'se have to sail off on our legs, and thank God we have 'em left to carry us."

The larger grotto looked very much like home, now; a stone table was covered with a white cloth, and spread with cold venison; and Pat's contribution, turkey's eggs boiled, and young pigeons broiled; above all, they had a smoking bowl of potatoes, which Dennis had gladly assisted Pat to dig up that very morning. "And sure, isn't there more of them," said the boy; "and wouldn't we have fetched a good lot, barrin' Mr. O'Reilly, he bein' taken with a trimblin' thinkin' may-be, would the savages be catchin' us; but won't I be the boy to be fetchin' more for dinner, to-morrow?"

But Mrs. Avondale insisted on it that no one should leave the cave for some days, as she feared the Sioux would still be at the lodges, their departure west being delayed by the abundant supply of meat they must have obtained, and which they would certainly consume before they set out to seek more.

"I am glad I succeeded in bringing off my elegant hump and tongue," said Harold. "I see Hahnee is

contemplating the meat with approbation; and doubtless she is acquainted with the orthodox mode of cooking these Indian delicacies."

Mrs. Avondale promised to direct the cookery; and now, being in perfect security, they calmly discussed the plans for their future journey.

"How we shall ever accomplish such an undertaking," said Mrs. Avondale, "is a problem to me. The spread of civilization has doubtless reached further west than it had at the time when my dear husband and myself left the Columbia; but I cannot think that we shall have less than four hundred miles to travel before we reach even the remote habitations of our countrymen. Some part of the road may doubtless be fertile and pleasant, but I fear we may come on barren grounds, where we shall encounter famine and thirst, as well as savage animals and savage men. May God guard us, for we are seeking his own people."

For three days they secluded themselves entirely; wandering through the range of caves, and encouraging Mrs. Avondale to accompany them, that she might acquire strength and practice. But this confinement was irksome to the active; and Pat had many times begged to be let out, promising to keep in the trees; but it was not thought prudent to risk his appearance. But when the more delicate articles of food, the eggs, the young birds, and the potatoes, were exhausted, it became necessary to renew these provisions, and Pat, with his friend Mike, was released. Dick accompanied them to enforce prudence. They were to descend the mountain, and before they began to forage, take a survey from the trees below, to ascertain that the Indians were not about.

However, before they reached the foot of the mountain, they were glad to seek the shelter of the thick trees, for they heard the trampling of horses below. Dick charged the boys to remain behind, and ventured cautiously to descend, till he could, unseen, obtain a view of the plain ; and from a tall tree, he beheld a number of horses without the riders, and heard the voices of the Indians. Very soon he saw the chief, with some of his attendants, issue from the hut. They held some of the spars that had been left in the *cache* of Captain Scruton, as too cumbrous to transfer to the cave ; and thus it was plain they had discovered that property had been hidden, and afterwards removed ; a proof that the fugitives had revisited the hut, and had fled with their treasures.

Dick was not quick in understanding the language, but from the few words he was able to make out, he judged that the chief was despatching parties south and east, to pursue them for two days ; after which, if they were unsuccessful, they would strike the tents and proceed westward. Then he watched them ride off, keeping a respectful distance from the mountain, towards which he observed some of the men pointing with looks of awe and horror. When assured that they were quite beyond hearing, he returned to the boys, and they went back empty-handed, except that Pat had taken a few pigeons, to report the necessity of continuing their seclusion for some days ; which intelligence the women heard with resignation, and the men with some impatience ; though all were thankful for their safe shelter.

“Then sure, won't I be turning my hand to a good work,” said Dennis ; “isn't it my duty in the world,

and me shut up snug in this quiet cabin. Sure, wouldn't it be little good, I'm thinking, Mr. Rodney, that you and I were doing yonder among the haythens, God forgive us for that same."

"You are right, Mr. O'Reilly," answered Rodney; "unless our small exertions to deliver three Christian souls from the power of the savage infidels be some fulfilment of our neglected duties."

"That's true for you, Mr. Rodney," said O'Reilly. "It's little my old hand can be doing in a strife at this time; but the head, though I'm saying it myself, is good for work entirely. And haven't I been going through the parts of speech with miss, and she pretty fair up in the English grammar; and sure you wouldn't be thinking that same, seeing she's making so little use of her personal pronouns, and me warning her this very day, would it be illigant English to be saying, 'Ellen loves her white brothers.' Och! botheration, miss, honey, isn't it flinging away the good gifts of words altogether?"

"We have been so long accustomed to converse with the Indians," said Mrs. Avondale, "that doubtless we have imperceptibly acquired some of their idioms; but I trust, now that she is restored to English society, and has the benefit of your instructions, Mr. O'Reilly, my child will soon become a real English girl."

"That's the truth, madam," replied the gratified old man; "and will I be communicating to Miss the least taste of the classics, that same being the grammar of the Latin tongue, the biggest accomplishment for a woman."

"Not a bit of it, I say, Mr. O'Reilly," said Harold, laughing. "We shall have no time for study, once on

the road; and besides, I mean to be Ellen's tutor on the prairies, and our books are to be the works of nature. I only wish we could make a start to-day, for of all the vexations of life, defend me from imprisonment."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Occupations of Confinement. — The Anthropophagi. — The Trail of the Indians. — A Turkey Hunt. — The *Buttes* of the Prairies. — The Bursting of the Storm — Dry Lodgings.

BUT in these days of imprisonment all were usefully employed. Mrs. Avondale had described the large skin water-vessels which had been among the preparations of her husband for crossing the prairies, where they must encounter dry deserts before they reached the fertile river valleys; and they resolved to make some of these water-bottles. The hide of the bear was not flexible enough for the purpose; but among the variety of small deer that frequented the mountains, they trusted to obtain the desired material. Ellen, armed with her light bow and quiver, was the first who was allowed to venture out; and, dexterous in the use of her weapon, she shot two small deer the first day.

The venison was cooked for the journey, and the skins, dried and cleaned, were formed into large bags, or bottles, to be filled with water before they left the rich and fertile grounds. Dick had, in the meantime, ingeniously made three bows, on the model of that of Ellen, stringing them with the twisted sinews of the deer, and, directed by Hahnee, feathered the arrows, and barbed them with sharp flints. But all these preparations, so necessary for subsistence and comfort,

created a great increase of baggage; and the men sighed as they looked on the heavy burdens made ready, and more than ever regretted the loss of the useful horses.

"Sure, won't it be a daring of Providence, Mr. Rodney," said Dennis, "to be laving this same snug cabin, and throwing ourselves into the midst of the Anthropophagi? God save us."

"Who are they?" asked Ellen. "The Sioux never speak of the tribe, as they do of the Pawnees, the Chippeways, the Black-feet, and some others."

"We have some doubt, Ellen," answered Mr. Rodney, "of the existence of Mr. O'Reilly's bugbear tribe in America. Men who eat men still are to be found in the world, I believe; but I think we need not fear them here. We may be shot, or captured; we may even die of famine; but I have no apprehension of being eaten up."

"But, indeed, Mr. Rodney," answered Ellen, "Hahnee has told me that the Sioux women love to cut pieces of flesh from their still living prisoners, and eat them. Hahnee has herself eaten human flesh before she became a Christian."

"Praised be His name," said Dennis, "that they kept their knives off our poor bodies."

"And sure, it's little flesh they'd be findin' on your bones or mine, masther," said Peggy. "Wouldn't it be the young and tinder they'd be atin', the dirty dogs?"

"I confess that I myself feel reluctant to leave an abode where I feel more ease of body and peace of mind than I have enjoyed for years," said Mrs. Avondale; "but I struggle against the selfish feeling. I



know that in this world God provides work for all; and wo to us if we shrink from it. We must face the fatigue, my good Mr. O'Reilly; we do not see what good God yet means us to accomplish."

"Sure, I'm not seeing it at all, madam," answered he, sighing, "barring its opening an academy you'd be maning; and few scholars I'd be getting, I'm thinking, in this same savage country."

"We shall yet, I hope, in time, arrive at the civilized regions, O'Reilly," said Harold; "and then you will doubtless meet with scholars to exercise your abilities."

"And may-be the masther, your tutor, Mr. Crofton," replied Dennis, "will be settin' up there too. Sure, thin, wouldn't two schools be over many for the people?"

"I promise you, Mr. O'Reilly," said Rodney, gravely, "not to open a rival establishment. I have had so much trouble with my one pupil, that I have no inclination to extend the labors of instruction."

Satisfied that he should have a fair field, the old man braced up his energies to begin his journey again. Ellen, as the safest spy, was sent out to reconnoitre, and returned with the good news that every trace of the Indians had disappeared; the lodges were removed, the corral vacant, and the trail to the west plainly to be discovered. She had ventured to the remote and proscribed burying-ground; and there, elevated on a scaffold, she had seen the corpse of the medicine-man, easily recognized by his professional robes and the well-known bags and paraphernalia which were placed beside the body.

"Wretched man!" exclaimed Mrs. Avondale.

“What a fearful end to his ill-spent life! And how unfortunate his death might have proved to us, if God had not mercifully extricated us from the hands of the benighted people, since the wicked wretch had, even at the last, attributed all the disasters of the day to my spells. Now, my dear friends, I am ready; let us unite in prayer for God’s blessing on our journey, and then go forth in His strength.”

On a fair and bright morning in the latter days of May, they left the mountain of refuge, and brought all their property in safety to the lower ground. Then, as rapidly as their heavy burdens and the strength of the women permitted, they marched forward, with their faces towards the sun, which lighted up the grassy and flowery plains and the trees of varied foliage and blossoms into glorious beauty. The fresh grass had not grown high enough to be troublesome; and though the ground was undulating, their road was easy and pleasant. The perfume of the blossoms, and the twittering and chirping of the brooding birds, made the journey interesting; and it was only when the noonday sun beamed scorchingly upon them, that they began to feel the need of rest and refreshment; and underneath the shade of the willows which overhung a rapid stream, they dined, and slept two hours, and then rose refreshed for further labor. At night they raised low tents, greatly assisted by Hahnee, who was accustomed to the work, and slept on fresh grass, cut from the prairie.

To secure a supply of water, they were content to follow the winding of the river for several days, though this lengthened their journey, and carried them further south than they had proposed. But one evening, as they were selecting a convenient place for the encamp-

ment, Hahnee came up to her mistress, with an expression of fear in her large dark eyes, and said, —

“It is not good to raise the lodges here. The redskins of the prairies love not their pale brothers. See! the strangers have come on the trail of their enemies; the fires are yet hot; the bows are left behind; the chief will send his warriors to bring the bows. The pale-faces do not wish to kill the warriors, who will go back to tell the chief to bring the tribe on the war-path. Why should the warriors be slain? They have squaws and little ones to mourn for them. Then will not my pale brothers leave the path of the red-skins, and walk on their own path in peace.”

“It is wise counsel, Hahnee,” said Mrs. Avondale; “and I know that your Christian brothers will agree to avoid contention, for they are forbidden to shed blood unnecessarily. Weary as we are, my friends, it will be advisable that we should retrace our steps for some distance, to avoid leaving a trail from hence; then we can strike out in a new direction. We may yet be fortunate enough to fall in with the river again. It has long curved towards the south; it will probably wind round the high ground before us, and return to the north, and by taking the chord of the bow, we shall gain time, avoid the Indians, and perhaps find the river again, or some other that may prove as useful to us.”

Mrs. Avondale's advice was immediately followed, and the toil-worn travellers reluctantly resumed their burdens; and those who carried no load were, in fact, the least able to proceed at this late hour. Leaving the river, they marched forward, directly east, for some miles, frequently alarmed by sounds which they could

not fancy were produced by the wild animals of the woods or plains, but were really the cries of children and the barking of dogs from an Indian encampment.

At midnight, with one consent, they halted, completely worn out. Hahnee alone preserved strength and energy enough to raise a tent to shelter her mistress and Ellen from the night dews. They had nothing left to eat but potatoes, and they did not dare to make a fire to cook them, but, faint and weary, lay down supperless, to take a short rest before morning recalled them to toil.

Pat, tired as he had been, was the first to wake, and rousing his companion, he said,—"What will we be doing for breakfast, Mike? Sure, thin, isn't this a bad bit! But wasn't myself seein' a big turkey sittin' up in yon tree, and lookin' bould at me like, seein' I wasn't carryin' a gun nohow, by rason of makin' a hullabulloo to tell the savages where we were? And wouldn't you be takin' yer bow, and hittin' him entirely, Mike, honey? Sure wouldn't he be good for breakfast?"

Mike was but a novice in bow practice; but William had practised archery, as a sport, in England, so he was called to assist, and Ellen, hearing them move, soon joined the party, delighted to teach and direct them. "The bird is very wise," said she; "do not let it see you come near; hide behind the bushes. I see many in the tree, and we must all shoot together. Now then!"

Even Pat had been provided with a bow, so four arrows flew into the tree, and two birds fell from it. One lay helplessly struggling, but the other ran swiftly along the ground, with the arrow stuck

through its wing. Pat, ambitious of the honor of capturing a turkey, or fired by the pangs of hunger, while Mike was despatching the struggling bird with his knife, pursued the fugitive with such speed that he caught it by the tail. The enraged bird immediately assailed him with feet, wing, and beak, overthrowing, trampling, beating, and pecking him, till his cries brought up William and Ellen. A blow on the head stunned the pugnacious turkey, which had already lost much blood, and a good many feathers also, in the conflict with Pat. Then Mike beheaded the bold bird on the spot, and laden with their game, the sporting party returned in triumph to exult over the lazy sleepers, and to venture, in a thick grove, to light a fire, that the turkeys might be cooked before they resumed their journey.

"Will we find the nest, Mike," said the untiring Pat. "Sure turkeys' eggs are big, and good for atin'."

Pat was well acquainted with the haunts of the turkeys. He crept beneath the brushwood of the thicket, near the tree where the birds were perched, and soon discovered several nests. Two contained eggs; the rest young birds in various stages of progress; some only a few days hatched. They chose a dozen of the freshest-looking of the eggs, and half a dozen of the largest birds, and before they extinguished the fire, cooked them in readiness for supper, in case they should be too tired to prepare them at night.

Then they set out again, persevering in their direct course, and trusting to fall on some stream, for the ground was still undulating, and none of the mountain rivers continued in a straight direction. But a new impediment arose: it was plain that the strength of

Mrs. Avondale was giving way. So lately recovered from a serious indisposition, and so long unused to active exercise, she was unable to sustain the continued fatigue, and they saw with dismay the necessity that she must have rest, dangerous as it was to linger, and attract the attention of the various tribes of marauding Indians who infested the prairies, and especially the banks of rivers. "We have skins, and axes to cut poles, and strong arms to wield them," said William. "Mr. Marlin will soon nail together the sort of litter that will be easy for Mrs. Avondale."

"Ay, ay, no fear of that," replied Dick. "Let me have the orders, and I'll soon rig up a tight craft as is fit for this voyage, and lend a hand to bear away with the mistress. Is it fall to, captain?"

Captain Scruton having signified his permission, the men cut down two slender, young trees for the poles, and Dick nailed a dried buffalo-skin to them; to this they added an awning, to shield the sufferer from the sun of noon, and she was then compelled to yield to their kind wishes; and lying down in the litter was carried by the willing men, though she was truly distressed that she should thus add to the already heavy burdens. Moreover, it was two days before they reached any water, and their suffering from thirst was extreme; neither were the turkeys, which they occasionally shot with their arrows, sufficient to satisfy the appetite of so many hard-working men. Buffaloes had certainly been seen at a distance, but they had no wish to attract the Indians by using the gun, and they had not much confidence in their own skill with the silent arrow, against these formidable beasts. But at length the river lay before them, delicious to their parched

lips, and swarming with fish; and soon rod, line and net were engaged, and a plentiful supply of large, delicious white fish made an excellent addition to their diet. The scenery about this river differed greatly from that on the banks of the stream where they had been lately encamped. High cliffs hung over the water crowned with thick woods, now in their summer garb of bright green. Willows bent over the edge of the rocks, and beneath the forest trees was a thick undergrowth of rose-bushes, already covered with their rich, crimson honors, while the glades were purple with rhododendrons. This was really an enchanting region, and but for the continual dread of Indian aggression, even the toil of the journey might have been pleasant; but a constant watchfulness and uneasiness could not be prevented. The young men would not have been so deeply anxious on account of their own safety, but it was a serious responsibility to have to protect all the helpless beings in their train.

They were unwilling to quit this beautiful spot, and lingered to take a day's rest, which revived the women and the old man, and enabled the rest to search the woods for game. They saw some herds of the stately wapiti, called by the Americans the elk, but were yet too unskilful in the use of the bow to succeed in bringing one down, and Mrs. Avondale warned them to beware of using fire-arms, for this fertile district was certain to be haunted by the Indians. When they resumed their journey they proceeded through woods broken at intervals into lovely glades, that afforded them charming spots for encampment; and though their rest was often broken by strange sounds, the cries of

unknown nocturnal animals, or some distant troop of Indians, they were unmolested for several days; and still keeping within a short distance of the river, accomplished many miles of their journey, living on fish, young birds, and the much-prized potatoes, which were at length entirely consumed. And now they once more reached one of the curious wooded mountains, that stand apart from any chain on the vast prairies of the Far West. They must either cross or skirt this wide-spreading *butte*, and they preferred to keep the low ground, and wind round it, though still marching near to the wood, to have the benefit of shade, for the sun had now attained great power, and the heat exhausted them more than the labor of walking. They all dragged themselves slowly along, except Pat who chose his usual mode of locomotion, leaping from tree to tree, and Ellen, who had been so long inured to the free, open-air life, that she never tired, but rambled leisurely among the trees, continually finding some new plant, insect, or bird, to bring to Mr. Rodney, that she might learn its name and nature, and he kindly imparted instruction to the unsophisticated girl, and the neglected William Arncliffe, who equally longed ardently for the knowledge which circumstances had hitherto prevented them from obtaining.

At length the sun became overcast; the sky was one gray cloud, so low, that it seemed to rest actually on the mountain top; and a heavy languor oppressed the travellers. They were compelled to rest; Mrs. Avondale had fainted in the sultry atmosphere; some were lying on the ground, some looking round for water to refresh them, some fanning themselves ineffectually



with green boughs ; but all energy was suspended, and it was evident that they could not yet proceed on their journey.

“There is something appalling in this heat without sun,” said Harold. “What does it portend, my sage tutor? The birds that cheered our morning hours with their whistle, and chatter, and strange un-English choral sounds, are now silent ; the restless squirrel and opossum are still ; even the vexatious insects that ceaselessly war against us have made a truce. Nature has fallen asleep, and I feel inclined to lie down on this flowery bank, and sleep too.”

“I would not advise you to sleep under the trees, or your sleep may be eternal,” replied Rodney. “A storm is at hand ; this lower ground is covered with tall trees, conductors of the electric fluid, and my opinion is, that we should be safer on the bare, open mountain top.”

“And be drowned by a torrent from the clouds we shall intrude on !” exclaimed Harold. “Well, it is a choice of death by fire or water. What do you say, Captain Scruton? Are we to climb, tired as we are?”

The straggling forces were collected, and reluctantly yielded to climb the mountain, Peggy murmuring that there was nothing like a good tree in a “thunner” shower ; but the wiser heads denied the fact. Wearily they ascended through the brakes and briars to the bare crags that formed the height. But even here, not a breath of air fanned their heated faces ; and exhausted and panting, they sat down on the fragments of rock till the voice of the storm broke on their ears. A tremendous crash — the thunder rather bursting than rolling — reverberated among the rocks with deafening roar ;

while at the same moment the lightning, in bright streams, seemed a fiery shower descending from the heavens, even to the very feet of the startled travellers. The next minute the rain fell in torrents over them; and in terror and awe, Peggy cried out,—“Will it be, Mr. Rodney, yer honner, that the Lord himself is being angered with us, sinners as we are, by rason of our comin’ over the say among the haythens? Ochone! Will, ye unlucky gossoon, why were ye set on laving ould Ireland? Won’t we be drown’t entirely, seeing its Noah’s flood comin’ down on our heads, and we never havin’ the blessed ark to be shelthering us?”

“Will I be showin’ ye an illigant shelther,” said Pat, “and niver a three nigh it, by no manner of manes?”

“Sure then, Pat, honey,” said Mary, “it’s you that is the sharp gossoon. Won’t I be glad to see mother inside of that same cabin.”

The lad laughed as he led them for some yards along the face of a wall of rock; then forcing his way through a thicket of low brushwood, pointed out a small opening in the rock.

“Would there be a bear inside, Pat, honey, and me fearing to face him?” said Mary.

“Niver a bar at all,” replied the boy. “Wasn’t I going over them myself, and seeing what nate, dhry lodgins were here?”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

A Labyrinth of Caves.—A Thunder-storm.—The River Barrier.—The Unmanageable Raft.—John's uncomfortable Position.—A difficult Haul.—Total Destitution.—John's Dread of Water.

PAT boldly took the lead, crawling through the opening; he was followed by Harold, who took care to convey a gun with him. The passage was too narrow for more than one to pass, and they gradually descended, till Harold, hearing the sound of water before them, caught hold of the boy, and insisted on his proceeding no further till they had procured lights. They drew back, therefore; and making some pine torches, which they lighted beneath the shelter of the mouth of the cave, Harold himself led the way; and one after another the whole party followed the pioneers, glad to escape the storm. They soon reached a broad stream which cut off their progress, as it flowed across the pass towards some hidden outlet of the mountains; and here the cave became wider and loftier, but was quite dark. This river was a formidable obstacle; but the unfearing boy, looking over the shoulder of Harold, said—"Sure it's noways deep, yer honner; and wouldn't we be helpin' the faymales, the craturs?"

"No doubt you could afford them a great deal of assistance, Pat," replied Harold, "but I prefer to lead the way myself. Fall back and wait, my boy."

Then, seeing the water was not more than two feet

deep, Harold waded through ; and holding up his light, penetrated through a winding passage on the opposite side into a large dry cave, so lofty, that though only a few narrow crevices in the roof afforded light and ventilation, it did not seem to want air. From this central chamber many branches led, ascending or descending to other caves, all dry and clean, and apparently never having been visited by man since their formation. From the roof of one cave hung numerous beautiful stalactites, some forming columns, and all glittering in the light of the torches, till the scene resembled a fairy palace. In fact the whole mountain, which was of limestone, seemed to be honeycombed into caves which might have afforded an impregnable retreat to an army.

"Gloomy as it is," said Mr. Rodney, "we ought to thank God for this temporary shelter from a storm such as, I have never seen surpassed, except in the tropics ; here we are safe, and the flowing water cools the atmosphere delightfully."

"But I should like to be in the open air, that I might look on the storm," said Ellen. "I love to hear the voice of Almighty God in the thunder, and see the fire of heaven come down, as it will come on the last day, to destroy the world. Do come with me, Mr. Rodney, and talk to me, as you talk to William, of the wonders of electricity. I think I can understand you."

Mr. Rodney could rarely refuse Ellen any request, and followed by William, who wore a look of great awe, they returned to the mouth of the cave, to watch the blue lightnings dart along the dark clouds with a velocity the eye could scarcely follow ; and as they stood they saw it strike a withered elm not far from

them, rending the immense trunk, the splinters of which fell at their feet. The dry tree blazed up, and communicated its flames even to the green wood near, spreading from tree to tree, till the watchers shrunk back into the shelter of the cave to escape from the awful conflagration. But the rain, which had ceased, again poured down in one great mass of water. Ellen, who put forth her hand to welcome the precious stream, declared it was warm water; and this quenched the burning woods and cooled the heated atmosphere. The eyes of Ellen were raised in wonder and adoration; she forgot her own weakness and the perils that surrounded her, while she contemplated the mighty works of her Heavenly Father. William, pale and agitated, was kneeling down, his face turned from the scene, in fervent prayer.

“You can never be in the wrong to pray, William,” said Mr. Rodney; “but remember to pray in faith, nothing doubting. In the midst of peril, the Christian can ever say:—

“Thou, O Lord, art with me still,  
Thy friendly crook shall give me aid,  
And guide me through the dreadful shade.”

They returned to the inner caves with thankful hearts, to wait in peace and submission for the termination of the storm, which, however, continued through the day and night; and as Pat's desirable “dhry lodg-ins” were not furnished with food, they were compelled to fast till the cessation of the rain enabled them to go out to forage. Then Pat and Mike looked out for nests; William and Ellen sought for fruit, with which the bushes were laden, but the greater part was yet unripe. The rest of the men took out their bows in

the faint hope of meeting with game. Towards evening the boys came in with a bag of turkeys; Ellen and William brought a basket of really ripe strawberries, and some very acid white raspberries, the juice of which, however, when mingled with cold water, formed a pleasant beverage.

The sportsmen produced two small but full-grown deer. They had seen on the plains a herd of buffaloes; but they were careering wildly, as if pursued, and it was therefore suspected that Indian hunters were in the field, whom the small party had no wish to encounter, and, therefore, withdrew with their first spoil, proposing to remain in the caves for a day or two till the Indians had left the neighborhood. The deer were skinned, and the hides washed and prepared by Hahnee, who made a bag of part of the leather, in which Dick could carry his tools more conveniently than in the heavy box. The rest of the skins were rolled up to be carried off by the women, to supply garments for the poor boys, who were in bad condition.

The old schoolmaster enjoyed the good broth made from the venison, for the tough buffalo or elk meat defied his powers of mastication, and he murmured over his privations to his friendly countrywomen. "It's not the mate wer'e nading, Peggy," said he; "sure it's not aqual to the potato, and that's the truth; and isn't that same the best gift of God; and we never thankful enough for it, sinners as we were, in our own blessed land?"

But the delicate turkey-stew and the broth revived the old man, and enabled him to make further exertion when necessary; and after a few days' rest, and sending out spies to observe the country, they con-

cluded the Indians had departed, and resolved to make no longer delay; for at this season the heat of the sun prevented them from travelling at mid-day, and retarded their progress as much as the cold of winter. They therefore resumed their burdens and their toilsome march, carrying with them a tolerable supply of cooked meat for the provision of a day or two. Their first care was to wind round the mountain, to fall again on the river they had left, and, penetrating the thick wood, they gladly regained the high banks, and then determined to rest and have a fish dinner. But they were concerned to observe that the river deviated now considerably to the northeast, which was not the course they proposed to take. Trusting, however, that this was only one of the sinuosities caused by the alternate rise and fall of the ground, they marched along the banks till the evening of the second day, when the sight of a ridge of hills alarmed them, and they found with vexation that at this place the river abruptly turned off directly north. Swollen by the recent rain, it was too deep and broad to be forded by foot-passengers, and they looked with dismay on this formidable barrier to their progress.

"This is what our Yankee neighbors would call a fix," said Harold. "Now, we have the choice of wandering along the banks of this capricious river towards unknown regions, or venturing to ford it in the face of danger. What must we determine, Captain Scruton, land or water?"

"I have often thought that a light boat would be of immense service to us," answered he, "and I have no doubt Marlin could build such a craft. But, then,

look at the danger of remaining on this exposed spot till it was ready to launch."

Mrs. Avondale suggested that the Indians made temporary canoes of raw buffalo-skin, stretched over a slender frame-work; but, alas! no buffaloes had been seen since they resumed their journey, therefore this scheme was not feasible.

"What d'ye say to a raft again?" asked Dick. "There's timmer enow, and I've my tools yet; no thanks to them savages, who'd have bagged them all, if we'd not looked sharp."

"A raft it is, Marlin," said Scruton. "Pipe all hands, and be brisk, my lads."

There was nothing the boys liked better than to have work before them, and they were soon all employed, cutting down young trees of the proper length, or lopping boughs to cross the main spars; and before they were ready for moving next morning a raft was launched, capable of transporting the whole party in two trips. Skins and furs were spread over the rough fabric to make seats, and, with two rude paddles, Captain Scruton and Marlin undertook to conduct the raft across. The first trip was perfectly successful: the five women, Dennis and Pat were happily landed; but in the second, the force of the stream having carried the raft much lower down, it struck on a hidden rock, and was capsized. The men had to swim or be dragged to land, and with some difficulty Scruton and Dick succeeded in saving the raft and paddles, which were still needed, as all the baggage remained yet to be brought across.

But Captain Scruton had sprained his arm with his



strenuous efforts, and was no longer useful. Dick, too, was completely exhausted, and as he lay back on the grass to recover himself, he called out, "You lads, just look over that there craft, and see if she be sound, afore we launch her again. The stream runs terrible strong hereaway, and it'll take two stout pair of arms to carry her over again."

Harold and John were of opinion that they possessed "terribly stout arms;" and as Scruton was out of condition, and they were willing to spare Dick further exertion, they at once set out with the raft, which they carried over tolerably well, as it had now drifted lower than the hidden rocks. Then they carefully piled upon it the property which had been left on the bank, and set out to return with their valuable cargo, anxiously watched by all, especially by Dick, who angrily denounced their presumption in undertaking "a thing they knew naught about."

They had paddled to the middle of the stream, when they again struck against some sunken tree or rock. The shock caused John to drop his paddle, and the raft drifted round, and was then carried down the river by the force of the current, against which Harold, by his single effort, could not contend. Rapidly the laden raft ran down, followed along the banks by the anxious watchers, who labored vainly to keep up with the speed of the uncontrolled craft; and after they had run half a mile, Dick pointed out in alarm that a lower valley lay before them, to which the river must descend by rapids or falls.

"It's all over with them!" cried he to Mike, who alone had kept up with his speed. "There'll not be a soul nigh to lend 'em a hand, and me blown and wake

as a babby. Ye see, Mike, this here's not that sort of work I'se used to, and I'se altogether better wi' my hands nor my legs. Now, wait a bit, lad; I've gotten my breath; let's make another push, and come in, any how, afore all's lost."

The devoted raft, as it approached the rapids, was swept forward with such swiftness, that the only use Harold could make of his paddle was to ward off any concussion against the rocks that stood up in the water. The current had carried them near to the east banks, and they watched keenly for a chance of escape, till, seeing a line of willows hanging over the river before them, Harold pointed them out to John by signs, for it was impossible for words to be heard amidst the roar of the waters, broken by large rocks scattered over the bed, and pouring down the descent. They were fortunately under the trees, and, catching at the overhanging branches, they remained suspended a few feet above the water, as if on a gallows, while they saw the raft and its valuable contents flying down the river at railway speed. In spite of their perilous situation, and the vexatious loss of all their possessions, Harold could not forbear a momentary laugh at the ridiculous position of himself and his companion, as he looked round to consider how they might attempt to plant their feet finally on *terra firma*.

"John, man," he cried out, "you are not really hanged; you must try to scramble up into the tree, for it is not very pleasant to look down at the deep water racing below you."

Harold set him the example by transferring his hold, one hand after another, to a higher and stronger bough, and from thence, by stages, he reached a safer position,

and alighted on the cliffs above; but John remained stupefied and motionless.

"I'se drop soon, master," whined he. "I've gettin' no feel of my hands; I'se numbed, like. What's to come on me?"

Harold was provoked at his cowardice; but was glad just then to be hailed by the robust Dick, whose strength would be useful in extricating the fearful man. Dick commenced by reviling him for his want of pluck; then turning to Harold, he said, "It's not a bit of use talking; the fellow's out of his head, and I'se have to run down and lash him fast, or he'll drop afore I can fetch a rope to haul him up. It's lucky that lad Mike brought a hawser over last trip. Now, just lend me that strap you have round you."

Harold took off his leather belt, and Dick lightly slid down the tree with it, to the place where the helpless man was clinging, and after expostulating and threatening in vain, he succeeded in passing the belt round him, and binding him fast to the stout extended bough; then leaving him in a most uncomfortable position, attached to the horizontal bough, Dick ascended to the cliff, muttering in his anger, "I'd have cut him down at once, and let him take his chance in 't water, but it runs awful strong, and he'd been dashed to bits among yon rocks, afore his senses came back; and I'd niver have gotten' him hauled out, for you see these here banks are like walls."

Dick started off for the rope; and Harold, leaning over the cliff, endeavored to rouse the distracted man to exertion, assuring him that they would save him, though it would be hard work. But John continued his senseless howlings, till Dick returned with a coil of

thick rope, which had been very useful on several occasions. One end of this he passed round an immense tree that grew on the cliff, giving it to Harold to hold while he descended with the other. "Now hold that rope fast," said he to Harold, "but don't you be trying to haul till I come back; it's not in you to do it. It'll take two hands, and more if we had 'em for he's a stunning weight, and he'll make no fend for himself."

Then he went down, and passed the noose round the trembling man, including the strap and the bough, from which he could not readily release him; and assuring him that if he did not try to help himself, he would be down in the foaming water below, he severed the bough with the axe he always carried, and holding him by the collar a moment, to lessen the strain to Harold above, he gradually allowed him to swing loose, and left him shrieking with terror, to run quickly up to assist Harold, who, with William, who had luckily come up, was straining every nerve to hold the rope.

The three strong men, then, in spite of his struggles and cries, at length hauled the cowardly John to firm ground. He was however a good deal bruised and scratched with the boughs of the trees, which he had made no exertion to avoid, and almost senseless with fright. As soon as they had landed him in safety, they could not forbear a hearty laugh, till William said, "Oh, Mr. Crofton, where is the raft? Have we lost every thing?" There could not be a doubt of the fact; every thing was certainly lost. Food, clothing, every necessary for comfort, and even for existence, was gone. No wonder they felt reluctant to return to their expecting friends, to report this irretrievable misfortune.

By this time John had recovered his senses, and was sheepishly and foolishly endeavoring to excuse his troublesome poltroonery. "Say no more, man," answered Dick. "Thou'st made a bonnie job on't fra' beginning to end; running a sound craft reet amang rapids; and then when we might have had a chance of some salvage, we had thee to mind, and had to haul thee up like a lass or a babby. I thought better on thee, man."

"It were all that boiling watter an under my feet, Dick," answered John; "I'd feight savages, or stick a bear, or ride an unbrocken horse, wi' onybody, but I niver could bide to think on drownin'."

"Ay, ay," replied Dick; "they say some's not born for that, and likely you'll be one of that sort. Come away, let's be off to read off our log. There's little chance of picking up any wreck; if we were to follow yon unlucky craft, I reckon it would be lost time."

## CHAPTER XXX.

Taking Stock. — Looking out for Salvage. — The Contrivances of the Destitute. — Prairie Travelling. — The dry Desert. — A Night of Storm. — The perplexed Travellers. — The lost Trail.

THE distress of the elders of the party was very great, when they were informed of the total loss of the raft. The women wept for their household utensils, kettles, cups, every thing that custom has rendered necessary to civilized life; Mr. Rodney deeply regretted the loss of his books, the boys who had nothing to lose, only laughed at the catastrophe; but Captain Scruton was frantic with indignation and despair. All his money, his papers, his plate, all the heavy salvage of the *Nugget* with which he had for months encumbered himself and others, every thing was swept away in a moment, and the money-loving man was utterly subdued by the blow.

He besought the men to pursue the raft, and endeavor to save his strong-box at any rate; and declared that he would set out alone, rather than relinquish the chance. Then Dick, with his accustomed obedience, and Harold, who felt that he was in some measure answerable for the disaster, agreed to accompany him; and proceeding along the banks of the river they descended the rapid looking carefully among the rocks, round which the river boiled and foamed, for any trace of the lost raft; but, for some time, in vain.

At length, about two miles from the place where they had crossed, they came on one of the large spars of the raft, entangled amongst the reeds at the side, and around which a buffalo-skin was still rolled. They drew out the skin, and found that it enveloped a large canister of powder, which was a desirable acquisition, for the men had saved four guns, and all carried shot-bags. Further on some linen and clothes were floating; the scattered contents of broken portmanteaus; and these, on the now shallow water, were easily recovered. All the heavy articles were probably lodged among the rocks of the rapid, for nothing more could be found; and they slowly returned, his two companions enduring, with admirable patience, the alternate moody silence and vehement reproaches of the disappointed and desponding Scruton.

"It is a serious matter, Mr. Rodney," said he, when they had rejoined their friends, "for a man at my time of life to have to begin the world again; who will trust a man with a good ship, who has lost his own without even saving the papers? I am a ruined man, sir."

"The world is full of trials and disappointments, Captain Scruton," replied Mr. Rodney, mildly; "but we have a sure consolation. Remember Him who said to his disciples, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'"

Scruton was silent; he was not an irreligious man, but had an inveterate habit of complaining; and his sinful love of money demanded the trials with which God had mercifully visited him. He gradually became more composed and resigned, and finally joined his friends in an earnest thanksgiving to God, that, amidst these light afflictions, no lives had been lost.

"Now, my boys," said Harold, "you see what we have before us: fourteen mouths to feed, the weak to help, and the desponding to cheer; hundreds of miles to march, without guide or compass. But God is with us, as He was with the Israelites in the wilderness, and assuredly will save us. Let us consider our condition: we have four guns, and a fair amount of ammunition."

"And I have my bow, and a quiver of arrows," said Ellen eagerly; "and mamma has my silver cup in her pocket, which we must all drink from. We have, too, the bearskins on which we are sitting. Indeed, brother Harold, we have many more useful things than some of my red-skin brothers had in their lodges. God is very good to us."

"We must, however, try to shoot a deer or two," said Mr. Rodney, "for the special purpose of turning their skins into water-bags; for we have yet to cross the dry desert; so look round, my good boys."

"We'll start any hour ye like," replied Dick. "What's your will, captain? I'se warrant we get on; so niver be down-hearted at losses. More as is gone, less we've got to hug; and we'se carry t' mistress's hammock briskly now. And then, captain, wasn't it lucky that Hannah, God bless her, rigged me up this here satchel for my tools; and me wearing it cannily over my shoulder all times has saved 'em. A man must be a fool if he cannot get on grandly when he has hammer and nails. What's to ail him?"

"We'd do better wi' a few stout horses," said John.

"Ay, ay, man," answered Dick; "I consate thou canst steer a horse better nor a raft."

"Every man at his trade," said John, tartly.

"And thy trade ought to be out of harm's way, man,"



replied Dick, "for there's little pluck in thy big body." Harold undertook the defence of John, who had, he asserted, courage enough after his manner: when his blood was up, he was determined enough in subduing an enemy, or a stubborn horse; but to be suspended over a roaring torrent was an unaccustomed trial, and no wonder he lost his head.

Very light were their incumbrances now; and they marched on quickly; for to bear Mrs. Avondale's litter was no fatigue, when shared by so many. They went forward in the usual direction, speedily losing sight of the river, and all keenly looking out for game or any other food; while Peggy and Mary, in sore trouble, discussed the mode of cooking and dishing the expected meat, now, in their destitution of utensils of every kind. "If we'd had only a bit saucepan," said John, "ye might have boiled some of these here nettles, Peggy; they're not bad eating at a pinch."

"Don't we know that same, Mr. John?" said Mary; "and we thankful to ate them in the famine. Sure, then, Mr. Marlin, maybe you'd be thrying to make us a pan. Wouldn't you be usin' them same tools you're thanking Hannah for keepin' to you altogether?"

"Now Mary, my honey," answered Dick, "you know better nor that; I'se not turn my back on man living for carpenter's work; but as to riggin' up your pots and kettles, it's out of my line entirely. So we'll have to turn savages, and eat our meat uncooked, I reckon."

However, Hahnee assured them that, when time permitted, and material was at hand, she would make a bark bucket that would bear to be hung over the fire. They marched till dusk, when they encamped in a hollow, where a small pool of water afforded them refresh-

ment; and the reeds which grew around it sheltering wild-fowl, Mr. Rodney and Harold, even at the risk of attracting the Indians, shot two brace, while Pat rifled the nests, and, though too late for eggs, obtained four fat young birds, and, spitted on reeds, they roasted or broiled them as well as they could, dished them up on large leaves, and, with pocket-knives, and sharpened reeds for forks, contrived to make a hearty meal.

In the morning, after eating the remainder of the fowls, they set out cheerfully, and went on till the scorching rays of the sun compelled them to seek shelter in a grove, where the gobbling of turkeys filled them with hopes of a dinner; and the sportsmen obtained an abundant supply of food for the day. But, as they went forward, trees became scarce, and very soon only a stunted ash or thorny cactus broke the monotonous expanse of prairie which stretched before them, the high grass rising to the shoulders of the tallest of the party, and grievously impeding the progress of the shorter and weaker. Their sole consolation might have been that it seemed to be untrampled by man, if they had not observed that it was likewise untrampled by beast. "Certainly, Rodney," said Harold, "we ought not to name this region a desert, for the grass grows bountifully; but, as we cannot feed on grass, we might as well be crossing the Great Sahara."

"The grass is not without its use, Harold," answered Rodney; "it somewhat shields us from the burning sun, and we can, moreover, cut it down for beds and for fuel, for you see it is so dried with the heat of the sun that it will burn green. One thing is alarming: I see no water." This was, indeed, an alarming fact. One of the few skins saved from the wreck of the raft was

with difficulty made up into a sort of bag or bottle, to be filled when they reached a stream; but it was not till another day had passed that they came on a basin in one of the hollows of the undulating prairie. In this they found a tolerable supply of clear water, and, moreover, some reeds and stunted willows that grew about it afforded some hope of birds; therefore they resolved to remain till next day on the spot.

Hahnee, with the keen observation of an Indian, soon pointed out to Harold the mark of a hoof on the edge of the pool, which she pronounced to be that of a buffalo, and the hope of obtaining real flesh-meat cheered the strong men. They made out a trail, which they followed for two or three miles, leaving the younger lads to search for nests, and to cut down some broad reeds, at the instigation of Hahnee, to be woven into buckets for holding water.

The sportsmen at length came in sight of the dark herd; but the bare prairies afforded no thicket to shelter them, and they were compelled to stoop and make their way, concealed by the high grass, till they came within rifle-shot. Then they divided and formed a curved line, arranged so that there should be no danger of shooting each other, and each selecting a choice animal, they fired. A loud bellowing succeeded, and the herd started off wildly; but one had fallen, and a second, with horrid roars, was staggering slowly after the rest, when a second shot prostrated it, and the triumphant hunters hastened forward to finish their work of slaughter. Then, after skinning the beasts, they cut up the meat, and leaving the heads and offal, packed the rest in the skins, which they suspended to their rifles,

and managed to convey the desirable acquisition to their greatly-satisfied companions.

Steaks were broiled for immediate consumption, and a large quantity of the meat was cut in slices and dried in the sun. Hahnee had woven one basket or bucket so compactly that it would not only contain water, but, hung at some height over the fire, they used it to boil down the coarse and tough parts of the meat into soup, and the addition of some of the delicate prairie birds which they had obtained gave the soup a pleasant flavor. Thus they fared luxuriously for two days, during which they rested, curing the meat, preparing the skins, twisting the sinews into ropes, and cutting up one skin into lassoes, to enable them to capture animals less powerful than the buffalo. They wove more baskets and buckets, and above all, some platters, which, though not symmetrically formed, were as useful as porcelain, and gave them once more the comfort of eating from dishes and plates. They set out again cheerfully, though heavily laden with water for two days' consumption, and meat for double that time; but they were not sorry to leave the muddy remains at the bottom of the pool which they had emptied, and continued their march till the second day exhausted the water, and they still saw before them the wide prairie, more dreary and monotonous than ever, while the fervid heat of the sun made all exertion painful; and they were thankful when, on the third day of their journey, a thick mist gradually spread round them, shrouding every object that lay more than two yards distant, and shielding them effectually from the dazzling rays of the sun, though they suffered still from the close and sultry state of the air.

At length the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the rain fell. The unfortunate and unsheltered travellers, blinded with the mist and rain, and utterly confused with their situation, ran from side to side, seeking the few coverings they possessed, or crouching under the long grass to escape the pouring rain. Mr. Rodney alone seemed to retain his composure, and it was some time before he could induce his companions to gather prudently into one spot, that the skins and cloaks might be spread to the most advantage, and, above all, that the guns might be carefully protected.

Then, crouched close together, the dismayed party, amidst the darkness, the rain, the rattling thunder, and the flashing lightning, remained through the tedious night of incessant storm, some weeping, some murmuring, some praying, but all unable to sleep or rest. At length the thunder died away, and though the rain continued to fall, a faint gleam of daylight enabled them to observe the desolation around them: the tall grass bent down with the heavy rain, the pale faces of their fellow-watchers, the drenched garments clinging round them as they reclined on the wet and swampy ground, with the wide, unvarying, cheerless waste around them. "This will never do, Rodney," said Harold desperately. "To march through the rain would be more tolerable than this inglorious submission, this crouching to bear 'the pelting of the pitiless storm.' Let us try to shake off this torpor by quick motion at once, for I conclude we need not wait for breakfast, as we have not yet sunk to such a state of barbarism as to eat our meat uncooked."

"And, sure, His name be praised, yer honner," said Peggy; "wont we be gettin' a cup of good wather

again, seein' the buckets are brimful, and it's little of that same we've been tastin' these three days, musha!"

The water from the buckets was carefully transferred to the large leather bag for future emergency, after each had used Ellen's silver cup to obtain a draught as a mild breakfast; then they marshalled in order to set out; but, after a little hesitation, Dick, with a perplexed look, said, "Would ye please, captain, to sing out the word, as to what point we're to steer."

"East it is, Marlin," said Scruton. "Of course, we must go on in the usual direction."

"Ay, ay!" answered Dick. "East it is, surely; but would any gentleman, as has larning about points, please to signal which may be east, for I'll be shot if I can make out our course anyhow."

The travellers looked round in dismay; the mist and the storm had completely bewildered them; not a gleam of sun could be seen to guide them, and on every side lay the same monotonous grassy undulations, stretched as far as the eye could extend, without a single landmark. They could not even make out their own trail now; for the heavy rain, which had levelled all the long grass alike, had completely obliterated it. No one could remember how he lay down in the darkness and tempest, and each looked in his neighbor's face for the information he vainly sought. Every one recollected that the litter had been set down directly on the line of their course, but unfortunately it had been *unrigged*, to make a temporary shelter during the rain, and they could not rely on the position of the tent, which had been often changed. "We seem to have fallen into an unlucky dilemma," said Mr. Rodney. "I propose that we put

ourselves wholly into the hands of Captain Scruton. Surely the prairie cannot be more difficult to navigate than the wide pathless ocean."

"That would be quite true, Mr. Rodney," answered Scruton; "and, though I say it myself, you couldn't be in better hands than mine if I had either compass, sun, or star; but you might as soon expect a blind man to find his way across the great desert, as for the best pilot to steer without God's light or man's contrivances."

"The sun," observed the schoolmaster, dreamily, "rises in the east, and the pole-star in the north."

"Thank ye, master," said Dick; "but it doesn't take book-learning to tell that. Are ye up to giving us an inkling how we're to steer in a fog?"

"Wouldn't we better be waitin' quiet," answered the old man, "till the Almighty himself houlds out a light to us?"

"The man's no fool," said Scruton. "We must come to anchor, Marlin."

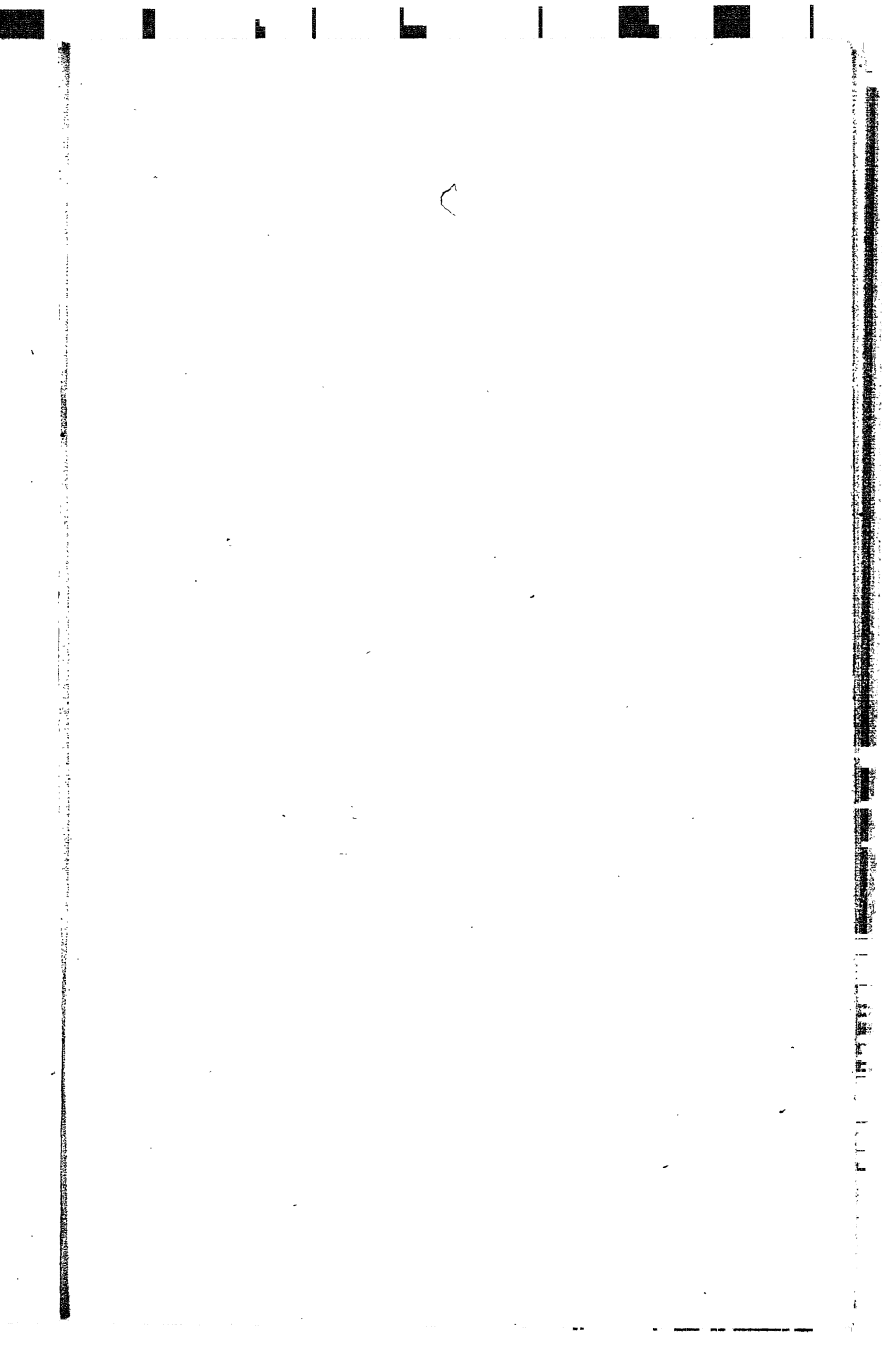
"Anchor it is, captain," replied Dick; "and dowly work it is. It's bad fighting again a storm and a dead calm, all at once."

"I cannot remain at anchor," said Harold. "Come along, boys, who'll volunteer to try and recover our trail? At all events, employment is better for us than this dull lounging in the rain. Our best plan will be to stretch off to four points."

Thereupon, Mike, William, Dick, and Harold himself, started off over the wet grass towards opposite points, examining the ground to the right and the left as they went on. John was rejected; because his master declared that he was not hawk-eyed; but Ellen,

Pat, and Hahnee made short excursions of their own accord, and one after another returned unsuccessful, the levelled grass baffling all search. In the mean time the buckets were again filled, for though the rain was not so heavy as at first, it was incessant, and they soon poured into the bag an abundant supply of water for future need.







THE FLIGHT FROM THE CONFLAGRATION.





THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Unsuccessful Researches. — Pat's Rib. — A Sight of the Sun. — The Night Owl. — The Vengeance of the Indians. — A terrible Pursuer. — A merciful Deliverance.

ALL the party now complained of hunger, and the women had tried for hours to light a fire under the shelter of the buffalo-skin, stretched over the poles of the litter; but as they could not meet with dry grass, every effort was fruitless, — they only wasted matches. Then they tried to eat the dried meat uncooked; but few could endure it, and the women and old man could not even masticate the hard, tough flesh. The explorers, after some hours' absence, returned sad and disappointed. They had been unable to discover even a broken straw to indicate the track they had passed. But, as no situation could be more miserable than their present cheerless encampment, they agreed to march forward in a straight direction, next morning, to escape, if possible, from the desert. The hours passed slowly, and the fog deepened into darkness, without any relaxation of the rain.

Worn with anxiety and watchfulness, they all slept, but woke shivering and unrefreshed, to look on the wide waste and the gray sky, still uncheered by a ray of sun, though the rain had ceased. Once more they attempted to raise a fire, Pat and Mike setting out to search under the grass for any dried remains of a former crop that

might be coaxed to burn. They had not been long employed before a loud shout from the younger boy was heard, and Harold plunged through the wet grass to ascertain the cause of the cry.

"Sure, isn't it my own rib, yer honner?" cried Pat. "And wasn't I comin' on it myself? And me losin' it in the rain; and didn't Will himself be wantin' this same to shape into a spoon? Wouldn't it be altogether good luck I was losin' it musha?"

It was really good luck, for the huge bare buffalo rib was a plain indication of the path they had come over; and leaving it as a starting-place, they now turned their faces from it with renewed hopes, in the misty direction which they trusted must be due east, and deferred their breakfast in the anxiety to escape from their melancholy encampment. They carefully kept on in a straight course through the wet grass, in which their feet became constantly entangled, and progressed slowly from the miserable spot where they had suffered so much.

After walking for an hour, a faint light in the horizon before them confirmed them in the conviction that they were really proceeding to the east. Gradually the sun broke from the clouds, vapors rose from the damp grass, and before noonday they were subdued by the scorching heat, and glad to shelter amidst the already erect green grass; and once more to eat cooked meat, and rest and sleep till the fervid heat of midday was past. The air had now become fresh and delicious, and though the sameness of the scene continued, hope urged them to great efforts; as soon they would have little more than the water-bags to encumber them, for the buffalo meat was nearly exhausted, and though the prairie birds were skimming over the grass, they were unwilling to expend

ammunition on those small creatures. Therefore they continued for two days longer to subsist on the tasteless, hard, dried meat, and the water, now warm, and tainted by the ill-cured leather bag in which it was contained. Then the hour of destitution arrived; and on the ensuing night they lay down to sleep supperless and sad. As Harold lay sleeplessly ruminating on their very unpleasant situation, he suddenly cried out to his friend, who was near him, — "Rodney, I am at a loss to know where those noisy owls can build. I have never heard before owls hooting in a barren wilderness, and I cannot understand it."

They listened, and were convinced that owls actually haunted the spot, for the hooting arose in different places. It was a still, beautiful night; and though neither moon nor stars were visible at that season, it was decidedly not dark.

"I would not have scrupled to have made a shot at the noisy birds," said Harold, "if we could have made a breakfast on them; but to eat an owl must require a needy appetite and a strong stomach. What can induce them to haunt this barren spot?"

"I suspect," said Rodney, "that field-mice and other small rodents must infest the roots of the grass; and on these animals it is probable our hooting neighbors make their nocturnal banquets."

"Brother Harold," whispered a low, gentle voice, "do you hear that strange cry? Hahnee sends me to tell you to load your gun, and watch, for that is the signal of the Indian spies, who are telling each other that unwary sleepers are here; and, if you are not very bold, Hahnee says they will come craftily, and take all our scalps."

"But I am very bold, my dear little Ellen," replied Harold; "and these wretches shall not scalp your pretty head. We must call Hahnee into council, Rodney."

"Is it worth while?" answered Rodney. "Our people are all much fatigued; ought we to rouse them from their sleep at the fanciful alarms of the Indian woman? I am tolerably well versed in the notes of the feathered tribes, and I pronounce the cries to be those of the common night-owl."

"But the cry varies, Rodney," said Harold. "It is actually a language; the notes and inflections are changed at each successive hoot. This is certainly suspicious."

"The male and female hoot in different keys," said Rodney. "But see, that energetic girl is bringing the Indian; so we may as well listen to her explanation."

"Hark!" whispered Hahnee, in a low voice of terror. "Bad Sioux man come for scalp. He say, 'Many pale-face sleep here quiet; come away, many brave! Come, take scalp, take fine robe, take slave Hahnee, and pretty White Dove.' Pale-face tink he hear night-bird; Hahnee hear Sioux word."

There was so much probability in Hahnee's conviction that they were watched by some wandering tribe that all became armed, and were soon assembled quietly to consult on the steps they should take. They had certainly little to lose except life or liberty; but these possessions were too precious to be lightly regarded.

"Considering our poverty," said Mr. Rodney, "it does seem madness in the wretches to risk their own lives merely to obtain our scalps. But there is cer-



tainly no accounting for the depraved taste of the savage. What must we do, Hahnee?"

"Shoot gun at bad night-bird," answered she, quickly. "Make him fly away."

The advice appeared sage: all the guns were made ready, and they listened for the next hooting which they were now convinced proceeded from the grass, and was much nearer to them than at first; and as soon as they had marked the spot, they all fired. A yell followed; then a dark figure sprang up and bounding through the grass fled towards the north. No more hooting was heard; but the travellers had no longer any wish to remain on the spot; they resumed their march without delay, and, favored by the cool and calm night, accomplished four or five miles before day broke, to show them the usual monotonous prospect; and they looked round in vain for animal, fruit, or herb for food.

"Musha! boys," cried Pat; "it's myself will be ladin' ye to some illigant nettles; and wouldn't I be bringin' them, av they'd behaved betther, and not be stingin' me," showing his blistered fingers.

The report of this discovery was not rapturously welcomed by the English; but the poor Irish, not unacquainted with the resources of a nettle diet, gladly set out, with a large bucket, to cut down the nettles and returned with an abundant supply. As the little water remaining in the bag was now totally unfit to drink, it was poured over the nettles; the bucket was suspended over a fire of grass, and allowed to remain till the leaves were reduced to a pulp, or, in the technical language of cookery, to a *purée*; and this mess, served on the wicker platters, and eaten with bone chop-

sticks, delusively named spoons, formed the novel and very unsubstantial breakfast.

"What a strange smell," observed Mrs. Avondale; "I cannot account for it, as the air is far from sultry; there is even a light breeze, yet there is something around us overpowering and stifling."

"Wouldn't it be the greens, madam," said Mary. "Sure, it's not use to them you'll be. It's we that had to make our males on nettles, and be thankin' God that was givin' us them same, when betther nor us were down in the famine and the faver. Praise God for His mercy."

"Amen, my good girl," answered Mrs. Avondale; "but it is not the smell of the cookery that affects me so strangely. It might be the fire; yet that is extinguished now."

"Would you be the fog comin' on us agin," cried Pat. "Sure, thin, wouldn't we be settin' up a guide-post, seein' we'll, may-be, all be lost agin."

"A good precaution, my boy," said Mr. Rodney; "but I see no appearance of fog. What is your opinion, Harold? you look anxious."

"It is no fog; it is smoke," replied he. "Do notice that dusky-gray line along the horizon, as far as the eye can reach, Rodney; I feel certain that is smoke. I smell it now myself, Mrs. Avondale."

"I fancy it is nothing more than a cloud which is about to spread over us, and give us another drenching," said Rodney.

"Mr. Crofton is right," said Mrs. Avondale, showing a white handkerchief, on which a light deposit of almost imperceptible black dust lay. "See, the ashes are already extending to us; it is a prairie fire behind

us, probably kindled by the malice of the disappointed marauders, for the purpose of overtaking us; for the wind which brought this dust will certainly bring the fire. Let us not delay our flight."

"My dear Madam," said Mr. Rodney, "though I am not accustomed to calculate prairie distances, I should pronounce the fire, if fire it really be, to be six or eight miles from us; and the fire kindled by the hand of man does not speed with the same velocity as God's lightning."

"And yet, I tell you, Mr. Rodney," replied she, "that if we cannot avoid the track of that fire, it must overtake us in an hour or two. The Indians, when thus surprised, usually light an opposing fire; that is, they draw back, and fire the grass forward, till a space is cleared on which they can safely remain as the advancing flames will be turned aside for want of fuel."

"But that would be literally placing ourselves between two fires, madam," said Mr. Rodney.

"Undoubtedly it would," replied Mrs. Avondale: "yet with perfect safety; for we should thus attain the scorched and barren ground we had ourselves cleared."

"Cleared by sending the destroying fire on before us," said Harold, "to distress and injure others as we have been distressed. It would be a selfish and cowardly measure, I think; and we should deserve that the wind should veer round, and turn the mischief on our own heads. Let us rather move onwards as quickly as we can. There is no disgrace, my boys, in running away from an enemy like fire."

"Sure, niver a bit, yer honner," said Mike; "and

wouldn't it be luck av we were comin' on a corner to turn away from it altogether?" Not putting much faith in the chance of turning a corner, they marched forward with all speed, pausing only to take breath and cast apprehensive glances behind them. Soon the smoke appeared more dense and dark; and below it, a long red line unmistakably denoted the coming conflagration.

"Will it be fire, thin!" cried Peggy. "Lord, have mercy on us! Sure, wont it be a bad ind we'll be makin' to be burnt up alive, and niver dacently buried and waked, like Christians. Ochone! my darlings! why were we comin' among haythens, that have no more sinse than to be burnin' up their own illegant meadows, and niver throublin' to make them into hay at all."

As they attained each little rising ground, the breathless travellers looked anxiously forward for some refuge, or some break in the tall grass, which supplied incessant fuel to the flames, the heat of which first withered and dried, and then devoured it.

"I'd have liked a better look-out, captain," said Dick; "but if I'd my sea eyes on, I'd pipe out, 'Land, ho!' as I make 't out yonder away. Them green bushes stretch out like a reef, and likely we'll be falling in with a new country."

It was true that, towards the north-east, a dark line indicated the presence of the trees or bushes. Where trees grew, water could not be far distant, and they went on, with renewed vigor, in the hope of placing an effectual barrier between the dreaded fire and themselves. But ever, as they looked back, they saw the lurid, blood-red wall of fire, approaching

nearer to them; they could even hear, in the dreary stillness of the prairie, a rushing sound, as if an army were on their track.

Another quarter of an hour of toil and terror passed, and now they already felt the oppressive heat of the awful conflagration behind them, and looked back fearfully on the flames shooting up in lofty columns of fire, and crowned by a dark cloud of smoke. The dried grass crackled in consuming, and black particles flew half a mile in advance, to fall in showers on the despairing fugitives; while the prairie birds, driven from their nests, but with happier facility to escape, whirred past them; and the gaunt and howling prairie wolves, regardless of the presence of their natural foe, man, fled wildly before a still more formidable enemy.

"Speed onward, my child," cried Mrs. Avondale; "your step is light; yon green belt may skirt some stream or stony hollow that may turn away the flames. Let none delay; relinquish the litter, my kind friends. I will endeavor to walk, or, as I am content to die if it be God's will, let me not impede and endanger you all."

But no one listened to her; John and Dick, the bearers, scoffed at the idea of the litter being an impediment, and trotted along with their light burden unmurmuringly. Ellen and Pat raced forward with rapid steps; Mike and William supported Peggy and Mary, whose progress was retarded by terror rather than weakness. Dennis alone seemed utterly to despair: he staggered, groaned, muttered prayers and lamentations, and finally they saw that they must assist or abandon him.

"Here, master," said Dick to Harold, "you're strong

and able; lend a hand to heave along this hammock, and I'll tow the crazy old craft. I'd niver be he as would desert a sail in distress. Ye see, he drifts about like a disabled hulk, and needs a pilot."

Harold willingly took the poles of the litter, and Dick caught up the old man, placed him on his shoulders, and then ran on with his helpless burden, satisfied that he was only doing his duty. By this time the two children had disappeared behind the low green bushes, which were now not more than three hundred yards before them, and it was hoped they might be out of danger; but the unceasing and overpowering heat, and the stifling smoke, filled the rest with a speechless horror and dread of the impending awful death by fire. Scarcely dared they look back on that devouring conflagration, which roared its threatenings, as they thought, close to their ears; and though they fled on mechanically, they no longer dared to hope; and the scorching, suffocating atmosphere prevented them from speaking.

Suddenly they were roused by a shout, and saw Pat and Ellen waving their hands, and heard them cry out, "Faster, faster! Water! water!" and at that glad cry all were nerved with new strength, and fled desperately on. Even Hahnee, who till now had refused to leave the side of her beloved mistress, darted forward with the speed of lightning to the bushes, and tore them down with her hands, to make a road for the rest of the fugitives, who followed rapidly. Already had some reached the blessed refuge, when a cry behind-startled them, and they saw that Captain Scruton, entangled in the long grass, had fallen, and the flames were actually within a few yards of him. Rodney and William

rushed back to him, and snatching him up between them, they drew him off, and succeeded in reaching the barrier with their hair scorched and their eyes smarting with the smoke and ashes.

Then all passing through the bushes and willows into a ravine, they saw with delight a broad though not deep river flowing south-east. As they reached the water, the bright-red flames caught the bushes above, and blazed up majestically; but fortunately, between the river and these trees was interposed a bed of gravelly stones, which cut off the progress of the destructive element. But unable to endure the heat and the smoke, they all plunged into the cool water, and waded across the river before they ventured to turn round and gaze on the magnificent and fearful conflagration; the blazing fragments of the shrivelled green branches were cast over the river, and fell around them; but they carefully extinguished them, that the devastation might spread no further.

"Is it dumb ye all are?" said Dennis, in a reproachful tone; "thin, what for are ye silent, whin ye should be sending up your thanks to Him who has brought us from a land of flaming fire, and set us down by the pleasant waters. What are we that He should put forth His hand to save us. Have ye none of your grand words in the fine ould Latin, Mr. Rodney. Sure, isn't that the noble tongue for praising the Lord."

Mr. Rodney was lost in contemplation of the terrible scene, and the thoughts it suggested broke out in the words of the noble hymn, *Dies Iræ*.

"If this be terrible," said Mrs. Avondale, "what will it be, then,—

'That day of wrath, that dreadful day!  
When Heaven and Earth shall pass away?'

Bowing down their heads in penitence and tears, the grateful people united in holy and sincere thanksgiving for their deliverance.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

Beyond the River. — The Footsteps on the Shore. — Project of a Canoe. — Pat's Discovery of the large Nest. — Two Strangers in the Wood. — The Trapper's Hut. — Arncliffe's Ill-fortune.

IN the mean time, the flames no longer finding fuel in the direct course of the wind, turned away along the line of bushes, south-east; and in a short time the charred and smoking hem of ashes alone remained to mark the track of the fire; and no longer in danger, the travellers recrossed the river which they now found more difficult than at first.

"Cross I must," said Captain Scruton, "to see that all is now in safety; but I am crippled. I scarcely realized the fact at first; but my ankle had been twisted in that awkward fall among the knotted grass; and I must have a jury-leg, or I shall never get on."

"There's never a spar to rig one out, captain," said Dick, "or I'd be the man to build it to order."

A shallow ford at a little distance enabled all to cross conveniently. Mike and William carried Pat and Ellen; Peggy and Mary took off shoes and stockings this time, and waded boldly through two-feet-deep water; and the strong assisted in carrying over the weak, that all might look on the scene of their peril. The bright sun shone over a black and barren wilderness, extending as far as the eye could reach, while the devouring flames were still hurrying forward down the

banks of the river, marking their path with utter desolation.

"It was useless coming back to this horrible spot," said Harold. "What in the world should we do here? We do not want to travel north, and it would be madness to follow the fire, exposed to the noonday sun and the famine of the wilderness. We must return to the opposite banks."

It was but another plunge and struggle, and fortunately the ground was level, and the river not rapid, and they were soon seated beneath some green drooping willows. Mike reported that the river was swarming with large fish; willow branches were lopped for rods, the fishing-hooks, being personal appendages, had happily been preserved in their pockets in the wreck of the stores, and were now in requisition. They speedily caught abundance of excellent white fish, and fuel being plentiful, a fire was raised, as all appeared perfectly quiet. Though the wide prairie still lay stretched before them, the ground appeared more agreeably varied; clumps of trees, and thickets of low bushes appeared here and there, and the vegetation was so much more brilliant in coloring, that Mr. Rodney felt assured that they must be entering a richer and better-watered region.

"This does not look like famine, Harold," said he; "and if we can find a tolerably secluded spot for our encampment, it would be advisable to rest here for a few days, that we may attend to Scruton's ankle, for it would never do to set out again with more invalids."

The fish, broiled over the fire by the side of the river, was heartily enjoyed; then Scruton's ankle was bathed

and bandaged; and the weary lay down to rest while the young and active looked curiously round the new country. While the children were busy searching for flowers and eggs, the young men looked for the track of animals, Harold paused before a sloping bank, which was bare of grass, and bore the marks of hoofs, and examined them closely. "Call Hahnee, Mike," said he; "I can't understand this trail."

Hahnee understood it immediately, and said, "Dis pale-face moccasin, pale-face trail," and she pointed to the boots which Harold wore, to compare them, much to his disgust, with the huge clumsy footmark on the soil; and he suggested to the woman that this was the step of an Indian. "No! no!" persisted Hahnee. "No red-skin come with pale brudda." And they could not doubt her sagacity.

Still there was an uneasy suspicion among the travellers that some wandering scalp-hunting tribe might be near, and they hastened to prepare their arms for defence. William still lingered near the trail, and endeavored to follow it, but he was not skilled in this keen and delicate craft, and he soon lost the traces, and returned to the camp disappointed.

"I had hoped, Mr. Rodney," said he, "that we might have come on the track of my unfortunate father."

"God forbid," muttered Dick to Harold. "We're a deal better without that unlucky bird among us again. And if it were to be he, I'se warrant we find him in bad company."

There were more that held the same suspicion, but Dick changed the subject by saying to Mr. Rodney, "You're a good bit book-larned, sir, and may-be you can tell how far this here river has to run afore it comes to

its natural end, and whether it would be worth our while to rig up a bit craft again as would run down canny; you see it would suit them hands as is sick and off work, rarely."

"This is certainly not one of the principal navigable rivers," answered Mr. Rodney; "but probably it will join the Platte, or one of the large rivers which eventually fall into the Missouri. It would be an admirable plan to navigate it, if it were practicable."

"It would take a bit of time to hollow out a canoe," said Dick, looking anxiously round for his timber; "but we've hands and tools; and once get her launched, I'll be bound to carry her right, barring falls, and rapids, and shoal-water that we may fall in with, seeing we've never a chart to steer by."

"A canoe it is Marlin," said Captain Scruton. "If we'd only had the prudence to rig up a canoe for crossing that strange river, we might have saved our freight. We can never expect to make port unless we set about it on a regular plan. Marlin may be trusted; therefore I vote that we should remain here, and such gentlemen as have taste for the sport may hunt while the canoe is building, in order to victual it properly."

"But I am not satisfied about that trail, Captain Scruton," said Harold. "If we should go off on the chase, and leave a weak garrison, what if the Indians should come down on you?"

"Then we must defend ourselves like Englishmen," answered Scruton. "Certainly we are more exposed to the guns of an enemy than I like; is there no mode of fortifying our camp? or could we not select a better position?"

"It is worth consideration, captain," answered Rod-

ney; "at all events, let us make as little demonstration as possible. Allow that fire to die out, Mary, and try to subdue the clamor of tongues. I don't see that mischievous urchin, Pat. Have you let him run off to betray us?"

"Is it Pathrick Conolly would be bethraying yer honner!" exclaimed Peggy with indignation. "Sure, thin, it's not in the boy at all! Wouldn't he be givin' the skin on his bones sakin' the birds and the eggs to make a male for ye all, and he niver forgettin' it, and blessin' God that ye were helpin' to save him alive from the say, and the murtherin' savages, ochone! It's niver a step of bethrayin' is in him."

"My dear, good woman," answered Mr. Rodney, "the boy is not ungrateful; but he is insubordinate, and therefore liable to error. He has disobediently wandered out alone; he may be seen by the Indians, and the capture of himself, if not the whole party, may be the consequence. Mike, I beg you to look after him."

"Will I whistle him up yer honner?" asked Mike.

"Certainly not," replied Rodney. "Your head is as giddy as that of Pat himself. None but an Irish lad would propose to whistle a signal within hearing of the enemy from whom he wished to be concealed."

But before Mike could set out, the delinquent was seen to approach very leisurely, with his cap, filled with turkeys' eggs, in his hand.

"Wasn't I watchin' him a great bit, up in the big three?" said he; "and he gobblin' away, and me knowin' he'd be carryin' mate home to the family in the nest; and sure, while I was kapin' quiet, didn't he come down and waddle sthraight away, and me craping under the bushes after him. Thin he stops and looks round

about him, and niver sets his eyes on me at all, and stales like a mouse under the thicket, the thafe! and me afther him again, and seein' the baste standin' by the nest and 'tacin' the ould mother to be havin' a walk out. Sure, aunt, she was an illegant fowl! and didn't I wish she were rostin', musha! Thin wasn't I rachin' out quiet, to knock her down with my shillala; and worra such a hullabaloo did the big fellow set up! And, sure, he was hittin' hard with his bony wings, till I craped under the bushes and shouted and dhruv them both off, and me gettin' the big eggs in my cap; and lookin' about for another nest, and didn't I find another, Mike? Sure it wasn't a turkey nest at all, only a big nest, all laves and bushes, and a man's head papin' out! Wasn't I runnin' off sharp, and he niver sein' me, and just kapin' a look-out to see the turkeys gobblin'."

"What does the boy mean?" asked Mr. Rodney. "It's impossible to understand his rhodomontade."

"It'll likely be a bush-hut he's seen, sir," said Dick; "and I'd say may-be sheltering them feet as had left their mark thereaway nigh us."

"The Indians build their huts of skins—rarely of boughs," said Mrs. Avondale. "If the boy has really seen a hut, it may, providentially, be the abode of white men. It is desirable that a more intelligent observer be sent out."

"William and I will go," said Harold; "I will be his Valor, and he shall be my Prudence. Does that euphuism satisfy you, my most learned tutor?"

"I think, Harold, that you will be more indebted to William for his prudence than he need be to you for your valor," answered Mr. Rodney; "but, if Captain Scruton agree to the plan, I am satisfied."

“Let them take arms,” said Scruton; “but avoid using them, if possible.”

The two men set out, compelled to take Pat as guide, but not allowing him to stray from them. After conducting them about a quarter of a mile from the encampment, though still keeping within a hundred yards of the river, he pushed through a thicket, to a grassy glade, surrounded by wood, on which they saw a low hut of woven willows, entwined with creeping plants, really a mass of verdure, which might have passed for a part of the grove, if the attention of the men had not been directed to it by the boy. Every thing round the hut was perfectly still, and, winding among the bushes, they came up behind it, and were at once arrested by hearing the deep voice of a man from the interior of the hut.

“He is certainly speaking English, William,” whispered Harold. “I should like to be near enough to distinguish the words; but I fear these leafy walls would not hide us.”

Pat was down on his face in an instant, crawling through the grass towards the hut, and Harold would have sprung forward to stop him, but William held him back, saying, —

“I don’t think he is in danger, Mr. Crofton; but you certainly would be if you left cover. Pat is a clever little spy; we had better let him alone.”

They waited anxiously for a few minutes, then the active boy rose up beside them, whispering, “Sure, ar’n’t they both raal white men, and not Injuns at all, barrin’ one has a shirt all over fine-work; and wasn’t I thinkin’ him that same bloody chafe, the Gray Wolf; but, hearin’ him spake words, both of them, altogether

plain and asy English, and groanin' as if they were kilt, and cursin' the Pawnees and the Sioux altogether they were."

"Are you sure there were no more than two men, Pat?" asked William.

"Niver a sowl more, nigh," answered the boy; "and me seeing them lyin' down on the ground, through the laves, as av it were a glass window."

"We must go on, Mr. Crofton," said William. "They are in distress, and we are bound to help them."

Without further delay the young men went up to the hut, Pat pointing out the place from whence he had seen the face of a man on his first approach; and raising the leafy branches, they saw an opening through which Harold entered at once. Two men were reclining on the ground, but at the sight of the intruders one sprang up, and, with an oath, seized a gun that stood at the side of the hut, till William cried out, "Father, it is I!" and arrested him.

"Is it you, lad, at last?" answered the man. "How many of you got off from those rogues? and are you sure they're not on your trail?"

William briefly told him how they had escaped, while Harold turned to look at the companion of Arncliffe. He was a tall, muscular man, with a bronzed face, and grizzled hair. He was clad in a hunting-shirt of buffalo skin, with leggings of the same, and round his waist wore a broad belt, which held his long knife, his pipe, and tobacco-pouch. He looked on the intruders with an air of perfect indifference, and continued lying on his bed of leaves, only uttering at intervals a low groan.



"Are you ill, friend?" said Harold. "You groan as if you were in trouble."

"Trouble enough!" muttered the man, with the peculiar twang of the uneducated American. "It's trouble to be loafing here, like one of yer fine down-east traders, with all my traps and powder carried off by them rascally red-skins. It's agin the natur of a free trapper to want watin on and feedin like a babby."

"You have perhaps had an accident," said Harold, looking at the rude bandages on his leg. "One of my friends has some little knowledge of surgery, and would, I am certain, be glad to help you, as far as he was able."

"It's late in life for Jacob Lightfoot to begin to let hisself be hannelled by doctors," said the man. "Can your doctor straighten that twisted leg?" and he stretched out a brawny limb, the bone of which was bent like a bow.

"This has been the result of neglect," said Harold; "a fracture which has never been properly reduced. Why did you not try to replace the bone, and cradle it till it was united?"

"Then I'd like to know who was there to fetch me my meat and drink," replied Jacob. "Wasn't a bandy leg a heap better nor a starving stomach? I were driven to put it to use, to trail me down yonder away to my drinkins, and a fish or a few eggs to help keep me living, when he, there, were out of t' way. He's a rowdy customer, he is; an out and out blasphemer, and half Injun hisself; but what then? there's a drop of Christen blood in him. He raised this here hut, and that I guess, ye'll reckon someways a Christen deed; and he's knocked down a gobbler now and then, and

cooks awful good. That there, I calkerlate, will be his lad as he's tellin' on, a kinder of an out of t'way almighty grand scholar. And it's everlasting wonderful how you all came to be taken in our traps."

"Yes, Mr. Crofton," said Arncliffe, "you see I'm on your hands again; a bigger trouble than ever, for my horse is gone, and walk I cannot. If I were in your place, now, I'd make no bones to leave two such useless dogs as Jacob and myself to die and rot in this dreary hole, where it needs a man to look out for a spark of God's grace to save him from all his sins, or his life would be a torment, and his death a terror. Well, I know you all; your ways are them of Christian men, and I can trust you. Sinner as I am, I know you'll hamper yourselves, and trail me on with you; and I thank you for all you've done, and all you may do. May-be I'm not so graceless as you think."

"Our position is certainly awkward, Arncliffe," answered Harold; "but rely on it we won't desert you: you shall share our fate, good or bad. And as we must necessarily be detained, I think we cannot do better than remove to this retired spot; for on the banks of the river we are dangerously exposed."

"Fetch your folks up hereaway directly," said Jacob. "You aint a goin' to leave 'em nigh yon creek; they red niggers lie there, right and left. We'll fix ye all here handsome, if so be as ye've no women-folk among ye."

"But we have women, my good friend," said Harold; "it is for them I feel particularly anxious for a shelter, and I fear your hut is too small to contain us all."

"Well, then, that there old buffler," answered Jacob, pointing to his companion, "he's him as will run up

another for ye: some of your followers must put in help."

The two young men returned with all haste to break up the encampment. They found the preparations already commenced, for Pat had taken care to be first to announce the marvellous news that they had found a cabin, where Will's father and another old fellow were living, who had invited them all to go and lodge with them.

"And no more nor Arncliffe was owin' us, the rap-  
paree!" exclaimed Dennis. "Sure thin, Will, I was  
not maning to vex you, seein' he's your own born  
father; but you'd not be owning him to be a Christian,  
anyhow."

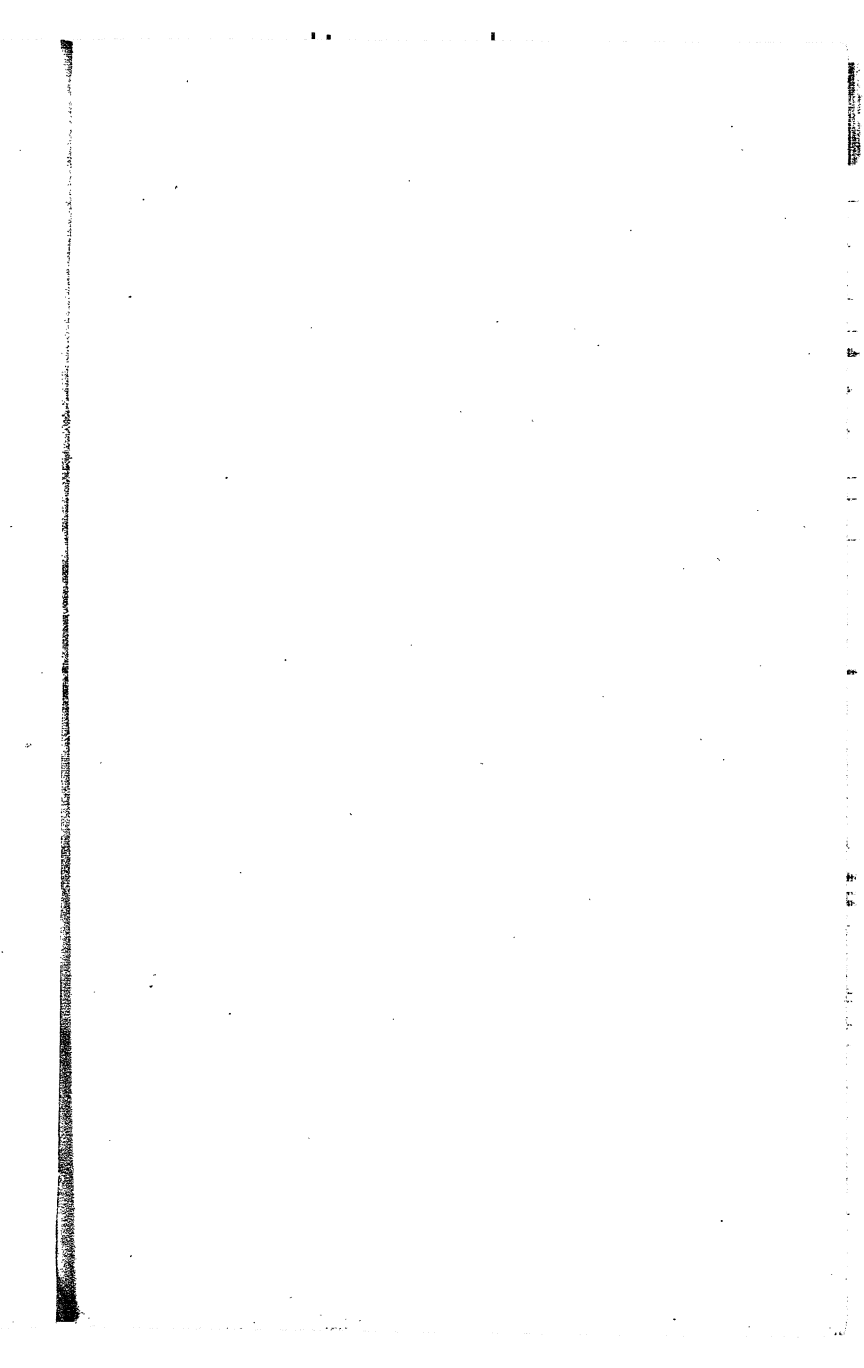
"God forbid he shouldn't be a Christian, master,"  
replied Will, "though he be a sinful man, as every one of  
us is. We know that His mercy is great to all who put  
their trust in Him, and I cannot look on my father as  
lost. He has been very kind to poor Jacob."

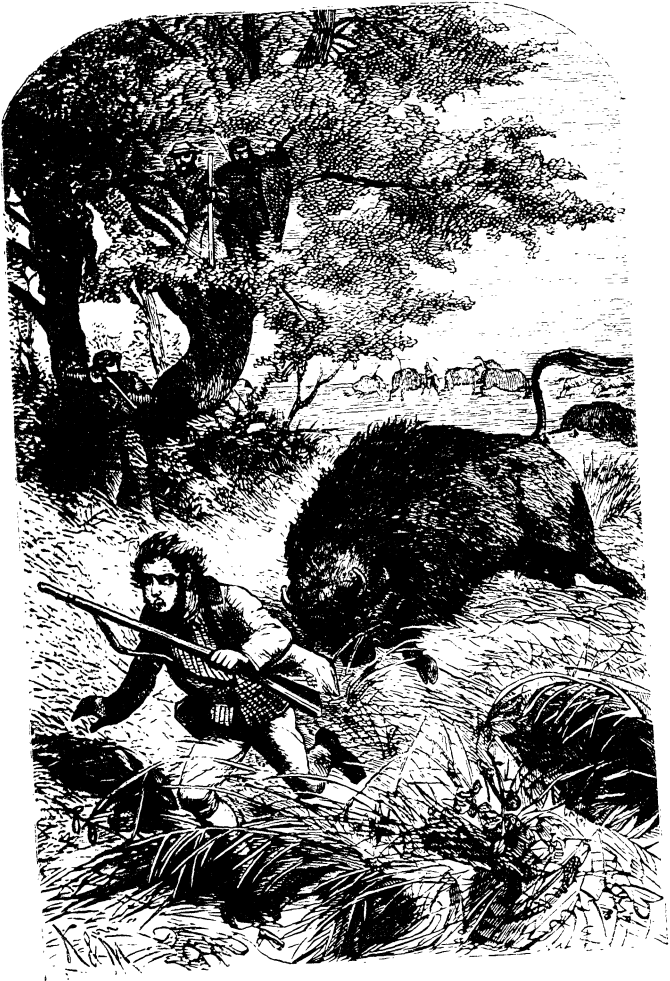
"Sure, thin, I'm plased to hear it, Will," said the  
old man. "Isn't it one of the wondthers of the world  
altogether, how that same small spark of grace that  
falls on a child's heart, smother it as ye will, will flicker  
up, and have its way in God's own time. It's the grief  
that brings the joy, Will. Blessed be His name that  
sends it."

The baggage was easily removed; in half an hour  
the travellers had left their resting-place behind, and  
spreading about to avoid leaving a broadly-marked trail  
towards the hut, they reached the place with thankful-  
ness that offered them the semblance of a home. Arn-  
cliffe received them with a dejected countenance; but  
Rodney shook hands with him kindly, saying, "I am

glad we have been so fortunate as to fall in with you, Arncliffe, for you look feeble and emaciated, as if you needed friends. Have you wanted food, or been suffering from sickness?"

"I was met by a party of Pawnee villains on the war-track," replied Arncliffe. "They robbed me, and left me half dead. Fortunately they were not of the tribe with whom I was a prisoner, for if they had known me, I should never have escaped alive. Even as it was, the scalp-knife had already touched my head, when the war-whoop of their adversaries summoned them to the fight, and they left me and rode off, taking with them my horse. When my senses returned, I crawled under some bushes, and lay there hidden till darkness permitted me to move forward. How I reached this place, or met with Jacob, I can hardly remember; but since that time we have been equally helpless, and but for the fish and eggs so near us, we must have perished. Do not ask me more."





JOHN IN JEOPARDY.





STANDARD.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Trapper's *Cache*. — Lodging Houses. — The Buffalo Chase.  
— The Flight of John. — The Skin Coracles. — A Startling Story.  
— Mrs. Avondale's Anxiety. — The Embarkation on the River.

BUT Mr. Rodney was not discouraged by Arncliffe's reserve, for he saw remorse and penitence in his face, and he trusted that, by God's help, they might induce him to lead a new life.

"I feel sure, father," said William, "that you are now tired of your wandering life: may God give you strength to keep in the right way, which will comfort all your friends. But I'd like to know how you fell in with this poor man."

"Well, then," answered Arncliffe, "I was coming round a bit, as I limped on, when I came on him lying on a prairie miles off this place, where he'd been left for dead by them cowardly Pawnees, who had carried off his horse, his skins and traps, and his rifle, and beat him till his head was laid open, his leg broken, and he was insensible and covered with blood. It's little enough I know about doctoring, but they had left me my leather bottle with some water in it, and I washed and tied up his head, and lifted him on my back, and trailed on, bit by bit, for miles, resting whiles, till he came to his senses. Then he made me understand which way to take, for, you see, he had a *cache* hereabouts, with more skins, another rifle, powder and shot,

and a sup of brandy, for fear of accidents. It was two days before we got here, and once among these trees we both got round, after a bit, all but his leg, and that I managed badly."

"Never ye heed what he says," said the old trapper. "More-by, it were my own unpatience, crawlin' about in spite on him, and stannin' up afore the old fox were for lettin' me. Ye see I were stiff to sarch out my notions myself, as I had berried in my *cache*, and I wanted to see after meat again, but it wouldn't hould, I were a gone beaver, bad all over, and no mistake. Ugh!" And the old man concluded his speech with the usual Indian exclamation.

"How we both came off with our hair is a miracle," said Arncliffe; "only, the old fellow's head was so split up with cuts, that they'd hardly have come at a regular scalp or they'd safe done it, the villains! We're hardly snug now, Mr. Rodney, but one white man with a good rifle in his hand fairly equals six of these savages. Still, we'll have to keep a good lookout."

"I'll see to that, Arncliffe," said Scruton. "Marlin must lay out bulwarks to protect our position."

"In the first place, Captain Scruton," said Harold, "we should be glad if you would issue orders to Marlin to use his hands and his head in constructing us a hut to shelter the weak and the infirm."

"Ay, ay!" replied Dick cheerfully, when he had received the commands of his captain; "no trouble in that job; plenty of timmer and willing hands, we'll soon rig up a cabin or two."

Before night two small huts, or rather arbors, were erected, which afforded retirement and ample shelter in the summer season. Then, a watch being arranged,

they retired in thankfulness to rest, and after an undisturbed night, rose to open the day with prayer, from which Arncliffe no longer shrunk; after which they sought to provide food for the increased party; turkeys and fish were to be procured without difficulty, but were unsatisfactory diet; and the old trapper directed the sportsmen to some distant deer covers, but charged them especially to look about for "meat," by which word he distinguished buffalo-flesh in particular.

It was arranged that Harold and Mike were to be the hunters, Pat and Ellen undertook the plunder of nests, William the fishing. The rest remained in the huts, and Scruton took the opportunity of asking the trapper's opinion of the possibility of carrying a canoe down the river.

"Well, then," answered Jacob, "I'd say as how a reg'lar dug-out would fly slick down yon creek on to them ugly rapids; then you'd have to make portages; and agin, I'd guess, this dry season the sun will have sucked up all in some of them awkward broad flats, and then ye'd make no way at all."

"It might be worth while to try the experiment," said Scruton; "even if we made no more than twenty or thirty miles — provided we can build the proper craft; but I hardly understand the build of a 'dug-out.' Surely the boat is not one solid piece?"

"That's the ticket, old man," replied Jacob; "scooped out like a big apple; whereaway else would them red niggers fix up their canoes? They're not up to yer dockyard trade. Them steamers and three masts, is notions they've never seed."

Captain Scruton looked dismayed. "This will never do, Marlin," said he. "You have neither tools nor

time to hollow out the trunk of a tree. Cannot you contrive to rig up something in the way of a light boat? I could hardly make up my mind, at any rate, to be launched in a tub, and on fresh-water, too."

Dick scratched his head, and said, "I'll look about me, captain; but building a reg'lar boat without seasoned timmer and caulking is serous, like. What say ye, Arncliffe, ye've seen English craft and Injun craft; ye can speak, surely, man."

"Then I say, Marlin," answered he, "that if we light on buffalo, you'd better let the dug-out alone. Skin canoes would answer you better, for you'd hardly finish a good-sized dug-out before the fall; and God knows what might come on us before that time. Better look after buffalo trail."

The men left at the lodge kept their arms ready, and had sentinels placed round; and Dick, not to lose any time, cut down some young trees for paddles and oars, which, at all events, might be needed; Mr. Rodney examined the broken leg of the trapper: he found it was now too late to remedy the deformity; but he used bandages and such simple remedies as he had yet remaining of his stores, and Dick proposed to make a crutch and a sling for the infirm limb, to enable the poor man to move about, for inaction had enfeebled him so greatly that the powers of life seemed to be giving way.

About an hour after the hunters had set out, Pat rushed into the trapper's hut in great excitement, exclaiming, "Sure, thin, haven't we seen the big bastes? Will Ellen and me take our bows and be helpin', yer honner? Sure, thin, we'd be shootin' down a big lot of the cratur; and not a sowl but only two to trail them home; and they being such big bastes, ochone!"

"If this meddling boy has followed them, Captain Scruton," said Rodney, "and is reporting the truth, we ought really to go off to assist them in such an important foray."

"Ugh!" growled the old trapper. "Your tall hunter and the small coon with him won't be up to buffler tricks, I guess. Them old bulls will beat 'em off-hand; ye see, it takes a smart lot when ye find meat. Now there's you, mather, and there's him ye call cappen, ye've smelt powther, I guess, so be away and blaze at the brutes, and ye can lead along with ye yon big chap as hasn't a heap of brains, but I calkerlate he can pull a bit; he'll help clear away meat afore wolves come in to help. I'd like to have a blaze with you myself; but I'm gone under, — a lost coon."

Jacob's advice was followed: Mr. Rodney and Scruton armed themselves, with John, whose physical power was more useful than his intelligence; and with the ingenious Pat for guide, they set out. They found that the lad had left Ellen in the grove to do the bird-nesting alone, and had tracked the hunters till they had come on the herd, when he had, of his own accord, wisely fled back to bring up assistance. Through the thickets and among scattered trees they followed their guide, till they came on a row of thorny shrubs, beneath which the boy crawled for a few minutes, and reappeared, to lead his followers to a position where they found Harold and Mike hidden snugly behind the bushes, watching impatiently for the chance of taking a good aim among an immense herd of buffaloes which were spread over a rich glade that lay beyond the thicket.

One or two ferocious bulls, with long black shaggy

manes falling round the huge threatening heads and fierce eyes, were grazing not more than fifty yards from the hunters, somewhat to the terror of John, who turned pale at the near view of the lion-headed monsters.

"Will I blaze away at that ould baste that is staring at us so bould, captain?" said Mike.

"Will you be silent, and wait for orders, young man?" replied Scruton, sternly. "Without subordination, we cannot look for success."

Mike looked decidedly mutinous; but Mr. Rodney made a sign to him to be silent, and the lad did not object to obedience when the commands were mild.

"Old Jacob's last charge to us," said Rodney, "was that we should not waste our shots on 'bull-meat,' if we had a chance to hit 'cow-meat,' which was fatter and tenderer; and truly that old beast that took Mike's fancy looks too tough for human mastication. But Harold, my boy, mark those three charming young cows gossiping together at the left hand. Let us each select our beast, and fire at once; Mike, do you hold back, and if one of the victims escape, you may try your luck with her."

The three hunters fired. One beast fell, one roared and ran wildly off, the third staggered, lashed the wound it had received on its side with its tail, and then walked calmly away towards its male protectors, as if it had merely received a friendly pat. Against this disdainful creature Mike indignantly directed his gun, and wounded it mortally in the shoulder.

The largest of the bulls, roaring with rage, immediately charged revengefully towards the ambushade; and it was with much exertion that Harold and Scruton se-

cured their retreat in a tall ash-tree, and raised Mr. Rodney to a place beside them. Mike and Pat ran like squirrels to shelter; but John lost all heart, and crying out for help, he crushed through the bushes, and fled wildly over the plains they had crossed, pursued by the vindictive bull, which gained so rapidly on him that he must inevitably have fallen a victim to its fury, if Harold, reloading his gun, had not hastily descended from the tree, and, securing the best position he was able, fired both barrels at the beast. Luckily both struck the bull, not a certain event, when it was moving so rapidly. It tottered and fell; but it was not till after repeated and peremptory calls that John could be induced to turn back to assist in dispatching, skinning, and cutting up his enemy.

In the mean time, the herd, alarmed by the shots, had dispersed, and the two fallen animals were secured, to be carried or dragged to the huts; the skins being destined to be converted into boats, and the flesh to be dried, except that which was necessary for immediate consumption. The wounded cow, which had run off, had left a track of blood, which they purposed to follow, after they had disposed of the slaughtered beasts.

Dick and William came out to assist in cutting up the meat. The skins were to be employed under the direction of Jacob, who had frequently made boats for the conveyance of his furs. Willows were cut down to make the frame of the boat; these were bent to form a sharp stem and stern, and on this frame two of the fresh, pliant skins, joined together at the shoulders, and sewed with the sinews, were stretched, nailed, and lashed. Then the boat was left to dry. In the mean time

Harold and Rodney had returned to the field of slaughter and tracked the wounded cow to the place where she had fallen, exhausted by loss of blood. They had to drive off a pack of prairie wolves, which had gathered round to wait for the death of the buffalo, being too cowardly to fall on her when living; and they then dispatched and dragged away the animal, to complete the second canoe.

"We shall scarcely be able all to crowd safely into two such flimsy shells," said Harold: "but at all events we may thus carry the old men and the women. You may well sigh, Rodney, my good fellow, I have led you into a precious mess."

"You have, Harold, my boy," answered Rodney; "but if God permit me to reach England again, I intend to baffle any future plans against my peace."

Before the boats were ready for launching, a quantity of buffalo meat had been dried and packed in bags made of the fragments of the skins; paddles and oars had been made, and the long grass cut to form seats in the boats. All the party assembled to see the launch, but yet the old trapper seemed reluctant to leave his leafy hut, and Mrs. Avondale felt a panic when she looked at the fragile canoes.

"Why should not I and my child," said she, "remain with Jacob in this quiet solitude? He is able to move about now, and could procure the few necessaries we require; and after ten years slavery, liberty is the greatest and only pleasure left for the widow and orphan."

"Ten year is it," said Jacob, musing. "Let's see, that would be the time, I guess, as a white trader were robbed and a'most murdered among yon mountains by them bloody Sioux; and his woman, God help her,



were carried off. Ay, ay, many's the hunt after them dogs, and a heap of hair he's lifted, I guess, sin' that; a' lookin' arter his skins and his folks. I had him on my trail, may-be four year back, and all down in th' mouth he were, for ye see his heart were kinder grown small, seeing he'd hit on a wrong trail."

Mrs. Avondale trembled excessively as Jacob spoke, and, seeing her distress, Mr. Rodney hastily asked the trapper what was the name of the trader.

"We never mind no christened names on prairie," answered he. "We go by sorts of names as suits; all trappers know old Trueshot; that's how they call me; and somehow, at times, I can't call up my ould name full out; and what name that stranger went by is past me now. He were straight and big like yon young chap, with pale face and yaller hair, like this young gal, and a sky-blue eye, quiet as a pigeon, somehow like hers."

"Mr. Rodney!" exclaimed Mrs. Avondale, "could it be possible that my husband should revive and escape, when I saw him fall among the dead? Good man, I pray you, give me some further hope. Did this man tell you whence he came, and whither he was going, when he was robbed?"

"Ay, ay, mistress," answered Jacob, "he were no-ways close; he telled as how he were coming from Columbia river, and were wagoning over prairie to th' forts, when them red-skins fell on him. And how he kept his hair is strange; but I calkerlate they'd been druv off somehow, and he were picked up by some trappers. He telled as how it were days afore he were fit to speak out; and then he were mad for 'em to follow them rogues. But it wouldn't do; they were on for th'

mountains, and they couldn't be stopped by no sich notions; they'd got no call to th' war path; but they let him join company till he were sound. Then he took off, here and there, up and down prairie and mountain, niver makin' out nothin'. How could he, when I'd reckon his woman were scalped, or may be squaw to some Sioux dog?"

It was not wonderful that Mrs. Avondale should be agitated and filled with hope by this recital of the trapper. Mr. Rodney examined him minutely about the time that had elapsed since the robbery of the white stranger had taken place, and found that the man calculated by his beaver trading.

"Three year," said he, "I traded on t' other side, where I heard first of that job; then for other three year I were away as far as Leavenworth; and three year at Laramie, afore this last year as I've not traded a cent; and I guess that counts up ten year by trapper reck'nin'."

Mr. Rodney could not contradict the statement; and though he was fearful to encourage the hopes of the excited wife too much, it was impossible to deny that there was some foundation for them. No longer fearing to embark in the skin-coracle, she was impatient only for the moment of departure, which was only delayed till the contents of Jacob's *cache* — a huge packet of skins and a considerable store of ammunition — were transferred to one of the boats, with the exception of some of the powder and shot, which, for fear of accidents, was distributed among the men who were to walk.

Then they took leave of the huts, and embarked in the frail boats, Captain Scruton undertaking to steer

the first, in which were Arncliffe and Jacob, Dennis and Pat. Dick managed the second, which contained the five women and Mr. Rodney, Hahnee assisting in paddling. Harold, John, William, and Mike walked along the banks, armed ready for action against game or foes. The river for many miles continued to be so shallow that the only danger was that the boats might run aground; and slight and frail as the coracles were, even the women could not apprehend peril in a plunge into the river, which was not more than three or four feet deep. Little exertion being required in paddling down the stream, they all enjoyed the fresh air on the water, and the cool shade of the overhanging willows; while the immense number of fish sporting around them precluded all dread of famine.

But before long the banks became steeper, though still green and covered with trees; and the river, now augmented by several slender tributaries, increased in depth, and required careful navigation, which rather rejoiced Captain Scruton, who had fretted at the dead calm of the shallow water.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Beaver Lodges. — The Lucky Opossum. — A Spy in the Bush. — Jacob's Doctrine of Morality. — A Prize. — Captain Scruton's Fleet. — The Indian Encampment. — An Unseasonable Cough.

"ARE we coming to a rapid, Jacob?" said Captain Scruton. "What is that little island or peninsula, running out at the north bank, which causes this current that forces us to the south?"

"It's a beaver-dam, and nothing else, I guess," said the old trapper, much excited. "I'd like to be goin' in, anyhow. It goes agin natur' to turn away from beaver-skins; but, sartainly, trade's bad now. Anyhow we'll get tail to eat; and beaver-tail, that's first-rate. There, cappen, there, ye see them critters; they've felled them two trees, slick and clean as your carpenter even could do it. They're cute, they are; and have their meetins and hould talks; and ivery critter does his work as is set out for him as nat'ral as young 'uns at school; and niver a word as a man can make out."

"Sure, thin, Mr. Jacob," said Dennis, "if that same be thrue, won't it be altogether one of the wondthers of the world, seein' I'm the man to say it; it's hard lines to be kapin' them boys at their tasks that has souls to be saved; and how the masther will be managing them born brute-bastes is beyond me altogether; it passes the world. And where are they gettin their axes to cut down these big threes?"

"It's their natur', old chap," replied Jacob; "it's

their sharp teeth as does it. Bless ye, their tail and their hands — hands they have, and that's sertain — they use better nor all the tools your builders can bring. Many's the lodgē I've looked into, floored and plastered like a trader's parlor; and sharp as a needle is them that's workers. But thin, there's them among 'em as is idle critters, as doesn't do a stroke, and lives lonely by theirselves; and we trappers reckons 'em all as one, as your town-folks; others says as how they're rogues as is shut up in jail. But, somehow, it's hard makin' out plain their queer laws, like. Look ye, cappen! yon's a fellow puttin' up his nose; it seems unnat'ral to leave good meat and skins."

"Unnatural or not, Jacob," answered Scruton, "we shall not moor to catch beaver; we are not short of provision, and we've no room for more skins. My way is, to make sail when the wind's fair."

The boys, as well as Jacob, regretted to pass the beaver lodges; but delays were dangerous. The young men who were compelled to walk went on cheerfully, little encumbered with burdens, though their path at length became somewhat tedious and intricate among the forest maze. Trees resembling the ash, the oak, and the elm of England, were mingled with the peculiar products of the soil, the maple, the white cedar, the hickory, the cotton-wood, and the majestic tulip-tree, with its red and yellow flowers. Moss-grown and knotted, many of these trees seemed to have lasted for ages, unmolested by man, and were linked together by wild vines, convolvuli, and thousands of brilliant creeping plants, which, flinging their graceful tendrils from tree to tree, formed a bright canopy of network above the heads of the travellers.

This would have been charming, had it not been for a stubborn growth of underwood. Bushes of cactus, of rich-colored roses, of bright rhododendrons, and, where the banks sloped to the water, of tall canes, made the march toilsome, and, but for the axes used by John and William, it would have been impossible.

"Sure, thin," said Mike, "av we come on more bad bits, wouldn't yer honner be choosing to sail in the captain's boat, seein' there's room in that same, and them gettin' on like race-horses."

"It would be stupid work, crowded in that cockleshell, Mike," said Harold; "we're a thousand times better off walking. Didn't you hear how Pat begged to be landed?"

"It's running up the threes he'd be," said Mike, "afther the turkey poulthry; would yer honnor be hearin' them gobblin'?"

"I must be very deaf if I didn't hear them, boy," replied Harold. "There must be hundreds in these trees. What can that little white animal be, that is staring at us from the tall plum-tree, while it eats the fruit from its paws like a squirrel? I suspect it must be an opossum."

"Is't game, think ye, sir?" said John. "Could we have a shot at it?"

"Jacob," called Harold to the boats, "is the opossum eatable? Is it worth while to expend powder and shot on it?"

"Well," answered Jacob, "we trappers is no ways nice about meat; little comes wrong to us, I calkerlate, short of man-meat, and it needs a red-skin to get that down. 'Possum's white and juicy, and good for some,

when there's plenty; but it takes a heap to make fixings for this lot here."

So Harold considered when he looked at the many mouths, and he therefore spared the little opossum; which, already alarmed at the unwonted sound of the voice of man in the silent forest, had run with agility to the highest part of the tree, round one of the branches of which it had curled its long tail to secure its position; and from thence, half buried in the tendrils of the creeping vines, it darted keen glances from its dark eyes, and showed its little sharp teeth in ludicrous defiance of its powerful foes.

"If we had been famished," observed Harold, "the bold little animal would not have come off so well; but it's hardly worth firing a shot at."

"And perhaps bringing the Indians on us," said William; at which alarming suggestion, John started back under cover of the trees, and looked fearfully round.

"Now, just listen to me, John," said his master, "we are four stout, well-armed fellows, able to put a whole tribe of cowardly Indians to flight; and if I see you shirk again, and show the white feather, I'll put a ball into you myself, and get rid of you. So, now you know what you have to expect."

John groaned; but roused by the laughter of William and Mike, he replied, "I'd not mind a fair stand-up fight with one like myself, sir, but they say as how them savages roast and eat men; it's unknown what's in 'em for bloody-mindedness, sir; Hahnee, yonder, she tells fearful tales on their doings."

"You simpleton," said Harold, "to let a woman's tales make a coward of you. I tell you they are more afraid of you than you can be of them, and if you'll

stand up like a man, we'll take care they don't make a roast of you."

Usually, at the end of a day's travelling, they came on some little cove, where a grassy sloping bank, backed by the forest, offered a convenient landing-place; and here they encamped for the night; moored the valuable boats, lighted fires, cooked their dry meat, and spreading the skins, slept till morning. And for some time their progress was easy and pleasant. The hunters killed a deer; they even saw buffaloes at a distance; but Captain Scruton would not consent to any delay while provisions were still abundant with them. Once they saw, with covetous eyes, a troop of wild horses, feeding in a glade, but so watchful and shy, that they fled like lightning as they detected the approach of the intruders.

"There'd be some sense in it, Will," said John, "if we could light on a few fair good hackneys, as would be suiting this here queer road; then, may-be, we'd get on like Christians. Please, sir, if you've a chance of catching any of them skittish beasts, I'd soon break 'em in. I'd manage that there job better nor fightin' niggers."

"Truly, I believe you, John," replied his master; "but the important preliminary, 'first catch your horse,' is the greatest difficulty. The Sioux had the trick of the lasso, perfect, but we have none of us had practice."

"Miss Ellen was learning Will and I, a bit, yer honner," said Mike; "and sure, didn't I noose some fawns and turkeys? but these same beasts are raal race-horses, and it's not asy they'd be to trap."

"And very hard to hold," added William. "One might lasso a careless outsider, but I don't think we've



legs and arms to run with him, and hold the lasso firm."

"We'll make a trial in full force, if we can surprise another troop," said Harold.

That night there was a consultation on the scheme; lassos were produced and repaired, and new ones made. The travellers were still more anxious to obtain some certain and expeditious mode of completing their journey, when, in the darkness, they heard in the wood, the simulated cry of the night-bird, which they now recognized as the Indian signal. Jacob and Arncliffe, especially, were confident that the enemies were at hand.

"Doubtless we are watched, and probably surrounded," said Arncliffe; "but, so long as we watch, and show we're ready, the cowards dare not openly attack us. Concealment would be of no use now, they've seen our fires; we must use defiance, loud talking and a random shot might tell."

Jacob, seated on his skins, was examining his rifle and looking stealthily around, when Hahnee glided behind him, and whispered some Indian words. He remained still for a minute or two, then suddenly raising his gun, he fired into an opposite thicket. A yell and a deep groan followed, and the old trapper quietly said, "He's gone under, he has. I'd like to lift the hair myself; some on ye trail out the carrion."

Stunned with the unexpected event, for a moment no one stirred, till Pat, peeping into the thicket, cried out, "Sure isn't he kilt entirely, John, and wouldn't be harming ye at all av ye were pullin' him out of the bush."

As soon as they collected their senses, John and Dick

drew from the thicket the dead body of an Indian, who had been shot through the heart. He was a naked, ferocious-looking Sioux, painted for war, and probably a great warrior, for he wore several scalps suspended to his girdle, one of which, with long fair hair, was evidently that of a white woman. His hand was on his bent bow, ready to draw it with deadly intent, if his own life had not been arrested.

"I cannot applaud this deed, Jacob," said Mr. Rodney, shocked at the sight. "To slay a fellow-creature in cold blood is against all laws. True, he was prepared for aggression, but that fact you were ignorant of when you shot him."

"Ugh!" growled Jacob. "What war he about here, glaring upon us, coiled in the bush? War it in the friendly way? War he comin' to fetch meat and skins to his pale brothers? or war he come to take hair? I guess he war; and if he'd catched ye all sleepin', ye'd have felt queer and cold when ye waked up, wantin' your skull-caps. He's a Sioux dog, and they eat and drink blood. He's well out of way. Reach me over a knife, young un, and T'll let ye see how to do the thing as it ought."

But Mr. Rodney and Harold remonstrated with him, the Irishwomen screamed, and Ellen seized the old man's arm, and with her eyes sparkling with indignation, upbraided him for being an Indian at heart, though he had a white skin, and believed in God.

"Well, then, gal, that's all true," said he. "I'se no better nor them, I guess, for, ye see, them 'at looks long on blood larns to like looking on it. May-be it's not Christen, sartain, it's noways tould on in Bible. But look at this here wolf, what heaps he's put down for that

hair he's wearing; and them had not been th' last if I'd been fool enough to let him have his way, for ye mark he's a brave. Now then, what's them women bealing out like buffler cows about?"

"The poor Indian had perhaps a squaw and papooses, Jacob," said Ellen; "and they will be very sorrowful to find him lying murdered."

"Not they, gal," answered Jacob. "There's never a Jack among them Sioux as wouldn't eat his own grandmother if meat war scarce, and she war not over tough. I guess I know them."

"And I know them too," answered Ellen, indignantly; "wretched and ignorant they are, for they believe they are doing right when they are doing wrong; but they do love their papooses, and the little ones too scream with joy to see the father return from the hunting-path with game, or from the war-path with scalps. He is their father, and therefore they love him."

Jacob listened to the assertions of the ardent girl with a chuckling and contemptuous laugh. He had a mean opinion of mankind in general; but the Indians he placed in the lowest scale, even below the brute beasts; and though not by nature unkind, Mr. Rodney's words had not yet imparted to him the true philanthropy of Christianity.

"There's one thing clear, captain," said Arncliffe, "you must order out the boats without delay. The whole tribe will soon be pouring down here to find us ready fixed in a trap. We might have a chance to fight them on fair open ground; but here, with this thicket around us, they can lie snug, and mark us off one after another with their sure arrows."

"I disapprove of such a system of warfare altogether," said Scruton, "it's against all regular and honorable principles. Victory brings no glory, and a defeat is a massacre. Now, I declare that shooting down that spy without a court-martial was dastardly, and I willingly resume my petty command, to escape from ambush or stratagem. Marlin, unmoor."

"Unmoor it is, captain," said Dick, "and a good ridance of dirty land-skirmishing, say I. Pull away, my hearties."

Onward shot the light boats in the moonlight, and wearily the pedestrians took the road, disappointed of the rest required by the toil of the day; but they had not proceeded two hundred yards, when Harold heard Scruton hailing him: "Mr. Crofton, please to descend to the beach, and report what object that is we see moored beneath the bushes."

"It looks all same as a dug-out, I calkerlate," grumbled Jacob, who was yet surly at his disappointment about the scalp.

Harold descended the banks, and found moored to a large willow, by a thick rope of twisted sinews, a large clumsy canoe, formed of the trunk of a tree, roughly hollowed out, and rudely shaped into something like a boat in form, capacious enough to contain half a dozen people, but without rudder or oars. At the bottom lay a paddle, a stone tomahawk, a bark bucket, and a coil of rope, made, like the mooring-cable, of twisted sinews.

"Hurrah! my boys," cried Harold; "here's a resting-place for our weary legs. I can use my arms; but I could not have walked much further. Step in, and fall into line; captain, reckon us number three. I con-

clude this is a fair prize, — Jacob's spoil of the vanquished."

"Well, I guess," said the trapper, "the dug-out's my right, seein' it were yon murderin' dog's fixin'. We'll trade, Mr. Crofton, a bit later; now make on, they'll be lying someways on the creek, and ye'd safer keep a quiet tongue, I'm thinkin'."

The bark, though heavy, floated well down the now rapid river, and they quickly passed along the banks, till the half-extinguished remains of an Indian camp-fire, a few yards from the banks, showed a dark crowd, reclining or sitting, but all so still that the voyagers judged they were sleeping, and the first impulse of Jacob was aggression, the sight of a number of horses near being a great temptation; but Mr. Rodney and Captain Scruton were equally averse to hostility when the numbers were so disproportioned, and the motive was robbery.

"That may be law on the prairies, Jacob," said Harold; "but we English fellows think that to fall on sleeping men, and rob and murder them, is a crime worthy the gallows."

"Ugh!" grunted Jacob; "I guess these isn't men, but varmint; and you Britishers kill your varmint, I calkerlate, seein' they'd kill you, if ye left 'em to their own ways."

"My good friend Jacob," said Rodney, "you carry your animosity too far. Doubtless these savage wretches are dangerous; but even in their nature there is a spark of the Divine Spirit which we ought to quicken rather than to quench."

"Silence!" said Captain Scruton, peremptorily. "Marlin, creep close to land, under the shadow of the

trees, and ship the paddle. We must float with the stream. Let no man move."

The water was smooth as a pool at this spot, where the slope of the bank allowed it to spread, and the little fleet moved slowly and noiselessly on till they were immediately opposite to the Indian encampment, and, every man grasping his rifle, held his breath, anxiously waiting the result. For a moment they exulted in the conviction that they were passing unnoticed; but an unfortunate and ill-suppressed fit of coughing in old Dennis aroused one who was evidently placed as a sentinel, and his whoop waked up a crowd which to the distressed fugitives, appeared innumerable. The old schoolmaster shrunk from the hoarse denunciations of the trapper, and the bitter imprecations of Arncliffe, who, taking the initiative part, rifle in hand, called out in the Sioux tongue, that the voyagers would spare the Indians, if they were allowed to pass unmolested; but if an arrow was shot, they would fire on them, and carry off every scalp of the red-skins.

The Indians uttered the usual scornful guttural "Ugh!" and one voice answered in the same language, "Did the pale-faces allow our brother to pass their fires unmolested? Did they not shoot him in the bushes, like cowards, with their fire-sticks? He was a great brave, and his squaw asks for the scalps of the pale-faces that killed her husband."

The boats had by this time paddled to the opposite bank, fifty yards from their enemies; but a shower of arrows followed them. Captain Scruton then called, "Fire," and a volley from the three boats created much confusion and destruction among the Indians,

who, yelling and whooping, directed showers of arrows and huge stones against their adversaries. One heavy stone struck Scruton's boat so forcibly that it was capsized; and though the two boats that followed saved the men, their escape was miraculous; and, heavily laden, the two boats now were paddled rapidly for a hundred yards, when a descent of the river carried them easily and swiftly forward, and though they heard the Indians preparing their horses for the pursuit, they now felt tolerably out of danger.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

A Man missing.—A Skirmish.—A Pursuit.—Mike as a Spy.—Arncliffe in Jeopardy.—A formidable Weapon.—The attack of the Ambush.—The Prizes of Victory.

“PLEASE, Captain Scruton,” said Mike, “will we all be here?”

“What does the boy say?” cried Scruton. “Halloo, Marlin, is any one missing. What hands have you on board? Call over the names.”


The darkness rendered this process necessary; the names were called, and it was found that Arncliffe was missing. To return to search for him would have been madness, and by this time he must have escaped to land or be lost; and though William earnestly besought his friends to land him that he might seek his father, his entreaties were disregarded, for already the trampling of the horses was heard behind them, and the first care of all was to prepare for defence, if they were overtaken.

“They’re mad, the critters!” said Jacob; “all about that dog with his scalps as I put down; and they’ll not settle afore they lift hair. I guess Arncliffe will have to bide a heap, if he hadn’t gumption to seek t’other bank. I seed him rise and swim off, Will, lad; but I set it down he war ta’en in yon dug-out. They’d better have trapped me, an auld coon as none cares for. I can’t abide to see ye, lad, so hard up about him, for I guess he war some short in th’ way of a father.”



There was no more time for words: notwithstanding the quick and easy gliding of the boats, and the rough road along the banks, the horsemen were soon up to them, and it was necessary to come to a contest. Scruton ordered the heavily-laden boats to be drawn up to the opposite banks, and moored; then they landed the non-effective force, who took refuge behind a jutting crag, while the rest were divided into two parties, and ordered to fire alternately, that they might have time to reload. The arrows were poured among them, but the darkness prevented any direct aim, and the men were placed at a distance from each other, that they might escape the sharp weapons. But the continuous fire of the voyagers was deadly in effect, and the groans and yells from the Indians were fearful. After a contest of a quarter of an hour, the horsemen had plainly suffered so much that they refused to stand the brunt of the unequal weapons longer; and finally, the whole party rode off, and by the dim light of dawning day their antagonists saw that they were carrying off the wounded before them, on their horses. As they galloped off a faint cry was heard,—"Follow the trail and save me!" and they recognized the voice of Arncliffe, whom Hahnee asserted she had seen, tied to a horse, in the midst of the cavalcade.

The first care of the victors was to ascertain if all were safe. John alone was wounded; he had received two arrows, one through his shoulder, and the second had pierced his ear, but the injuries were not important; Mr. Rodney cut off the points of the arrows, and drew them from the wounds, and the man was soon in a fair way to do well, though in no condition to be useful for some time.



"Now for the field of battle," said Harold, while Rodney was attending the wounded man. "Let us see what damage we have done before we set out after the villains."

Thereupon Scruton, Dick, and he crossed the river in one of the boats, and saw that no less than four horses and three men were left dead. Bows, arrows, and tomahawks were scattered about, and were immediately taken possession of as lawful prizes, and three wounded horses were carefully attended to, in the hope that they might yet do service. One, also, had been left tied to a tree, overlooked in the hasty flight; and this, a strong uninjured beast, Harold thought was a full compensation for John's injuries, though probably that unlucky individual might not be of the same opinion. Securing the horses, they returned to hold a council.

"How is the pursuit to be conducted, Captain Scruton?" said Harold; "and who amongst us can best make out the trail?"

"There's never a coon livin'," said Jacob, "could follow up a trail better nor me, if t'were not for want of legs."

"I cannot see the prudence of chasing the enemy at all," said Scruton. "What advantage can we obtain by pursuing, or even conquering, a party of destitute savages? Men never stand well to their guns except to save their lives, or to win prize-money."

"In this case, Captain Scruton," replied Rodney, "we certainly neither wish nor hope for prize-money. Our expedition will merely be one of duty and charity, to snatch our unfortunate companion from the hands of merciless torturers."

Scruton muttered, that "the fellow deserved his fate;" but he was not really without good feelings, and he speedily marshalled the available force. Rodney and Harold, Dick and William, Mike and Scruton himself, were the armed infantry, and Jacob also carrying also a rifle mounted on the captured horse, led the way as guide. By the time they started, the sun had risen, and the path of the fugitives was visible through the forest. The trampled underwood and grass and the bent or broken branches of the trees showed the passage of the horsemen; they followed the trail for three hours; then the distant wail of women broke on their ears.

"That's their squaws," said Jacob, "settin' up their din for their men as is gone down. It's natur, I reckon. They're restin' a bit out of the hot sun, and someways we must get round th' varmint, and spy how we're to bring yon fellow out on his fix, if he's livin' yet; and I guess they're keepin' him up for a grand burnin', to please them squealin' squaws. Here, young beaver, can ye worm through them there bushes, and spy out their doin's slick away?"

Mike was nothing loth to undertake the office; he delighted in making a *reconnaissance*, and only wished for Pat to accompany him on the welcome mission. He set out at once, treading lightly over the trail as long as he could keep out of sight and hearing of the Indians, then he crawled beneath the brushwood, till he came close on their encampment. This was on the edge of a narrow stream, that crossed a small clearing in the forest. On the turf the wounded men were lying surrounded by the wailing women. A large fire, on which some cooking was going on, was blazing beneath a tall

cotton-wood tree, and round it about twenty able men, the braves of the tribe, were reclining, smoking silently and moodily. Close to Mike's ambush the horses were feeding on the rich grass, with one fore and one hind leg tied together to prevent them straying, but each harnessed with a skin bridle, ready to mount in a moment.

How Mike did long to put forth his hand, cut the bonds, and abstract the horse nearest to him; but he remembered that his employment was that of a spy, and he cast a last look round before he should withdraw. Then, for the first time, his eye caught the figure of a man, bound to a tree, at some distance from him, but still at the extremity of the glade. He saw that it was Arncliffe, and that no one was near him, and he could not resist availing himself of this opportunity of speaking to him; he therefore slowly and cautiously drew back, and, winding through the bushes at a safe distance, drew near the glade immediately behind the prisoner.

He advanced even to the back of the tree to which he was bound, and whispered very softly, "Uncle, it's myself, Mike; don't you be movin' at all, and I'll cut the ropes."

First he stretched out his hand and severed the rope that bound the legs, then, drawing himself up erect behind the thick trunk of the tree, he cut that which went round it, and which confined the arms of the prisoner, who now stood free, but prudently remained immovable.

"I'm laving the knife beside the three, uncle," whispered Mike; "and now I'll be goin' back to fetch them all up."

Arncliffe muttered something about a gun; but Mike

hastened from his perilous position, and succeeded in evading the keen hearing of the Indians, the restlessness of the horses and the howling cries of the women drowning the rustling he could not avoid causing in his movements. He reached his friends in safety, and made his report, adding, "Sure, won't it be a lucky time to come on them, and they niver heedin' a noise at all, seein' the women will be makin' a shindy, and wakin' the men afore they're dead altogether. And would I be settin' loose the horses, Mr. Crofton, seein' we nade them entirely?"

Harold pronounced Mike to be a "stunner," to the mystification of Scruton and the annoyance of Mr. Rodney, who besought his pupil to speak English. Then the questions arose how they should attack the savages, or could they release Arncliffe quietly?

"Well, then," said Jacob, "I'd like to see ye tryin' that dodge on. I tell ye, they'd fall on that critter like the storm from the mountain, and sweep him away to shivers. I guess we'll have to win him back with fair feightin', sooner and better; them howling squaws isn't the sort to spare him long."

"Then we must spread our ambush," said Scruton, "and give them broadsides right and left; and when we board the rascals, Arncliffe must take the opportunity to join us."

"Depend on it, he'll break cover before it comes to that," said Harold; "have we a spare gun for him?"

William had taken care to provide that; so Mike taking the lead, they cautiously drew near the glade. They halted close to the spot where the horses were feeding, and saw that the excitement of the women had become furious; and just as they had raised their rifles

to commence the attack, one of the distracted squaws rushed to the fire, and, seizing a flaming log, ran up to Arncliffe, who still retained his position, as if bound, and aimed a fatal blow at him. But the man sprung unexpectedly upon her, and easily wrested the formidable weapon out of her hands; then, uttering a whoop of defiance, he waved it round to defend himself from his foes, who now thoroughly roused by discovering him at liberty, ran up, tomahawks in hand, to cut him down.

But a volley from the ambush at this moment struck down three men; and Arncliffe, marking from whence the attack proceeded, flung his ponderous brand into the midst of the Indians, overthrowing two, whose yells proclaimed that they were fearfully injured; he then plunged into the wood, and joined his preservers, and, supplied with a gun, was ready to fire in the second volley.

"Spare the women," cried Harold; but this injunction was unnecessary, for all the squaws had fled to the woods at the first alarm. The men made an attempt to rally, and discharged a shower of arrows against their unseen assailants; but half of their number were already lying on the ground, and the fears of the rest magnified the strength of the enemy; and, after an ineffectual attempt to reach their horses, they finally retreated after the women. They had scarcely disappeared before Mike was on his knees, cutting the bonds of the horses, and assisted by Arncliffe, tying together in a line those that were not needed for the party; then, "mounting in hot haste," they rode off, carrying away the whole of the horses, but, in the triumph of victory, still feeling considerable anxiety

for the friends they had left so insufficiently protected.

When they arrived at the river, they saw with dismay that the dug-out in which they had crossed had disappeared; nor did they at first see any living creature. But the next minute Dick "piped out" from his watching-place, and was answered by Pat, who hailed him from a tree on the opposite bank, and immediately after, John and Hahnee brought out the coracle, and ferried the whole party across.

Peggy wept at the sight of Arncliffe, saying, "Sure, thin, blessins on yer honners for bringin' him back, and him manin' to lade a new life, plase God. Musha! Arncliffe, and them savages didn't ate ye up entirely, and maybe they not so bad as they're samin'. But ye wouldn't be horse-stalin', sure, seein' ye're bringin' all them bastes like a fair day?"

"I'm somewhat afraid, Peggy," answered Harold, "that we have really been guilty of such a breach of the laws, but we must fancy we have borrowed the animals; we can send them back when we have done with them, and thus cheat our conscience."

"Sure, thin, it's neighborly, isn't it?" said Peggy, "and convanient altogether, seein' them spalpeens went off with the good boat, and we tremlin' in the bushes, and niver knowin' it at all, barrin' Pat, the darlin', up the three, looking on, and spakin soft to us to be houldin' our pace, and keepin' quiet, av we were not wantin' our heads skinned; God be praised for it."

The victors now heard that the Indian woman had counselled them to hide the skin-boat; and they had scarcely accomplished this, when several Indians appeared on the bank opposite to them, evidently searching

for the boats, and who expressed, by loud exclamations, their great satisfaction when they saw the dug-out, and could obtain possession of it without opposition; and apparently not suspecting they were observed, they embarked and paddled up the stream.

Fortunately, the boat had been emptied, and the contents placed in the thicket; and it was now a matter of great rejoicing that they had secured the horses, though Mr. Rodney refused to sanction the deed, and Ellen, with tears, said,—

“Do release the horses, and let them go back, brother Harold. God will not prosper us if we are robbers; and the Indian medicine man will say, ‘See these pale-faces, Christian dogs! they speak peaceful words but they are men-slayers, and horse-robbers.’”

“Little girls have little wit,” said Captain Scruton. “By the laws of nations, we are entitled to the spoil of victory.”

“And by the laws of equity, we set these horses against our boat,” said Arncliffe.

“It was not our boat,” said Ellen indignantly. “We carried it off unjustly from the owners, and the spoil was not that of victory, but of massacre.”

“Oh wise young judge, how do I honor thee!” said Harold, laughing. “I go with Ellen; we were bound to give up the boat we had borrowed. And in the matter of the battle, I must confess I never felt so like a poltroon in any field. It was worse than deer-stalking. It was no better than a *battue*; the wretched creatures had not a fair chance.”

“And if you’d given them a fair chance, sir,” said Arncliffe, “I’d like to know what my chance would have been. If you’d defied them to fair battle, the first



thing they'd have done would have been to take my scalp; the next, to sound the war-whoop, and call numbers to surround and cut off your retreat. These woods are full of them. I heard all their schemes; to-morrow they meant to hold a grand war-feast, when I was to be tortured, scalped, and finally roasted and eaten. No need to use fair means with such ferocious savages."

This report somewhat lulled the scruples of the conscientious, and all thoughts were turned on the necessity of flight; as their enemies would certainly pursue them. Hastily snatching a little refreshment, each of the party was soon mounted; and as they had still three spare horses, they were loaded with Jacob's skins and the rest of the baggage, and led off. Then leaving the dangerous banks of the river, they passed through the woods upon the open prairie, and pursued a course directly east, piloted by the practised trapper.

"There's little of shelter hereaways for ye," said he, "and yer women-folk will have to rough it prairie-fashion. We'll have no time for loafin', I calkerlate, if we think to keep ahead of them scalp-hunting varmint."

Through the summer night they urged the stout little horses over fertile pastures, where herds of buffaloes and troops of wild horses continued to feed fearlessly as they passed; for their instinct told them that they were at that time in no danger from the enemies of their races.

At length, men and horses flagged; Mrs. Avondale could no longer hold her bridle, and they halted under the shade of a wide-spreading beech, and picketing the horses, lay down on the turf and slept profoundly for some hours. Then, as they ate their breakfast of dry

meat, they looked before them to contemplate the region they must pass. Already, the grass was shorter, the vegetation looked less verdant, and the trees were rare. Worse than all, no game was to be seen; their store of dry meat was not only small, but decaying; and they had no longer the resource of fish. A muddy pool of water, though it satisfied the horses, was very repugnant to the thirsty travellers, and they began to fear that they might not readily meet with a clearer stream. This was depressing; and old Jacob, chuckling at their nicety, said, —

“Ye’ll have to get used to hunger and thirst, I guess; many’s the time I’ve fasted well on to a week, and here I be, yet, God be praised. There’s yerbs, sartainly, as puts off hunger, and there’s small game, birds and prairie dogs; but ye’re an awful lot of mouths, and it would use a heap of lives of them unsatisfying things to fill ye all. One buffler ye see’s only one life, and that would go a great way; and that’s what God means for us when he sends bufflers in tens of thousands; plenty for all, Injuns and whites, as comes on prairie.”

“Jacob is right,” said Mr. Rodney. “Harold, I pray you to look for elks or buffaloes rather than shoot the flocks of birds which must be necessary to satisfy the appetite of such a number. Don’t you think, my little Ellen, it is a cruelty to kill so many birds?”

“Yes, I do, Mr. Rodney,” answered she; “and though dear mamma does not like buffalo-meat, Pat and I will try to find eggs for her. You know eggs are not living things, though they might be. Then Hahnee and I know some roots that are very good to eat. But what will become of us if we can find no water? We

must turn loose the poor horses, to find it for themselves, or they will perish."

"We'll not part with 'em, yet, anyways," said Jacob. "We'd be in an everlasting fix, hereaway on the barest ground of th' prairie, if so as we're letting them go their own gait. Nay, nay; they'll have to bide what we bide for a bit, honey. So you, and your fust-rate Injun woman, had better be seein' after yer diggins."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Supply of Roots. — The Strawberry Bank. — The Deer at the Pool. — Pats's heroic Fight. — The Return of the Buffalo Hunters. — A Pack of Thieves. — John's ignominious Flight. — The Escape of the Puma.

THE plains were not yet wholly barren, though the artemisia bushes, the tokens of the dry wilderness, were already scattered about on sandy spots, where the low hillocks, that guarded the burrows of the curious little prairie dogs were raised. There numbers of the shrewd, solemn-looking little animals sat gazing at the strangers, while their constant companions and inmates, the burrowing owls, sat near them; but no sooner did the leader take the alarm than he uttered the sharp yelp which has given the undeserved name of dog to these delicate little creatures, and all in a moment vanished into the burrows.

No evil intentions were entertained against the prairie dogs, however, and Hahnee and Ellen having collected an abundant supply of wild onions and the *Psoralia esculenta*, or sweet potato, they walked on till they met with a pool of clear water, and then rested to cook the greatest part of the sickening dried meat remaining, with the roots, and this stew formed the most palatable meat they had eaten for some days. Then, while the weary were resting under a tall artemisia bush, Pat and Ellen rambled off, and returned

with their hats filled with large delicious ripe strawberries ; inviting everybody to follow them and eat strawberries. Everybody was happy to pick strawberries, and to forget hunger, and thirst, and peril, and to talk hopefully of the future, though they were somewhat disappointed that Jacob, so experienced on the prairies, should not have led them over well-watered plains.

"Well, then," said the old trapper, "it was these Injuns as drew us off the track. I guess it wouldn't pay to keep on right afore 'em. You'll bide patient a bit, and things will drop clear. Them there fixins is next to water for Christens ; and them horses will keep on their legs another day I calkerlate."

But it was two days, two long, hot, tedious days, days of suffering from hunger and thirst, from fatigue and anxiety, before the travellers saw the green wooded sides of a *butte* or isolated mountain, towards which they turned the faint and weary horses, which already seemed to scent the desired refreshment, for they rallied, and started off briskly, to the base of the mountain, on the east side of which was a channel of pure water, bubbling from the heights, towards which men and horses eagerly rushed.

Refreshed with the delicious draught, the men hobbled the horses, though pretty well convinced that they would not stray from the desirable stream ; and then sought the shelter of the wood, to avoid the noon-day sun, and after a short sleep, to search for the supplies necessary to support so large a party. Low bushes of delicious currants and raspberries were abundant at the foot of the mountain, and higher up, the notes of the pigeon and parrot were heard, while the coveys of young prairie birds rose whirring from the

plains on all sides. Jacob shook his head at these prospects.

"Babby meat," muttered he. "Able men would make a poor feed on such like."

"Will I be thryin' my fishing-rod?" asked Mike.

"Ay, ay, fish it is, lad," said Dick. "And it's like we'se all have to lend a hand. What does yer honner say to a trip out north? It houlds fresh thereaway, like as though we might fall in with prizes."

Hahnee softly touched the arm of Dick, and led him to a spot by the side of the rivulet, where the distinct trace of small cloven feet might be seen.

"She's a sharp un, she is," said Dick, regarding Hahnee with admiration. "It's few women-folk as would have notished this. What sort of craft has touched here, think ye, Jacob?"

"Small deer," answered the trapper, poring over the trail; "but a few will come in handy, I guess. They'll be watering nigh-hand nightfall, and ye'll have to lie in cover; they're shy beasts, and fluttering a feather will set 'em off. Here, let Arncliffe and me mind this job; we'll watch 'em, and you stout uns be off after buffler meat; there's work for all, I calkerlate. There's Pat and Miss can gether berry fixins; and Hahnee, woman, look about thee; there'll be yerbs, or some feed, hereaways."

This division of labor promised to produce some relief, for all, more or less, were enfeebled by fasting, Mrs. Avondale and Dennis being the greatest sufferers; but the abundant supply of food around them allayed in some measure the sensation of hunger. Then Jacob ordered every one to retire behind a spur of the mountain, that the approach to the river might be left still

and undisturbed, he and Arncliffe lying concealed behind the low bushes. They remained a considerable time watching; at length the rustling of branches announced the approach of some animals, and a herd of graceful deer bounded, one after another, from the wood, and, plunging into the stream, laved their hot sides, with the semblance of perfect enjoyment.

"What a shame to disturb them," whispered Ellen to Pat as they peeped through the trees from a little opening in the wood, where the two children, armed with long knives, were digging potatoes, as Pat delighted to name the sweet bulbs Hahnee had taught them to find.

But Arncliffe and Jacob were not deterred by any feeling of humanity; they fired two rounds among the herd, and two were left floating on the stream, dead, or mortally wounded; and though the rest fled to the woods, one was, they saw, desperately wounded in the neck. This frantic creature came suddenly on the children, and in its agony ran against, and overthrew Ellen, and then began to attack her with its antlers. Pat uttered a loud cry, and with great intrepidity rushed on the deer, and stabbed it in the shoulder with his knife. Leaving Ellen, it turned on the new assailant, and stooped to butt him; but the motion caused the blood to pour in torrents from the well-directed wound, and before it could strike, it tottered and fell. With a shout of triumph, Pat leaped upon the body of his victim, crying out, —

"Wasn't I the boy as kilt the baste entirely? Sure, isn't he a raal big un, Ellen, astore?"

But Ellen "astore" was in no condition to rejoice in his victory; bruised, and bleeding from a gash in her

arm which she had raised to protect her face, she lay incapable of moving; and when Pat began to weep over her, she also burst into tears, and said, "Pat, am I killed?"

"Niver a bit of killin' it is, then, Ellen, astore," said he, "barrin' it's the baste itself, bad luck to it, will be kilt, and not you at all. Will ye be lettin' me carry ye down to aunt, to doother yer arrum? and thin, sure, ye'll be atin' a bit of its flesh, out of spite, musha!"

Ellen smiled, and sobbed, and looked with wonder at the proof of Pat's prowess; and when he had bound her handkerchief round the lacerated arm, and she tried to stand and to walk, she found that she was not really killed, and could even laugh at the sight of her tattered frock of dressed deer-skin, which had fortunately protected her from more dangerous wounds.

"You must go first, Pat," said she, "and tell mamma all the story, or she will be alarmed when she sees her little White Dove bleeding and ill. I must sit down here and wait a little longer. I think no more wild deer will come."

In the mean time Arncliffe and Jacob, with the assistance of Scruton and Mr. Rodney, had drawn from the water the two slain deer, and were assisting John to cut them up when Pat appeared, to report, with great pride that he had killed that same buck that had torn Miss Ellen's frock, — a mysterious allusion that was not understood till the pale and trembling girl was brought from the wood, to be attended, and nursed, and soothed by her mother and the kind women; and from that time Pat was elevated to the rank of a hero, and allowed to perpetrate mischief with impunity.

It was late; the fires had been made, and venison-



steaks and fish from the river were broiling temptingly, when Harold and Dick appeared, slowly and wearily drawing after them the skin of a large buffalo-cow, in which were enclosed the choicest parts of the flesh—the hump, the tongue, and the delicate ribs, a profusion which inspired the hungry with gladness. The tired hunters themselves were glad to see that they should not have to wait till their spoil was cooked, for they had at once placed before them slices of the delicious white fish of the river, followed by venison steaks, and potatoes—so called—roasted in the embers; and all declared that it was the most agreeable banquet they had ever enjoyed.

“Would ye be lookin’ at my baste, yer honner?” said Pat. “Sure, won’t ye be lettin’ me hunt along with you now? an’ won’t I be stickin’ my knife in the bastes? Worra! yer honner, wasn’t Miss Ellen screeching, and me mad entirely myself? and didn’t I kill him clane dead? and wasn’t it the best of mates, and me wantin’ to have a jacket made of his skin, plase yer honners?”

“You deserve to have it, my boy,” said Harold; “and as soon as it is prepared, I think you ought to have the jacket, and wear it as a trophy. You have fleshed your maiden knife to some purpose.”

No attempt to clean the skins was made this night, for all were fatigued and drowsy with their unusual feasting, so that in an hour there was not an eye unclosed in the encampment. But some time after midnight a shrill scream from Pat awoke the rest, and by the light of the moon they saw the boy dancing about wildly, waving a long stick.

“Mr. Crofton,” he cried, “they’re atin’ my jacket, the

craturs! Sure, thin, will ye be shootin' the bastes, Mr. Rodney, yer honner? What for will ye be slaping, and we'll all be atin up intirely?"

In truth, the startled men did feel rather appalled when they saw a pack of wolves close to them, snarling at each other, and dragging about the precious meat which had cost so much labor to procure. In a moment all were alert; shots, knives, and loud cries soon dispersed the cowardly nocturnal depredators; but alas! the buffalo-skin and meat had entirely disappeared, and one of the deer was so torn and mauled as to be uneatable and wholly useless. Pat's spoil, however, which was suspended on a tree, had escaped outrage, and he rejoiced at the idea that his prospective jacket was still safe.

"I feel disgraced, Mr. Crofton," said Scruton, "that I should have neglected to arrange a watch, or rather, as I had not any extra labor during the day, that I didn't keep watch myself. No wonder those piratical beasts came down on us; and but for the boy, whose smartness is commendable, and whom, if ever I possess a ship, I should not object to rate on my books — but for him we might not only have lost all our provisions, but, if the ravenous beasts had not been satisfied, they would probably have finished with some of our own flesh."

"Or, at any rate, with the flesh of our horses, which would have been a great vexation," said Harold; "so that, on the whole, we have much to be thankful for. I was always much charmed with the pretty story in 'Evenings at Home' called, 'How to make the best of it;' and now, like Robinet, we must make the best of it, and as long as we have venison, and can keep on

this blessed stream, we shall not do amiss. I suppose, Captain Scruton, we may now take another nap?"

"I shall watch, Mr. Crofton," answered Scruton, "and I think Mr. Rodney cannot object to be my companion."

Mr. Rodney agreed that he ought to share the duty; and for the remainder of the night they watched, without any disturbance, except the howling of the wolves, fighting over their booty, with the usual dissension of freebooters.

As the travellers still had abundance of food, they breakfasted sumptuously, and then set out along the edge of the rivulet, over plains still scantily covered with grass, dreading continually that they should see the trickling stream wholly absorbed by the sandy soil, which, except the short grass, produced nothing but bushes of cactus, now covered with glorious blossoms, that cheered even that scorched and barren wilderness.

For two days they fed abundantly on venison and the fish from the running stream, the old people digging up the *psoralia*, which they named potato, and preferred to the constant meat diet. But after that time, the heat of the weather tainted the meat, till it was almost uneatable, the stream had vanished in the sand, and they had to regret the fresh fish that afforded such a pleasant variety of food. As they arrived at each new *butte*, their first care was to search for a water-supply, but they long sought in vain. At length they heard gladly the dropping of water; near a high mound they found a slender current trickling over a jutting crag, and falling into a pool on the plain. From this pool they first filled all their buckets, and then the horses speedily emptied it. Unable any longer to endure the corrupt

flesh of the deer, they were compelled to be satisfied with roasted roots; and lay down to sleep beneath the bushes. But the hideous cries of the night prowlers continually disturbed them, and twice the watch drove away the wolves that had been attracted by the smell of the tainted venison, or by the horses. Towards morning, Jacob said to John, his companion in the watch, —

“I guess thar’s Injun or painter on our trail; hear ye, man, d’ye catch that rustling? Keep yer rifle ready, and yer eye yonder away.”

This excellent advice John followed so far as to keep his eye fixed in terror on the bushes pointed out by his companion; but when a glittering pair of eyes shone through the gray leaves, and a sudden bound brought an enormous unknown animal upon the back of one of the horses, he flung down his rifle, and rushed into the midst of the sleepers with a dismal cry.

“Cowardly sneak!” cried Jacob, as he fired his own gun. But though, from the sharp growl of the animal, he judged that he had wounded it, it proceeded to fling the horse over its back and flee into the thicket, the second shot of Jacob being wholly unsuccessful.

“It’s not like me to miss a painter!” exclaimed the trapper wrathfully. “I guess it war that cowardly coon as set up my dander with his bealing out like that, and it’s a marcy for him that I didn’t give him the ball hisself. Now, ye see, the critter’s gone with the best horse; they’re cunnin’ coons, they painters, — they allays pick out jicy meat.”

In this case, however, none of the horses could be said to be in “juicy” condition; labor and famine, and, above all, the scarcity of water had enfeebled and ema-

ciated them; and as they should have still two horses left for the baggage, they did not mourn deeply over the panther's victim. But John was soundly rated for his cowardice, and replaced by a more efficient sentinel, till morning relieved them from the dread of wild beasts, and they ventured to search the wood for game, in defiance of the puma, which Jacob named the *painter*.

"Sure wont I be saking out a stag for your honners to shoot," said Pat, "and me carryin' my long knife again, as Will gave me. Isn't it a first-rate hunter I'll be showin' myself altogether."

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Bee-hunt. — Starting new Game. — Robbed of the Prize. — The salt Lake — The wild Rice. — Making Bread. — The River and its Inhabitants. — The unlucky Horse.

THE party spread through the woods, fearing no danger in the daylight; strawberries and raspberries were plentiful, the wood-pigeon cooed, the squirrel chirped, and the bee hummed amidst the blossoms of cactus, while the musical trickling of the water harmonized pleasantly with the summer sounds even in that barren region. But the larger animals were snug in their lairs, or were roaming on the plains; none were to be found. Reluctantly the sportsmen were nerving themselves to the necessity of shooting the gentle pigeons, when Pat, in great excitement, came running up to Mr. Rodney and Harold, crying out incoherently, —

“Wasn't I seein' them all fly into ——? Sure didn't I watch them, and niver mindin' av they'd be stingin' bees at all, seein' it's them same that makes the honey, the cratur's! and lavin' my cap unther the three to be knowin' it agin. Wouldn't yer honners be wantin' an axe to cut it down altogether?”

From Pat's report, though it was far from lucid, Rodney judged that he had traced the bees to their honey store; an agreeable prospect, for though honey alone was not satisfactory food for starving men, it

would be an addition to the roots on which they were now subsisting. Therefore Dick was summoned to bring his axe; and they followed Pat nearly to the summit of the mount, where, on a jutting rock, some ages before, a large spreading beach had flourished. Time had hollowed the trunk, and withered the lower boughs though the upper part was still verdant and closely leafed. As they drew near they saw swarms of bees apparently driven from their cells.

"You little vagabond," said Dick, "I'll be bound ye'll have been poking 'em with a stick, and have set 'em all astir. Now, we'se have a reet-down feight with 'em about their bit honey."

"It is but natural and fair, Dick," said Mr. Rodney, "that the bees should defend their own, like loyal volunteers; and I am astonished that they did not sting the boy when he meddled with them."

"Sure, niver a stick at all was I carryin', yer honner," said Pat, "barrin' my long knife; and me niver thrublin' 'em at all, but just lookin' on. Would it be the cratur's were seein' us comin' to thave their honey?"

"Anyhow, we'se have to try and board 'em," said Dick; "it's hardly like we'se turn our backs and run from a lot of honey-bees. Tie a rag ower thy face, John, man, and take up thy axe, and let's fall on."

"They 'teng badly, Dick," answered John faintly; "I'se noways fõnd o' t' job."

"Get thee down among t' women folks," said Dick with contempt, "and take a needle in thy hand; it's all thou's good to, thou Molly!"

"Nay, nay, Dick," replied the mortified man; "thou knows I'se not feared on a wild colt, and can break him bravely; but there's no 'biding t' ways of them 'teng-

ing fleas. But come on, I'se thy man; and Mary, lass, blind me, honey; I'd not like my een piked out."

Peggy and Mary tied muslin handkerchiefs over the faces of the two men, and enveloped their hands in deer-skins, to the perfect satisfaction of John, and the annoyance of Dick, who complained that he never could work muffled. Then they ventured into the midst of the swarming insects, which continued to buzz angrily round the tree in unaccountable confusion.

After two or three strokes of the axe, a loud rustling was heard in the upper branches of the tree, then a deep growl, and finally, the grinning face of a black bear appeared protruding from the foliage.

"Halloo!" cried Dick, "he's gotten start on us; an ugly dog. We'se need guns sooner nor axes. I say, captain, a pirate in sight. Will your honners just give him a broadside, for bear's meat is better nor honey any day?"

"And plaze, Mr. Crofton," said Pat, "be in a hurry, seein' the baste will maybe be atin' all our illigant honey."

Many shots were sent into Bruin before he yielded to fall from his post; and then, having safely finished him, not, however, without some sharp stings from the distracted bees, the workmen proceeded to cut down the old tree, and, opening the trunk, found an amazing quantity of fine honeycomb, arranged with the marvellous art which the extraordinary insects display in their beautiful works.

"What a pity it is to destroy their town!" said Ellen. "Could we not have taken a little honey, and left their lodges habitable?"

"As good you had it as them ugly bars, honey," said



Dick, "if it be worth carrying off; but it's poor meat for hunghery men."

However, the bear was left untouched, till the whole party, with buckets, baskets, wooden cups, twisted leaves, or any vessel they could contrive, bore off a large supply of honeycomb to the encampment, to be packed up as well as their means allowed. Then they returned to cut up and bring away the bear; but before they reached the spot, they heard a tremendous roaring and howling, and approaching at a safe distance, they were mortified to see two large pumas fighting for the possession of their valuable game. Mike, perched on a tree, overlooked the field of battle, and reported that a pack of wolves were lurking in an opening at a short distance, only deterred from approach by the presence of the more powerful animals, and ready to pounce on the fragments when their superiors were glutted.

"Bring up the rifles again," said Harold to John; "we must have a shot at these ferocious robbers."

"I say no, Harold," observed Mr. Rodney; "pumas and wolves are dangerous opponents, and we should certainly lose more than we could gain by the conflict; for the bear, torn by these animals, can no longer be fit food for us. Let us discreetly retreat, and move immediately from this wood, which seems to be the general rendezvous of all the four-footed animals of the region round about."

Captain Scruton approved of the suggestion; and, with many bitter invectives against the meddling pumas, the men returned to the camp, dejected and crestfallen, to make an indifferent breakfast on roots, fruit, and honey.

"Now, we'd better be startin'," said Jacob; "and see

that ye all keep a sharp look-out for a trail, as we ought to strike somewhere hereaways. Mind it's not safe, for them sneaking red-skins is allays hanging nigh on it; but we'se fall in with water whites, and, I guess, not with so many of them bars and painters; they critturs keep in t' woods mostly."

It was vexatious to set out unprovided with food, and with no more water than their leathern bottle would contain; but, having watered the emaciated horses, which reluctantly turned from the pool, they rode away at a slow pace. The plain was still encumbered with the tall artemisia tree; but occasionally they met with patches of thick green grass, from whence it was difficult to move the famished horses, and at length they hailed the sight of a shallow pool of water, surrounded by willows; but, alas! white saline efflorescence upon it, and the crystals of salt on the banks, assured them, before they tasted it, that the water would be undrinkable.

"Then, wouldn't we be bilin' the pratees in it," said Peggy; "and won't they be altogether tasty."

The experiment proved that Peggy was right: the insipid roots were more palatable when boiled in the saline water; and the gratified women collected a bag of the crystals, in case, as they all hoped, that they should not meet with any more salt pools. Despairing of meeting with more substantial food, the sportsmen reluctantly sacrificed a dozen prairie birds, which were large and fat, and when boiled in the salt water with the roots which they could always find on their path, made an excellent and satisfactory stew. The poor horses' alone were disappointed; they snorted, and tasted, and shrunk from the bitter water, and stood

gazing languidly and despairingly on the delusive beverage.

"I cannot stand this, Rodney," said Harold. "We ought to discharge these faithful servants, and set them free, to find their way to more fertile regions. It is downright inhumanity to detain them."

"Well then," said Jacob, with a grin, "you're a top hand, you are, for a screed of doctrine; and grand words you have, but you're noways sound I guess. Human critters reckons afore brute critters anyhow, I calkerlate; and send them beasts off, and where'll we be? Wolves' meat, I tell ye, lying picked clean here on prairie. First them 'at's weak, then them 'at's stout, dropping one after another along th' trail; and some on ye, may-be, leavin' squaws or mothers, waitin' life-long for ye to cast up."

"It is quite true, Jacob," said Rodney; "we are certainly called upon to preserve the lives God has lent us, that we may do the work he has ordained for us; and it is plain that few of us could encounter the difficulties of the wide unknown paths spread before us, without the aid of our poor four-footed servants. We must be tender with them; but we must still use them as long as they can carry us. Can you not hold out a hope to us, Jacob, that we may soon meet with water?"

"Well then," answered Jacob musing awhile; "it's dangerous I guess, 'cause of them Injuns, but you down-east folks bide badly without yer every-day's eating and drinking. So, I calkerlate ye'll have to follow me a bit more south."

"South it is, Jacob," said Dick; "seeing you've set yourself at th' helm; but I can't say as how I see th' meanin' of your tacking on this here plain ground."

South they journeyed till evening brought them in sight of a clump of taller trees than usual, beyond which they came to a narrow rivulet, and men and horses hastened to it to drink; and then lave their heated bodies for some time. Then the horses turned, with revived appetite to feed on the fresh grass near the water, and the men set out up the stream with rod and net to try for fish; and, late as it was, they obtained fish for a good supper that night, and a plentiful breakfast next morning, before they crossed, and then reluctantly abandoned the river, under the peremptory guidance of Jacob.

But gradually a pleasant change of region broke upon them; trees of every variety; the American cedar and oak, the spreading beech, the sumach and hickory, all varied in foliage, adorned the fertile plain, which was brilliant with thousands of summer flowers, rich-colored geraniums, white lilies, bignonias, dappled columbines, and banks of golden eschscholtzia. Every tree was an aviary; many of the birds were beautiful in plumage, and perhaps the most attractive among them was the noisy useful turkey.

Far away they saw herds of animals which Jacob said were buffaloes and wild horses; but he would not hear of any delay, as he wished to strike a river well known to him before night. But they passed so invitingly near a herd of small deer, that before the creatures had scented their enemies, Harold had shot one, which they placed on the freshest of the horses.

Many times as they moved on, Jacob alighted to scrutinize some suspicious crushed grass, or broken twig; but was satisfied that all remained safe; and Hahnee keenly examined the trail, and assured her mistress

"no red-skin foot come on here." Cheerfully then they crossed a wide green swamp, to a belt of willows, beyond which was a growth of tall grass, six feet high, which concealed from them at first a broad clear river, the goal at which Jacob had aimed.

The horses struggled through the grass to the water, and when satisfied began to feed on the luxuriant tall grass, which Mr. Rodney now remarked, was headed heavily with grain.

"They're like to be greedy, sir," said John, "for if ever I set my eyes on a bonnie corn-field, its here, and it's not oft, I reckon, them poor beasts fall in with such like."

"It's wild rice," said Jacob. "Ye'll see heaps on't in these swampy bits, and not bad bread-stuff for them as likes such fixins, but a buffalo's hump's a deal better meat for men I guess."

But not only the horses were satisfied, but the men, and still more the women, rejoiced at the sight of grain, which might be converted into bread; and stalks, green and ripe, were cut down, for on sunny slopes it was already partially ripened. But when they had rubbed out the grains the Irishwomen looked disappointed, as they by no means resembled the rice they were acquainted with, and Mary, with some suspicion, asked, — "Will it be fit mate for a Christian to ate, Mr. Jacob?"

The man laughed as he said, "What! ye war lookin' to find smooth, bleached, city rice fixins, I guess; but ye'll not see that there a-growin' on prairie. We call this here grain paddy, and if ye'll trouble to bruise it atween two stones ye'll get stuff for yer dampers, honey."

"It is the *Folle avoine* of the voyagers," said Mr. Rodney; "in scientific words, *Zizania aquatica*."

"The thin husk that envelops the grain, even when cultivated," said Mrs Avondale, "must be removed before it is dressed for the market; but here, in the desert, the wild rice crushed into flour, as Hahnee can do it, and baked in biscuit-like cakes, will be a wholesome and desirable relief from the sickening flesh. The green ears, too, are agreeable vegetables when boiled with meat."

Every hand was willingly employed in the pleasant task of cutting, thrashing, and bruising the ripe rice; a large fire being in the mean time made on a broad, flat stone, to heat it for baking. As soon as sufficient rice was bruised Mary moistened and formed it into thin cakes; these were placed on the heated stone, covered with broad leaves, and then with the ashes of the fire, which was still kept up round them. In a few minutes they were baked, and with venison steaks made a luxurious supper. The crumpets, as Harold named them, were greatly approved, especially by the Irish women, who declared they now wished for nothing more, except a cup of tea.

The skin of the deer was cleaned, and spread to dry, that it might be formed into a bag to contain a store of rice; and after thrashing and sifting the rest of the grain, they sought out a place for their night's lodging.

"We have the choice between the swamp and these flat stones, which extend from the water," said Mr. Rodney. "I conclude they are really part of the bed of the river, left uncovered in this dry season. Let us spread the rice-straw over them: the tall rice will shel-

ter us from observation, and the fresh air from the water will be pleasant."

"I guess," said Jacob, "there's company nigh them stones as mightn't be so pleasant when a man were wantin' a quiet rest. Now, what'll ye be countin' yon critter, master?"

"Truly, Jacob," replied Mr. Rodney, "I see nothing but the blackened trunk of a tree floating down the smooth river; a very agreeable sight. I wish we had a boat to sail down as easily."

"Ye'll have to take another look at it, I guess," said the trapper, chuckling; and, as he spoke, the black log became animated, and such a head was raised from the water as made the women shriek, and the whole party decamp hastily.

"It's nought but an alligator," continued Jacob; "them critturs swarms in creeks down hereaway. Awkward customers they is, when they're wanting meat; but yon crittur has heaps of them big white fish. He'll not trouble to land his clumsy carcass just now, barrin' he'd seen Miss there lyin' sleepin' quiet, and easy to come at, and then, may-be, he'd tried her for a change of meat."

Unwilling to rely on the tranquil appearance of the alligator, they withdrew to a distance, content to spread straw over the swampy ground; and then bring up the horses from their rich banquet of rice to a safer ground. But before they came up to the animals they saw them wildly bursting through the rice in great terror. It was with difficulty that they were captured and secured, and then it was discovered that one was missing.

"I knowed we'd loss by that crittur," said Jacob, coolly, "as I clapped eyes on him. They're craftier

nor an Injun, they are. I guess he'd come drifting on like a snag till he war close on them beasts, and then snap at he who was nighest, with his big jaws, and draw him down. Well, then, better loss him nor a Christin soul, for it's an awfu' end to be swallowed livin' by an ugly crittur like him."

This was a vexatious and alarming termination to their enjoyment, and Mr. Rodney immediately relinquished his wish for a sailing-expedition.

"I'd say then as how a canoe's all right," observed Jacob, "he can't hurt ye in a good bark boat or a dug-out, but I'd not like a raft on this here creek. I guess yon critturs could board that easy."

"I reckon nought of yer fresh-water creeks," said Dick. "Give me a taught craft, and a free open sea, where there's none on these alligators, nor snags, nor Injuns shooting on ye off shore, but ye're just master yersel' of ship and of water."

"The Lord is king, Mr. Marlin," said Dennis, "on the say as well as on the land; give Him the glory. What for would ye call yourself master of the water?"

"Isn't it at His word the stormy wind ariseth, and He only can make the storm to cease, when we poor creatures call on Him in our trouble? Isn't it pitiful, man, to be callin' yourself strong when you're altogether wake?"

"Dennis has properly rebuked us all, Marlin," said Mr. Rodney. "We are all too ready to be proud of our small amount of knowledge; God give us grace to be humble. Myself, I own to having been much elated at being the first to suggest sailing down this perilous river, and Jacob was appointed to be my monitor. I



have spent years in learning, but in this matter he was wiser than I."

"Well, then," said Jacob, "I guess as how books is books, and prairies is prairies, and creeks is creeks, and every critter has his own share of work to do here below, and the Lord himself is the only master of larned and savage, trader and trapper. All we've to mind, I calkerlate is, to do our work honest and slick on, like a beaver, which critter is, to my mind, not far short on a Christian."

"Except the one mighty step, Jacob," replied Mr. Rodney, "the step from reason to mere instinct, from the immortal to the perishable. Man alone has a soul to be saved."

"Well, I'se not queshton that, master," said Jacob. "God forbid as how I shouldn't own it all. But," he muttered to himself, "it's a pity, it is; them beavers is fine critturs!"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Trail. — The War-whoop. — The Horse-robbers. — A sharp Conflict. — New Acquaintances. — Old Kentuckians. — News from Avondale. — A Prospect of Happiness.

AT early morning, Mike came up to Harold with a vexed look, and said, "Musha, yer honner, didn't Will and I mane to be gettin' a grand lot of fish to breakfast; and sure, didn't we see that same thafe of the world staling up, quite 'cute, saking out another horse to ate, and didn't we run away, thru it is, and lave him all the fish for himself, the nigger."

"You did quite right, Mike," answered Harold. "There was no disgrace in running from such a cannibal; he might have wished to try if boy tasted as well as horse. We must have more crumpets for breakfast."

They kept at a safe distance from the dreaded river, and passing through a wildernëss of brilliant flowers; pink and purple phlox, white azalea, noble magnolia, and other glorious blossoms of the season, they diverged into a grove of cypress and cedars, where they hoped to find the desired shelter. But an exclamation from Hahnee arrested them, and all saw plainly by the crushed grass and broken flowers, that the foot of man had trodden there. The trail was broad, the moccasin of the Indian, not the foot of his horse, had made that trail; but from the condition of the broken flowers,

Hahnee judged that it was two days since they were trodden down.

"Then, at all events, they are far beyond us," said Harold, "and we need not hurry to overtake them?"

"They'll may-be turn on us," said Jacob. "What think ye, Hahnee woman? I'se not pleased about this here trail. Would they be braves, think ye?"

"No, no," answered she, "no war-path here. Braves take war-path on horse. Red-skin on moccasin go rob and burn, come back on horse, leave blaze in lodge, burn all!"

"She knows a heap," exclaimed Jacob, in admiration. "It's plain it's been a troop of them robbers as looks after hosses. We'se have to mind, else we'se lose both hosses and hair, I guess. Let's keep on their trail, that it mayn't be notished; and if we see 'em nigh, we must make for bush-cover, or tree-cover, and if we can't casha these here beasts, we'se have to turn 'em loose."

They followed the trail undisturbed till night, glad to be able to keep near the river, and in the evening they succeeded in taking a large supply of beautiful white fish, and small trout or greyling; then plunging into the midst of a wood that skirted the river, they found a small clearing, where they ventured to broil their fish, tie up the horses, and leaving a watch, the rest composed themselves to sleep.

But their rest was soon disturbed by yells, which, though distant, were sufficiently alarming, for they were recognized as the Indian war-whoop, and Jacob was of opinion that some of the horse-stealers or scalp-hunters had been detected in a nocturnal foray, and attacked. "It's like enough," said he, "that them 'at's rogues will

come off best, 'cause, ye see, them dogs is 'cute enough to hunt in big packs; two thieves to ivery poor soul robbed."

"Couldn't we help the victims?" said Harold eagerly. "It can't be right to skulk here, when robbery and murder are going on."

"And we loss our own hair, I guess," answered Jacob. "It's like enough them very critturs as we helped would be first to fall on us. But I'd like to know what's what, if we'd a sharp scout."

"Wouldn't I like to be papin' after them, Jacob," said Mike; "and me just firin' a gun among them; wouldn't they be jumpin'?"

At this moment the report of firearms was distinctly heard, and Jacob exclaimed, "Well, then, I calkerlate that's niver Injun shot; them critturs can niver fire a volley, they just pop one arter another? I guess it's some hunters or trappers as them red-skinned rogues has fallen on. If this doesn't beat a full beaver-trap! We're in for it now. Hould back you, Mike; you're not up to yer work. Here, Pat, young 'un, go ahead; you're a deep hand."

"Sure, thin, Jacob," replied the flattered lad, "won't I be threein' all the way, and spyin out what's the shindy, and thin stalin back sharp to fetch ye all up to be shootin' the rapparees. Is it now, plase?"

"Now it is," said Captain Scruton, in a tone of authority. "Don't be alarmed, Mr. Rodney, the boy is shrewd, and will make a better spy than an older hand. Listen to my instructions, Patrick."

By this time Patrick was far beyond hearing orders; with the swiftness of a greyhound he had set out, his eyes and his ears open. Though the time appeared

long, it was in effect very speedily that the boy reappeared in great excitement, crying out, "Let me get on behind, and my bow and arrows, and be galloping sharp. Sure, isn't it only six Christians agin hundreds of Red Injuns? and all them same horses thaved. Musha! won't we be shootin' the rapparees dead altogether?"

Trusting the disparity of numbers was not so great as it appeared to the eyes of Pat, the travellers ungratefully refusing to admit the boy to share the honors of the combat, notwithstanding his urgent entreaties, rode off at full speed. The continued yells and the occasional shots guided them to the scene of the conflict, which was not more than half a mile distant, beneath a clump of trees.

Including Mike, they numbered nine good men, armed and mounted, and to present a more imposing appearance, the captain ordered them to ride abreast. When they came within fifty yards of the combatants, at a signal, they gave a loud cheer, which was immediately responded to by the unfortunate six white men, who rode up to meet their welcome friends. The Indians seemed to be in possession of a vast number of horses, which were plainly very unruly, and not more than thirty or forty of them had riders. A random shower of arrows from them did no harm.

"Are these men really robbers?" asked Mr. Rodney.

"They've carried off all those horses from us," said the leader of the strangers; and they're looking out for our scalps.

Captain Scruton immediately gave the word to fire, and a well-directed volley created immense confusion among the Indians; while the horses dashed wildly for-

ward, but being tied together in a string, they were unable to break loose, and only impeded the movements of the robbers, who seemed desirous of escaping.

"The dogs! they calculate to carry off the horses," exclaimed the strangers. "No gentleman can ever stand these horse-robbers, the eternal brutes! There's no sleeping quiet, sir, for their knavery; but, there's no denying it, their rascality is, out and out, a clever institution."

The Indians, impeded in their flight, fought for their booty bravely; but a few more volleys, followed by a grand charge upon them, dispersed the red-skins, who, after a vain attempt to lead off the captured horses, abandoned them, and fled over the plains like lightning. John and Harold then assisted the owners to secure their horses, or they would, after all, have taken to the prairie; then the stranger turned to his friendly deliverers, and said, —

"I guess we were as near our latter end as we shall ever be till the thing comes in airnest, if you strangers hadn't stepped in slick at the right time. You'll never have another such chance, I calculate. And where may you all hail from, gentlemen?"

Mr. Rodney, to whom this speech was especially addressed, smiled at the American ease of the man so lately rescued from death, and saw that he was a fine-looking, respectably-dressed man; plainly no trapper. The rough men who followed him, though equally free and familiar in their manner, had the appearance of servants or laborers.

"We are a party of travellers," replied Rodney. "I conclude, from your stud of horses, that you must be a settler."

"Hardly that, yet a bit," answered he. "I'm Abraham Branton, raised in Kentucky; started out here-aways to a clearing that he that owns it wanted to trade off, he being a Britisher, and tired of our grand country. This loss is his, you mark, because our contract isn't signed. But he took bad when he got a sight of Indians; you see, he owes them a spite, and he were not fit to come after the thieves; so it wasn't in me to let the rogues run off clear."

"How did they contrive to lead off all your horses?" asked Scruton. "Don't you keep a watch in these dangerous prairies?"

"I guess we'd not find men to keep watch by night and work by day," answered Branton. "Our men will fight like buffalo bulls, but they've no fancy for watching, when, ten to one, there's no need. Well, then, give us your names and your callings."

Mr. Branton was formally introduced to the whole party; and after they had ascertained that five Indians, and as many horses, were left dead on the field, they turned to lead the strangers and their horses to the encampment, in order, as Mr. Branton said, that his men might "have a snooze."

He was much astonished to see women ready to welcome their friends, and they were equally astonished to see civilized men in that wild desert; but all were too weary to enter into explanations till morning. The women had prepared broiled fish and rice cakes for breakfast, which the numerous party speedily consumed.

"You don't feel badly on the prairie," observed Branton; "only fish is a poor watery fixing for strong men. You should look after buffalo meat. I guess the beasts are thick enough on yon hills."

"And so's Injuns," growled Jacob; "and fish-feed's a heap better nor a scalped skull. We keeps our eyes open on prairie, ye see; and we knows when to hunt and when to keep close."

"And a pity it would be to scalp that skull of thine, friend," replied Branton, "because there's brains under it. I guess thou'st no Britisher. Where wast thou raised?"

"Not far from your houlding, Abraham Branton," said Jacob; "and your father, Isaac Branton, I guess, would sing out my name in no time."

"Well, then," answered Branton, "may-be I'll strike on the trail myself. I'm in the mind that you'll turn up to be that harum-scarum fellow, Jacob Lightfoot, the wandering trapper."

"There's queer chances in men's lives," said the trapper; "and it wasn't in natur' for me to look to set eyes on Isaac Branton's bould lad hereaways, seein' as how he war allays for militia trading."

"He's Colonel Branton, he is, any day he likes, full out," said one of the men, continuing to smoke his pipe coolly in the face of the "Colonel;" "but he's ta'en a fancy to turn settler; I guess he'll have a gal in his eye."

"Keep to your own side of the road, Amos," said the colonel. "You see, Captain Scruton, it's good to take a look at all sides of life. You've had starts off land and off sea, I guess, yourself, and, likely, know a heap. Now, I calculate to lay out a town yonder, and if you've a few smart hands to spare, I'd not mind giving them a plot to begin on. It's been poorly minded, you clearing! What could you look for under a shy, proudish Britisher, who didn't know half his



people, and was ever and away running off after the Indians; seeking lost friends. But he's not half a bad fellow, for all that, isn't Avondale. . . . ."

Mrs. Avondale uttered a faint cry, and Mr. Rodney said, "Was your friend seeking for his wife and child among the Indians? Tell us all you know, for we are all very anxious."

"Well, then," answered Branton, "I guess Avondale's not one of your great talkers; but Joel there, his horse-keeper, he knows a heap about it. How was't, man?"

"Injuns," grumbled the rough man, "nigh about put him down; left him on prairie, a gone coon, or thereabout. Squaw and papoose missing, and he argufying ever sin' as how they're livin' among Injuns. Total unreasonabe he are consarnin' that; but I guess it'll take a good 'un to put it out of his head. Thereupon he took a clearin', and when I war loafin' about at St. Louis, he picks me up to keep horses, and we fit one another fair. It's years now we've been yonder; but nows and thens, when his mad fit comes on, he starts off roamin' over prairie, like a rampant buffler as has lost company, and comes back all shakin' and white-like, — all as ripe corn as wants cuttin'. It's lunaticks, doctor says, as we hailed out from St. Louis to look at him!"

"My Alexander! my husband!" cried the agitated Mrs. Avondale.

"She'll be another, I calkerlate," said Joel, nodding significantly at the lady.

"You're eternal ignorant, you are, Joel," replied Jacob. "She's no more that nor you are yourself. There's bigger wonders nor beaver-dams in this world,

I guess. I've knowed a man afore now on this prairie as had had his hair carried off, and arter that has met him 'at did it, and scalped him clever. Oft them as was reckoned dead, turns up agin lively. Whereby I calkerlate your man may see his squaw agin, and that afore long; mind my say, Joel."

Joel stared stupidly and said, "You're a gobbler, ould fellow, you are, and there's no follering yer trail. I guess ye've some trap set."

In the mean time Branton had been made acquainted with Mrs. Avondale's joyful hopes, which there seemed now no doubt were well founded.

"But we're not at Avondale yet," observed Branton. "I'd not wonder if the horse-robbers rally, and muster a good force to come down on us, and recover their booty. I guess they'd be mad when they came to think how cowardly they'd been. So we'd better make a start slick, for we've two good days' work yet before we're on safe ground. You'll not need much packing, I reckon."

They set out with a formidable party of fifteen effective men, mounted and armed, sufficiently strong, Captain Scruton believed, to oppose any troop of Indians; but Branton shook his head as he pointed out the incumbrances; the string of unmanageable horses, the women, the old and the infirm.

"We may reckon half our men as told off," said Branton, "to guard them that cannot help themselves; and it's odds, that they don't come on us by hundreds. If the rogues had put off their prank two days, we'd have defied them. I was looking for fifty stout fellows joining me to take up bits of clearings yonder at Avondale, — real smart lads, that have smelt powder

and had their blood riz yonder again the Mexicans. They'd have cut up the Sioux dogs to shivers. Well, mark ye this, Joel, if we're like to be put down by these redskins, you get these women off snug, and away to Avondale, and bring up my fellows like a blaze of lightning to help all that are left of us."

"Well, then, colonel," answered Joel, "I'd gainer be arter my own turn. I guess I'se horse-keeper; not woman-keeper."

"Dull dog!" exclaimed Branton. "Which of you men will arn a few dollars from Avondale, by delivering over his goods safe?"

"I'll do it, Abraham," replied Jacob; "not for dollars, which reckons small hereaways; but partly not likin' to see poor women scalped by them bloody rogues, and partly a bit of regard for you and old Kentucky. And I'd be handier at that job nor fightin' now, and it'll lighten your hands."

"I earnestly hope we may not require such service," said Rodney, "so near as we are to the settlements."

"We'll have to keep our eyes open yet," said Branton, "and after all we're none of us up to Injun cunning. There's few trees we ride past but what may hold one of their scouts."

"And them hearin' Pat and me spakin' hard words agin them," said Mike. "Won't they be mad, musha!"

"They's not up to English, my lad," answered Branton, "let alone Irish, which I take it you're talking. But they'll read off a man's meaning as fast as the schoolmaster reads off his multiplication-table. They're deep files, and it takes a sharp beaver to cheat an Injun."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Night-birds again. — Piping to Quarters. — Jacob's big Lot. — Defeat and Captivity. — The Intentions of the Swift Elk. — The Amusement of the Squaws. — Feeding Time.

NOTWITHSTANDING the prediction of Branton, the travellers went on through the day without observing any thing to alarm them. The men shot two fine bucks, and they encamped on a lovely bank sloping down into a ravine, the dry bed of a river, and surrounded by noble trees. It was a fairy land of bright flowers, soft breezes, and curious and beautiful birds — the oriole, the woodpecker of golden wing, and the amusing mocking-bird; and in this sweet, sequestered spot the young and happy had no apprehension of evil.

“You're a jolly lot to fix on a lone man yonder,” said Branton; “but there's wealth of stores at Avondale, and gardens of fine fruits and vegetables, with forests of game to feed you all.”

“Will there be pratees, and pigs runnin' in and out, think ye, yer honner?” said Peggy. “Isn't that same the glory of the world, sure?”

“Well, then, good woman,” answered Branton, “there's glory enough of that sort. There's cows, and dairies, and chickens, and such small fixings fit for women folks. I guess it were Avondale's fancy to keep all spick and spander for his wife; and he never minded being laughed at a bit, not he; he kept his stand, and he's like

to come in winner, if we mind what we're about. Now then, my men, you're not to stand loafing and listening hereabout; you'll keep watch outside the wood, and throw your eyes smartly round. Pity it's like to come on thick. See, the mist's gathering in!"

This was not an unfrequent termination of an excessively hot day; and the scouts, finding their employment vain, hung idly about, lounging and chatting in an undertone; while those off duty obtained a little sleep. Jacob, who was among the sleepers, woke up before his time, uneasy with some vague suspicions. He could see nothing; the fire had even died out. He listened; but all was still, except the muttering of the drowsy sentinels, the hum of beetles, and the low, deep notes of the night-birds.

He woke Arncliffe, who lay next to him, saying, "I'm not half likin' yon whoopin, man. What think ye, is't owlet or Injun?"

Arncliffe growled at this interruption of his slumbers, and muttered surlily, "What for, can't ye let me be? Let them as watches watch, and them as sleeps sleep. What know I of a Jenny owlet's tongue?"

"Man! I tell ye," said Jacob, starting up, "yon's niver an owlet at all! Them fools of scouts have letten Injuns creep in round about us. Halloo! captin, ye're about keenest. We're trapped; and them hootins is meanin' words."

"Signals they are, Jacob," said Scruton promptly. "You're a man to be trusted; but I never can trust a land-watch, where every man does as he likes. Marlin, rouse up, and pipe to quarters; the enemy are bearing down upon us."

The word was passed from one lair to another; and

quietly the men, accustomed to discipline, prepared for the strife. Branton and his American followers were, on the contrary, noisy, bustling, and insubordinate. Every man had his own opinion, and his own plan; no one had a decided object except Joel, who determined to save his horses, and Jacob, who prepared to make off with the women.

"We've set up our fixings over a wolf-trap, I guess, Captain Scruton," said Branton. "If we'd kept out on the prairie we might have had fair play; now we're trapped. But we'll die hard. Jacob, you knowing old coon, you see and get the women mounted; and as soon as we can tell where the rogues are gathered, you make a start, clear off the opposite way; and if Joel can save his horses, he must consort with you."

The signals still continued, and were responded to, as the keen-eared Jacob pointed out, in various keys and notes, a perfect telegraphic conference.

"There can be no mistake now," said Harold; "I can distinguish the imposition myself. What are we to do—to leave this glade for the prairie, or to form a square, and defend ourselves here?"

"The open sea, if you please, Mr. Crofton," said Scruton; "there can be no fair battle in a narrow harbor."

"You are doubtless right, Captain Scruton," said Rodney; "you are accustomed to the tactics of warfare; but allow me to suggest, as the encounter seems inevitable, that our first duty is to send away the weak."

Hahnee was sent out to listen, and report on the position of the enemy, and returned to say: "Hahnee see many red light in dark night. Sioux brave come."

on war-path; they burn tree, and grass, and all pale-face. Sioux many, like buffaloes on prairie."

Harold himself saw, from the exterior of the wood, the glimmering of numerous torches through the mist. He judged the Indians could not be more than half a mile from them, and were evidently approaching swiftly.

"Off with the women and the horses, you men," said Branton; "keep along the ravine, — it will shelter you till daylight, then Joel will guide."

"It's a big lot," sighed Jacob, as he saw the five women and old Dennis mounted to set out. "One man'll have his hands full to mind 'em."

"There's Joel to help, old fellow," said Branton; "be moving."

"Well, then," drawled Joel, "I guess I'se have plenty to look arter with them hosses; I'd hardly be lossing them for any womenfolk, I calkerlate."

"You're a proper old grunter, Joel," replied Branton. "Now, I tell you, if there's danger, cut loose the horses, they'll find their way to their own corral, and you help save the women."

Joel growled rebellion as he led his string of horses down into the ravine, followed by Jacob and his train; and as they rode off, the trampling of the horses was plainly heard.

"Is there not a hope, that if we followed the women, we might escape?" asked Rodney.

"Not a speck of that," answered Branton; "these savage dogs ride horses as wild as themselves, and they fly like the wind. We must fight or fall, I guess. Come out, clear of these bothering trees; we'll never be killed in a trap."

"I'd say form in the ravine," said Arncliffe, "then fire this wood, and roast them cowardly spies. The wind's fair for us, and would keep the dogs off us a bit."

"Clever it is," said Scruton musingly, "but hardly fair warfare."

"Fair!" replied Arncliffe scornfully; "who reckons to fight Injuns on the prairie fairly? It's just trick for trick, cunning again' cunning."

"I protest against the plan, Captain Scruton," said Rodney hastily; "these spies in the wood believe they are fulfilling their duty. It would be dastardly and brutal to massacre the unfortunate creatures. What do you say, Mr. Branton?"

"Well, then, I say, Mr. Rodney," answered Branton, "that your friend there seems to have a cross of savage in his own blood. I'm not up to wholesale murder, if he be. But come on, boys, now's your time; be bold, and mark the torch-bearers, that's fair play."

Mounted and armed, the little band formed a line before the wood waiting the approach of the dark crowd, now plainly visible by the light of the torches, which rendered the bearers conspicuous marks to the opponents they intended to surprise. The Indians were naked, and decorated with patches of red and yellow paint, and as their hostile intentions could not be doubted, the fifteen men fired on the savage throng, producing much confusion and loss; but confident in their strength, the Indians soon rallied, and returned a shower of arrows, which the weaker party happily avoided by retreating into the shelter of the wood, and fired a second volley. The crafty Indians then saw the advantage of the position of their opponents, and after another ineffectual flight of arrows they sud-



denly charged against their victims in great force, lance in hand.

"It's all over now," said Branton. "You young 'uns tree it, you may get off; but we'll have to bide a heap, I guess. Never heed, captain; duty afore self. Give 'em a shout and a volley for a last token of love!"

The repeated firing, though it must have thinned the ranks of the Indians, did not arrest them; they poured into the woods, surrounding and bearing down their brave opponents by the weight of numbers, and they only paused when Arncliffe, in the Sioux tongue, cried out for quarter, declaring that they would at once surrender themselves prisoners, if they were assured of good treatment, and allowed to trade for their ransom.

"The Swift Elk, the great scalp-hunter," said he, whose plumed head marked him as the chief, "looks down with disdain on the pale-faced long-knives, who hide in woods, and war like women. The Swift Elk wants horses, guns, and fire-water. The long-knives must give him these, and work as his slaves till the feast of the scalps, then they shall be given to the squaws of the Swift Elk, who love to make the cowardly pale-faces cry out in the fire."

By this time every man was overpowered and bound to his horse with strong ropes of sinews, and the small possessions of the vanquished, including the rifles, were carried off; then, aware from the report of the spies that the horses had been sent away, the chief directed a party to pursue them; while he himself, with the rest of his troop, led off the unfortunate prisoners.

For some time the melancholy procession moved forward in silence; then Branton, in the Sioux language, attempted to expostulate with the chief on their

treatment, and to enter into some arrangements for their ransom; but his words were received as if unheard, in dignified silence.

"I guess we're in a mortal dilemma," said the irritated American to his two neighbors, Rodney and Harold. "The obstinate old brute has scrued up his talking engine, and that means bad. I say, are we all here?"

"Does anybody remember whether that urchin of mischief, Pat, was taken with the women?" asked Harold. "It was so horribly dark there was no coming at facts. Ask Will, Rodney."

William remembered that Pat could not be found when the fugitives set out, and doubtless he was left in the wood.

"It is quite as well," said Rodney. "No fate can befall him worse than slavery and death. Is any one wounded? I surely hear groans."

"It is John, Mr. Rodney," answered William. "He ran off at the first, but he hadn't sense to climb a tree, so the savages found him, and brought him off. I don't know why he cries out like that, for he's got no wound."

"The poltroon!" exclaimed Harold. "He ought to have been sent off with the women. I doubt whether he ever fired his gun. But, Branton, is there any hope of escape? We managed cleverly the last time we were in the clutches of these tigers, and now we have no weak charge to impede us. Once mounted, I don't see but what we should have a chance in the race."

"Well then, friend, 'once mounted,'" replied Branton, "I guess that's the hitch. They'll shut us up to fatten in their slaughter-houses before they butcher us; and won't they keep a tight watch? That's not the

hole for us to creep out, I calculate; but if that rogue Joel gets through with his horses, and stirs up my people yonder, they'll start off like mad; and if we're not all roasted or boiled, and swallowed up before they can come down on the dogs, — that's our chance, I guess."

"God send us help!" said Mr. Rodney, "for death, which comes to all, can never come in such an awful form as that threatened by these brutal heathens. Let us, my dear friends, pray for help to our Father in heaven."

All remained silent. Awe, or fear, or real devotion fell on the prisoners; and their hearts turned to the inevitable future.

In an hour's time they drew up before a village of rude huts of skin, from which issued noisy crowds of women, to receive their victorious warriors, and to assail the prisoners with groans, shrieks, and opprobrium; they even attempted to strike and wound them with long rods and spears, till the stern voice of the chief made them shrink aside. He rode up to the largest hut, and alighting, an attendant led his horse to the corral, which lay at the back of the huts, while he issued his orders about the prisoners to two grave aged men; and the unfortunate prisoners were transferred from the horses to a large skin hut, where they were left, with their legs bound, and their arms tied behind them, the two old men taking their station before the entrance of the hut, and keeping a watchful eye on the stunned and dismayed captives.

For half an hour, despair kept them silent, then Harold said, "This will never do, Rodney; we'll die like men, if we are to die. But can we do nothing? Where

is all our ingenuity, our energy, our bravery, if we can't make an attempt to escape from a set of rude and undisciplined savages?"

Rodney sighed as he answered, "I have no hope, my boy; we must die. Let us pray that our death may be speedy."

"And that we may fall by the hands of men," said Scruton, "and not be kicked to death like dogs by those ugly hags."

"If they'd let one have t' use on one's hands," said Dick, "there'd be some chance; but we're no better nor logs lying here. Please, captain, hail yon hands, and ask 'em to slacken these here ropes."

"Better keep quiet," said Arncliffe, "the spiteful dogs would only draw them tighter. Now John has a sharp set of tusks, he might manage to gnaw through a rope, and if one was free, he'd help the rest. Where is the fellow?"

"He's at my elbow, snoring like a pig," answered Dick. "How he can sleep is beyond me."

"That's John's strong point," said Harold; "I'll back him against an old tabby cat for a snooze. But he couldn't act in the face of yon old fellows, if he were awake. We must wait."

"It would be as well if we could all sleep," said Arncliffe; "to gather strength for what's before us. We shall have either to act or to suffer, that's sure."

"Arncliffe is right," said Rodney. "Let us try to rest."

In silence, if not in sleep, they remained till roused by the morning sounds; the shrill voices of the women, the screams of the children, the yelping of dogs, the neighing of horses, and occasionally the deep, guttural

voices of the sullen, brutal Indians. The captives then looked round on their forlorn position; the floor of the filthy hut was strewed with bones, straw, and ends of rope; the sleeping-place, which extended round, was made of dirty old mats and half-cured skins, from which a sickening smell arose. The only light was from an opening in the roof, beneath which were the ashes of a fire; and within the hut, across the entrance, were stretched the sleeping guard. The mist of the preceding night had ended in rain, which now poured through the open roof and the entrance, flooding the floor.

"We'll not have to die to-day," said Arncliffe. "These fellows can't abide rain; they'll keep close, and if they have it, they'll drink rum. They couldn't get up their bonfires to roast us, such a day as this, thank God."

"We are bound to thank God for the respite, Arncliffe," said Rodney. "Do you think, Mr. Branton, this affords us any hope?"

"For certain," said Mr. Branton: "if we can hold out four-and-twenty hours, we've a right to look out for friends to help us. If ever there was a bit of luck, or, as you say, Mr. Rodney, a show of God's mercy to a set of poor sinners, it's just this rain. What are those uneasy lads about?"

"Is it Will and me, yer honor," said Mike. "Sure isn't it biting, turns about we are, and have gotten through two strands, but arn't they twisted hard, these same rascally ropes?"

The boys had gnawed at each other's bonds till they had cut the ropes half-through, but by Branton's advice, they now desisted till night was approaching, for,

as he observed, what good would either arms or legs do them, when they were thronged round with their foes?

Shortly after this, the chief entered to look with triumph and disdain on his prisoners. "Where is the pride of the pale-faces now?" said he. "Do the great chiefs say now, 'We are very great; Manitou helps the pale-face, and makes the red-skin fly before him, as the dove flies from the hungry vulture.' The red-skin laughs now, and says, is the skin of our pale brother thin? will he cry out when the squaws cut him?"

"Chief," answered Mr. Rodney, "the Great Spirit made the pale and the red-skin to be brothers, and commanded them to live in peace. We have fought only to defend our lives, and to recover the property you had taken from our friend; we had no enmity against the red-skins. We submit to die, if your cruel laws ordain it; but white men do not treat their prisoners with harshness; they do not torture and starve them. Would it not be wise to accept ransom for us? Send a messenger with letters from us to the nearest station, and you may receive in exchange for us, blankets, powder, and shot, or even dollars; is not this good?"

The chief was silent for some minutes; then he said, "It is not good. Our squaws ask for pale prisoners to make them merry; and we love scalps."

"Are the squaws of the red-skins chiefs?" asked Mr. Rodney. "Do they change their husbands into women? Do they say, 'Give us these men; you are our slaves?'"

The chief mused as he replied, "The brave rules on the war-path, the squaw at the lodges. We give the prisoners to our squaws, for we love our lodges to be at peace. Brave men love only to slay; women love to

see pain. The Sioux chief is not mean like the Pawnee slaves; he gives meat even to his enemies. My brothers shall be fed."

"Will you order our hands to be unbound, chief," said Harold, "that we may eat our meat?"

"The Sioux eats with his teeth, not with his hands," said the Indian scornfully.

"At all events," said Rodney, "will you permit one of our own servants to be released to feed us? It is not good for a pale-face to receive food from the hands of a stranger."

The chief glanced suspiciously round; then pointing to Arncliffe, he said to one of the guards, "Take away the bonds of the lame prisoner, and give him meat to feed the rest. When they have eaten, bind him again."

Arncliffe was released, and with much pain he brought round his cramped arms to receive a huge bowl of boiled maize and buffalo meat, and moving slowly from one to another, he contrived to feed them with a horn spoon of his own making, which he carried about him.

Before he had finished, the chief left the hut, and seeing the guards were lounging carelessly outside the entrance, Arncliffe drew a knife from his vest, and rapidly cut the ropes which bound Mr. Branton and Dick at least half through; so that with a moderate exertion of strength, they might be completely severed. He had no time to accomplish more before the guards entered, and he submitted to be bound again. But artfully talking to the men, he amused them with stories of his Indian exploits, and prevailed on them to tie him loosely that his arms might not be so cramped.

## CHAPTER XL.

Sentence of Death. — The friendly Elf. — The joyful Signal. — The Slaughter. — Avondale's Gratitude. — General Patrick. — Home. — Separation of the Travellers. — England and its Duties.

DURING the day the prisoners saw no more of the chief; but they were frequently visited by the women, who derided and insulted them, and were only induced to withdraw, by a promise of the whole party being given up to them at the festival of the ensuing day. How anxiously the doomed victims watched and listened, and plotted till night came on. Then a fire was lighted, that the guards might see they were safe; and again the chief came in.

"My women will not accept blankets and dollars," said he. "They ask for their right; I cannot refuse them. I am not cruel like the grizzly bear, but I cannot give my brothers their lives. Let them prepare to suffer."

"We are prepared, chief," said Mr. Rodney. "Our God is mighty; He will give us strength to despise your tortures, and He will receive our spirits into everlasting happiness after our bloody death."

The chief stood a few minutes silent and uneasy; then he walked away, leaving two young men as guards, who murmured that they were detained from the preparations for the revels of the next day; and



cast many vindictive glances at the prisoners, who had caused their disappointment.

The anxious captives reclined on their filthy couch, then affected to sleep, keeping a watchful eye continually upon their guards, who, deceived by their apparent repose, after some yawning finally followed their example, and lay down to sleep. In the mean time the fire gradually died out, and all was darkness in the hut. Then, after Mr. Rodney had once or twice fancied he heard a slight movement near him, he actually felt a light touch, and a well-known voice whispered, "Sure, thin, don't be spakin' at all, while I'm cuttin' ye away, every sowl."

He felt the little active hands behind him sever the rope from the arms and legs, and he ventured to whisper, "Are you alone, Pat?"

"Sure, won't they all be among the threes waitin' for ye," answered the boy; "and the gin'ral himself manin' to cut all the Injuns to slithers. Now, be kapin' quiet till I tell ye."

Then the urchin crept round from man to man, setting all free, and Mr. Rodney now saw that a gap had been cut in the tent-cover, large enough to allow a man to pass. He longed to avail himself of this mode of escape; but soon found it would be prudent to wait till his limbs had recovered the power of motion; and when Pat had completed his office he whispered his parting instructions to Rodney.

"When ye're harin' the gin'ral cry out, 'Give 'em it, lads!' thin you'll crape through this same big hole, ivry man, and horses ready outside, and a gun strapped on ivry horse; and won't ye be sharp in joinin' the vol-unteers close by."

It was easily comprehended that Mr. Avondale was "the general" who had brought up Branton's people to the rescue; and they eagerly listened for the signal; while they stretched out their relieved limbs, to make ready for action. A quarter of an hour of anxiety passed, then the rallying words of the signal burst on their ears, followed by loud cheers.

The guards sprang up, and rushed from the hut to ascertain the cause of the tumult, and the prisoners availed themselves of the opportunity to pass through the opening made for their escape, and found themselves in a grove of trees, and heard the trampling of horses round them. "Here they are," cried the voice of Pat. "Jump on, Mr. Rodney; isn't it fun, thin?"

In two minutes all were mounted, Pat springing behind his friend Dick. The moon shone brightly, and a man riding up to Mr. Branton welcomed him, adding, "Come along; we're all here, and won't we whip the nigger critters?"

They were soon in the ranks of the Americans, who were spread round the village charging furiously, shooting down the confused Indians, or slaying them without mercy with knives or tomahawks.

"For God's sake!" cried Mr. Rodney, "hold your hands! Here are women and children, and even the men are unarmed and unprepared. Let us be thankful to escape unhurt, and remember that vengeance belongs to God himself. My friends, this is a base and sinful massacre!"

"You'll not find it easy to stop our fellows, now that their dander is riz," said Branton. "Come, now, Sanders, my good fellow, you've given them a swatch of

your stock-in-trade; let them be. They'll not meddle with our horses in a hurry again, I guess."

"It's not altogether that, colonel," answered the man; "but the dogs had nigh taken my scalp in a scrimmage last fall, and I marked it down then and there as how I'd sarve 'em out for it; and I'll do it."

But the voice of the commander was now heard calling off the assailants. "It is enough, my brave friends," he said; "we do not war with squaws. Let us onwards; we need rest and refreshment after our forced march."

With some difficulty the bugle called together the angry men, amongst whom the released Americans were the most bitter and most determined on avenging themselves on their tyrannical captors. But now they were all content to be marched off, confident in their strength even if pursued, which was not probable, as the loss of the Indians must have been severe, while the victors came off unhurt.

Mr. Avondale now sought the acquaintance of the friends to whom he was so deeply indebted for the rescue and protection of his wife and child, and they were touched with his appearance, bowed with the anxiety and suffering of so many years, and his mild and pensive countenance; and as they rode along they listened with interest to his account of the meeting with his wife, delivered in the words which his romantic dreams and solitary life suggested.

"As I looked out from my sad home," he said, "I saw approaching a cavalcade, which I concluded must be you, Branton, returning with the recovered horses. I went to the gates, and met Joel conducting the animals

to the corral with his usual unmoved countenance ; but I was startled to observe that he was followed by strangers. I drew back for a moment, but was recalled by a voice never to be forgotten calling on me. I trembled, and clung to the gate unable to move, and believed that the voice of the dead summoned me to join her.

“ But once more my belief that she still lived revived, and I rushed wildly forward to receive my long-lost wife into my embrace, and to feel the loving arms of my child around me. I can scarcely describe what followed, and how blessed was the moment when I welcomed them to their home. My wife was speechless with her great joy ; and it was my little Ellen who told me how much she loved papa Rodney and brother Harold, and entreated me to send many men to help them to fight the Indians. As soon as I understood the extent of your danger, and Jacob had pointed out the means of assisting or rescuing you, I hastened to make arrangements. But this required preparation, and Jacob, who undertook to guide us, needed rest and refreshment ; and I had time to hear the story of my wife’s sufferings before Branton’s newly-arrived men were gathered together and armed.

“ Painful as it was to leave my recovered treasures, I could not suffer these headstrong and angry men to set out without a leader ; and it was but my duty to rescue, if not too late, the noble and generous men to whom I was so largely indebted. We lost no time in reaching the encampment where you had been attacked, and found it abandoned. Traces of the battle, broken arrows and scattered balls, showed where the strife had been.

"While we looked round for the trail, a boy suddenly dropped from a tree, crying out, 'Didn't I know, Jacob, ye'd be comin'; and who would be tellin' ye all, barrin' I wasn't here myself?'

"I recognized with gladness the brogue of my dear child's Irish Pat, and heard from him the story of your captivity, and the plan of sacrificing you at the festival, which, understanding the Sioux tongue, he had overheard; and he begged to be taken with us that he might help in the rescue. Jacob advised me to consent, as he knew the boy's cleverness in secret services; and we all set out on the broad trail left by the Indians, hoping that the rain might have delayed their feast.

"We kept at some distance from the village till night fell, and the scouts, engaged in preparations for the revels, had abandoned their posts. Then our little spy set out, creeping under the grass, or swinging in the trees, till he discovered, by the sentinels at the entrance, your prison; and stealing to the back of it, made such an incision in the skin-cover as enabled him to cut your bonds.

"He then returned with his report, and though I was amused with his clever schemes, I was somewhat vexed with the noisy signal he commanded, for I meant my approach to have been accomplished with more secrecy and less bloodshed. But it was too late to dispute orders, and I am content that the title of general, which he so graciously conferred on me, should be given to him, who has properly the right to it, General Patrick."

"And won't I always make them call me that same,

yer honner," said Pat, "seein' ye're saying it yourself, musha!"

Without pursuit, they reached, before night, the cultivated lands which denoted the presence of civilization. They saw with joy, fields of maize, now ripe for cutting, oats, barley, wheat, beans, peas; and, above all, large patches of potatoes drew cheers from the Irish boys, and Pat said, "And isn't there the cows, Mike, quite natural, and not bufflers at all? And may-be, will be seein' the pigs themselves! Sure it's home we've come entirely."

The trodden way, though wanting the smooth surface of English roads, was a pleasing change from the entangling brushwood and high grass; and at length, winding round a grove of flowering shrubs, and an orchard of heavily laden fruit trees, they came before a handsome wooden building, stockaded round securely; but opening upon lawns and gardens, through which ran a slender tributary to the great river, wafting its freshness on the evening breeze. Every thing spoke of peace and prosperity.

"What charming repose!" said Mr. Rodney. "This is truly a poetic solitude. Here man may

'Hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and see her stores unfold.'"

"How rarely can outward circumstances confer happiness," said Mr. Avondale. "For years I have labored in this solitude to endeavor to divert my mind from the corroding care which oppressed it, but in vain. I desired only to return to England that I

might take leave of my relatives and die. The world had no longer a home for me. To you, true followers of the commands of our blessed Lord, I owe my restoration to peace of mind. Welcome to my house; all I possess is at your disposal, my gratitude can never be exhausted."

Their approach had been seen; the outer gates were flung open, and the happy little Ellen bounded over the lawn to meet them, followed more slowly by her agitated mother. Ellen sprang upon Harold's horse, before him, calling out, "See, papa, this is my dear brother Harold: he is your other child; he shall never leave us."

"I fear, Ellen," said her father, "that Mr. Crofton would soon tire of the quiet life that is suitable for your dear mamma and me."

"Then I will go with him to hunt and trap," she replied. "I will build his lodge, and cook his meat. I am to be his squaw, papa. We will come back to you when the hunting-season is over; then he can read books, and I will sew skins for clothes. But, I forgot, I am going to be dressed like an English girl, Harold. Mary is making me a beautiful dress; I think it must be such as the Queen of England wears."

"I rather doubt it," said Mr. Avondale, laughing; "my stores of showy Manchester prints were procured for the purpose of ransoming my treasures, not for dressing my daughter, whom I hope to see before long in simpler attire."

"She must have white dresses when we can get them," said Mrs. Avondale; "in the mean time, I was glad to clothe her in attire less savage than deer-skins. Now, enter, my beloved friends."

Through a verandah clustered over with roses and woodbines, they entered the spacious, airy mansion, where they found Jacob seated, making snares and traps, Dennis happily engaged in a book, and the women employed in household affairs. The men enjoyed the luxury of a bath, and, dressed from the wardrobe of their host, sat down to a sumptuous English repast, enjoying the pastry, the milk, the butter, and the home-brewed ale, after their long privations.

When all the details of the past had been satisfactorily heard, the conversation turned on the future.

"Am I to have this holding, Avondale?" asked Branton, "or do you mean to break the contract, now that you've got your folks round you?"

"Certainly not," replied Avondale; "my wife agrees with me in the desire to return to England. We have there responsible duties. I must no longer be an absentee; I shall settle on my Yorkshire estate."

"Which is happily not far from my own," said Harold. "I shall be of age in a few months, and must be at home; and then Rodney can, if he chooses, abandon his troublesome charge."

"I rather think, Harold," said his friend, "you will need a guide for some years yet. Don't think I mean to emancipate you entirely."

"And you will teach me still, dear papa Rodney?" said Ellen. "You know I am only a little savage now."

"You must be broken in like a little wild filly," said Mr. Avondale. "We must engage a governess to teach you to sit still and be silent, like an English young lady; must it not be so, mamma?"



But mamma shook her head; she was afraid that the task of converting the little savage to young ladyism would be beyond the skill of a governess; and Harold declared Ellen was all right; she didn't need a governess.

"Then, I look to it, Captain Avondale," said Branton, "that our bargain stands. And now, you folks there, if any of you have a fancy to hold a bit of ground and settle along with me, let him say."

"Well, then, Abraham Branton," said Jacob, "give me a bit of a hut to shelter me, and some meat and corn to keep me livin'. I calkerlate I be past trappin' and huntin' now; but I can larn your men, and tell 'em some secrets, and help ye heaps of odd ways, I guess."

"And welcome ye'd be, Jacob," answered Branton, "were it for no more than old times. You're down for one; now, then, who comes next?"

"Sure, then, Mr. Branton," said Dennis, "I'm not mindin' to thraavel further myself in this wild counthry; and manin' always to settle in the same, I'm willin' to take up my rest with you. Would you be having any boys, that you'd like bringin' on in their classics?"

"We're poorly off for young stock just now," replied Branton; "but times will mend; my men will fetch up wives and young uns as soon as they've raised huts for them; but as to the classics, we're not over-much given that way; we'll set you on with some pen and ink fixins to throw off, I guess."

"I'll not disgrace my friends by returning to England," said Arncliffe. "I shall be glad of a holding; the old woman is willing to stay with me; she's been a mother to my lad, and I'll take care of her; and if your

colony get on, I'd like to manage a store; that's in my way. Will must return to England; he's good to make his way there; and Mr. Rodney and Mr. Crofton promise to make a man of him."

Branton gave a long whistle, and said, "Well, then, I guess, I'm like to get a valuable lot from you, Mr. Rodney: but no matter; here's space and stuff for all."

"I'd never have deserted, Captain Scruton," said Dick, "if so as the *Nugget* had held together; but I'se not again this country, and Colonel Branton, he wanting a carpenter, offers to rate me in his houlding. But I'd better be honest and let it out, captain. Ye see, it's Mary, the lass; she's willing at last, if so be as I 'gree to bide here, 'cause of her mother, and Mike as frames to make a good carpenter, and Mary, as reckons to get stitching-work to help make us a living."

Two happy days were spent in this charming retreat, in discussing, arranging, and completing the decisive measures. Mr. Branton had two of the convenient American travelling-wagons, which were fitted up with every necessary for the journey, and his own men went as drivers. Dick and Mary were to accompany the travellers to St. Louis, that they might there be married, and their rich friends proposed to load the wagons, on their return, with useful furniture.

"You'll not be disrememberin' the seed pratees, Dick," said Mike. "Sure thin, won't we have a cabin and a pratee-ground illigant altogether. And Mr. Avondale, hasn't he given mother the cow and the pig, blessin's on him! and she croonin' over the same, and partin' with Miss Ellen, the darlin'!"

The parting was sorrowful; but hopes and even prom-

ises were held out of future meetings. "I don't know but I may make a run over next season," said Harold. "I've done little sporting this year. I came purposely to shoot bears, and I have shot little but Indians, and have neither a skin nor a scalp to show as a trophy."

"I will come with you," said Ellen, "to help to hunt the bears; then I shall see Peggy and Mary, and dear funny Mike again."

"Next year, my child," said Mr. Avondale, "you will be learning to smooth your disordered ringlets, and to study lessons from your governess, instead of woodcraft from Harold Crofton."

"But the squaws always go with the hunters, papa," said she.

"We must not venture, I see, Ellen," said her father, "to produce you among your refined cousins, till you are reclaimed to civilization. But I have no doubt that in another year, Harold, she will bow gracefully to you, and address you as Mr. Crofton."

"Never, I trust," replied Harold. "She will soon fall into the usages of society; but I feel assured that she can never be made artificial in manner; that she will never forget she has promised to be Harold Crofton's squaw."

The journey to St. Louis was pleasant and easy, and the passengers laughed at light troubles. Captain Scruton alone was pensive; he was dissatisfied to lose Dick; and now, that his life was no longer in danger, he reverted to his losses, and gloomily anticipated the future.

"Never say die, Captain Scruton," said Harold. "As soon as we reach England, Mr. Avondale and I propose to help you to another ship. Besides, if you

regret the loss of Marlin, you must rejoice to be rid of Sharpley, who was, you must recollect, something like your master."

"'Tis true, Mr. Crofton," replied he. "I feel your kindness deeply, and I think if I were once more treading my own quarter-deck, I should feel a new man. But I shall have some difficulty in replacing Marlin; hands are not easily picked up."

"Will I be yer man, captain?" squeaked out Pat. "Sure, didn't ye say you'd be ratin' me in yer ship? and me lavin' ivry sowl yonder, and comin' away entirely to run up the ropes agin."

"You're hardly fit for mate yet," said Scruton, laughing; "but as soon as I have a ship, you shall be rated on her books my own cabin-boy. And if you mind your duty, boy, you may command a ship of your own some day"

"Then won't I call her the *White Dove*," said the delighted boy, "afther Miss Ellen, the beauty. And me Captain Pathrick Conolly! Musha! won't I be proud?"

Arrived in safety at St. Louis, Ellen was, for the first time, taken to church, where the travellers assembled to thank God for his many mercies, and to witness the marriage of Dick and Mary. Ellen, pale and awestruck as she left the consecrated building, said to Harold, "Shall we also be married before the altar of God, Harold? It is very solemn. We must learn to be wiser and holier before we kneel there, don't you think so?"

Harold did think so; but in his heart he treasured up a hope, never to be relinquished, that he might really kneel there one day with his dear little *White Dove*.

Immense purchases were made for the settlers, calico, muslin, china and glasses, pots and kettles, groceries, seeds, plants, implements of every kind that were useful, not forgetting books and school appliances for Dennis, as a large party of the wives and children of Branton's men were to return with the wagon. Then they parted with tears; Dick and Mary to return to the free life of the prairie; the voyagers to step into civilized life in the busy crowded saloons of the steamer for New Orleans, where Ellen, though amazed and diverted, felt annoyed and trammelled by forms unknown or long neglected.

From the noisy American steamer to the quieter and simpler cabins of the English vessel the change was pleasant, and the homeward voyage was rapidly accomplished. They landed at busy Liverpool, where the astonishing scenes bewildered Ellen, who clung in alarm to her mother. Mrs. Avondale had also to soothe the terrors of the helpless Hahnee, who was as little easy in the bustle of English life as in the confinement of her English dress, and who prayed her mistress that they might go to the woods.

To the woods they soon after departed, after seeing Scruton appointed to a good ship, and leaving Pat, newly rigged, with him as cabin-boy, rambling about Liverpool, running into many dangers, but always cleverly extricating himself.

It was at Crofton Manor, the travellers first rested, to become the guests of Harold, till Mr. Avondale prepared his house for the reception of his wife and child; and as it was within thirty miles of Crofton, he could conveniently superintend his workmen, while his family

enjoyed a sunny late autumn amidst the beautiful grounds and the woods which Hahnee loved.

There was much to accomplish in the long-neglected domain of Mr. Avondale; but he rejoiced in the prospect of a life of action, and projected improvements in farms, cottages, and grounds, as a means of at once employing and benefiting his people, and atoning for long-unfulfilled duties. Then he hoped to live to lead his child through the trials of youth to the soft and gentle virtues of womanhood.

And after years of salutary trial and suffering, God restored the Avondales to peace. The manners of their child softened into gentleness without losing their simplicity. The rude experience of her early life had rendered her persevering and energetic, and though, in her conversations with Harold in after-days, she sometimes blushed at the reminiscences of her feats of daring on the mountains and on the prairie, she never regretted those useful wanderings with dear papa Rodney and her beloved Harold, and rejoiced to remember that she was herself one of the BEAR-HUNTERS.

THE END.

