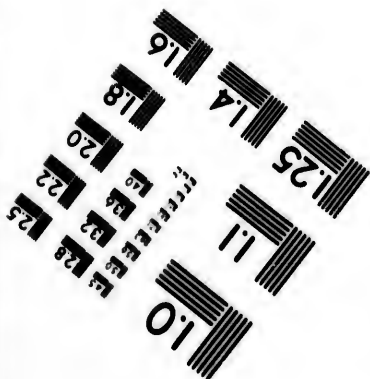
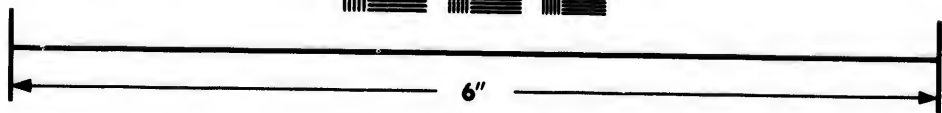
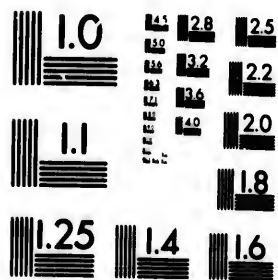


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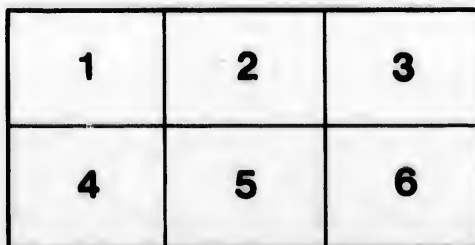
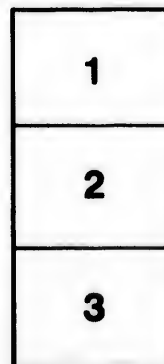
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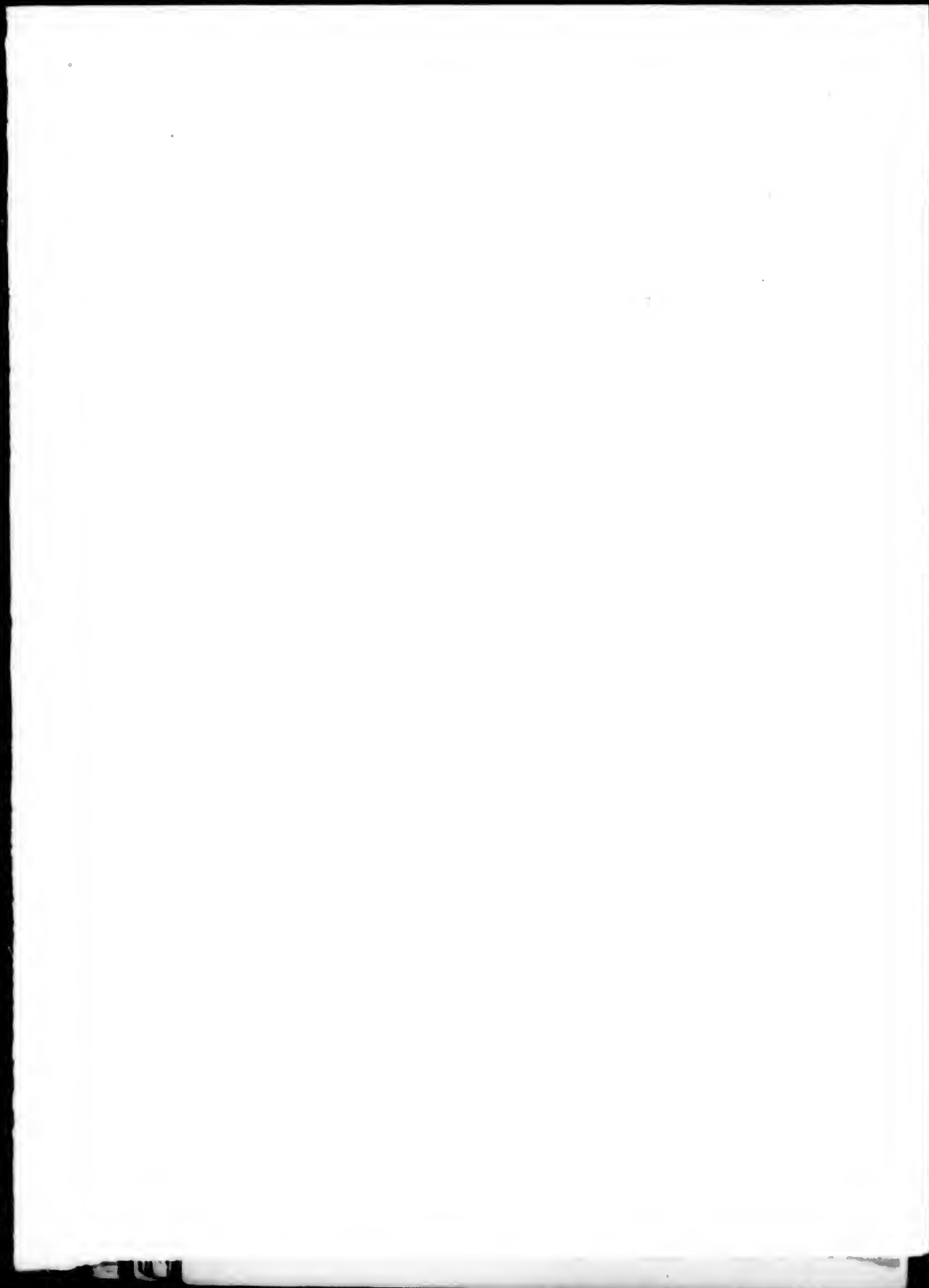
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A PILGRIMAGE OVER THE  
PRAIRIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FORTUNES OF A COLONIST."

VOL. II.

London:  
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,  
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.  
1868.

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A

## PILGRIMAGE OVER THE PRAIRIES.

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### CHAPTER I.

HAVING thus footed up our respective doings to the present time, we indulged ourselves with an hour or two of sweet repose, and then getting again across our beasts continued our journey along the river side towards the point where it was proposed to strike off from it in search of the waggon.

Any hope we might entertain of its having escaped the fire, rested on the presumed ex-



perience of the half breed, Antoine, and was necessarily so vague that we all laboured under much anxiety about its fate.

Our hunt, too, after the buffaloes, together with the long southward march with the Indians, had taken us such a distance from the spot where we left it, that no little uncertainty and considerable difference of opinion prevailed as to its present whereabouts.

After travelling the remainder of the day and best part of the next up stream, by which time we had reached, as we imagined, the proper point for the purpose, it was resolved to quit the river altogether, and make our experimental cast for head quarters.

Ere doing so, however, a short halt was called; the Indians were again sent off for a supply of food, while Bryce and I, having hobbled and turned out the horses, discussed over a pipe of negrohead the "pros" and "cons" of the step we were about to take

The hunters by and bye made their appearance, having met with no success, but Peg-

top made a communication to Jannock, which induced the latter to resolve on continuing awhile longer our course by the water side.

“That critter Peg,” remarked he, as we remounted our animals, “tells me he has seen mule droppings in the water, and knowing what Injyn eyesight is, and his in particklar, I consider it worth our while to try it up a bit further.”

As the sun was about to drop below the wavy line of prairie horizon, Swiftfoot, who had been scouting in advance, came hastily up and made the important announcement that he had discovered a “white camp” a little more than a mile ahead.

This information put new life into all of us, and Bryce and I eagerly followed our intelligencer to assure ourselves of the truth of his report.

On nearing the point in question we found the river expanded to nearly double its former width, enclosing a marshy island thickly set

with reeds, and in the middle of this appeared an object certainly never placed there by nature, but of which the true character was at first sight undistinguishable. Ere, however, I had well time to reconnoitre it, Bryce siezed me by the arm, and, his eyes brimming with silent humour, pointed my attention some little distance to the left, where, sitting under the bank, with a knife in one hand and biscuit and bacon in the other, was seen the figure of my attached but dejected henchman, Robin Hood.

For the moment he was resting from his masticatory labours, and apparently absorbed in thought.

“My shootin’ ir’n,” whispered Bryce, “agin his shot pouch, he’s wishin’ he was at hum this very moment, eatin’ his dinner in the harvest field.”

“Or musing peradventure on the charms of the white-skinned Hannah.”

“Or wonderin’ belike when master will come back. Lord! where would he be now

with three blood-thirsty Seehoo on his trail; it's a massy they've never struck it. Peg, lad! snake up thro' the grass, and rouse him to like with a hallo!"

Entering into his comrade's humour the Indian threw himself upon the ground, and presently the Delaware war-whoop sounded in the ears of the astonished penseroso.

For an instant he remained rooted to where he sat with the surprise, then down dropped biscuit and bacon, and ere we had well time to look about us, whiz came a rifle bullet close to our ears.

"Down, Squire, down," cried Jannock, chuckling with mirth, "or, egad, you'll get another hole thro' your tile, he's got his long pistol yet, mind. Who would have thought the younker had been so spry? Hey, Robin, lad!" cried the hunter.

"Why, Hood!" shouted I.

"Is this the way you welcome your frinds hum again," sniggered Bryce.

“Put down your piece, Robin, and—”

“And get up the bread and pork, man,” quo’ Jannock, as seeing him comply we at last went up, “it don’t do to waste good wittles in the wilderness.”

The deep bay of the bloodhound was now heard from the midst of the reeds, roused by the report of the shot, and led by the rejoicing Robin, we soon had the pleasure of greeting him, together with the derelict and disconsolate Antoine.

It appeared from their narration, that on our starting after the possessed buffalo cows, they had waited some time for our return, and then in accordance with general orders, proceeded forwards in the prescribed line till they should meet with water. This was not done till late the same evening, the camping place being but little distant from where we eventually found them. Here, while awaiting our arrival, the following day they had discovered the approach of the fire in time

fortunately, to shift the waggon and mules to the marshy island near, where they had succeeded in braving the danger without damage.

The tilt of the vehicle had been taken off to avoid detection by the Indians, and we now had the satisfaction of finding both it and its contents as we left them, with the exception of a very perceptible diminution in the eatables.

This, however, was forgiven our followers, in consideration of the good service they had rendered in saving all besides.

With a feeling of infinite gratification, I now gave myself a new rig out, my old one having, as before recorded, been reduced (so far as regarded my own lawful property) to simply my shirt and hat.

For arms (my good rifle having been taken by the Indians) I appropriated the double barrel that had hitherto been attached to the waggon, and restoring Bryce (who had a natural partiality for his long tried weapons) the pistol he had lent Pegtop, armed the

latter and his brother Delaware with those, equally good, we had provided for exigencies of this sort. These with St. Louis knives and their own bows and arrows, furnished an equipment that both for hunting and warfare, was perhaps the most suitable that could be given them.

Not knowing but that the Sioux, with the vengeful pertinacity of their nature, might still be following up our trail, we thought it prudent not to linger where we were longer than was necessary to recruit ourselves and cattle (*i.e.* such of the latter as had shared our later toils) for the continuance of our journey. On the day after our re-union, therefore, we reharnessed our now well-rested mules, and dragging the waggon up the western bank, resumed our progress in the direction of the Black Hills.

Retarded by the huntings, haltings, and misadventures hereinbefore described, as well as the increasing difficulties of the country, which had become rough and broken, we were

yet some distance from these landmarks, though it was already the middle of October, and the sharpness of the nights impressed us forcibly with the necessity of making the best use of our time if we wished to reach the rocky mountains ere the snow fell.

The state of our travelling gear, however, now drew our attention, and gave us cause for apprehension it might scarcely be able to hold out so long

Such is the excessive dryness of the atmosphere in the elevated region we had now attained, that the wood work of our waggon was cracked in every part, and the wheels become so crank and ricketty that after journeying for about a week, to avoid dissolution of the vehicle we were compelled to lie by for two days at a pleasant station on the river called Laramy's Fork, in order to effect repairs.

This was done by securing the spokes with wedges, and taking off and re-affixing the



tires, red hot, over bands of green wood nailed on to the shrunken felloes.

Thus refitted we again took our way westwards, no longer over the rolling prairie, but a series of hills and valleys, all equally desolate and sterile, cut up by deep ravines, and barred by rocky steps which tasked our utmost energies to master.

This was the country of the Upsarokas, or Crow Indians; a race of inveterate marauders, and in addition to the exhausting toil of wayfaring, we were now under the necessity of exercising double vigilance by day and night against the predatory attempts of the natives.

Tho' the Black Hills had been visible to us even before reaching Laramy's Fork, our march over the interval had been so interrupted by the ruggedness of the route and casualties caused thereby, that it was not till the beginning of November we arrived at the defile, thro' which it was proposed to pass

that formidable barrier; and we determined, ere attempting this, as our provisions were again got low, and game seemed here to be abundant, to devote a couple of days to buffalo hunting, with the view of laying up a store that might last us into winter quarters.

Although the neighbourhood was accounted dangerous, yet so, too, might be considered every step of our future route, and it was thought better to brave the peril here, rather than incur that of being stopped by our necessities under circumstances still less favourable.

We accordingly took up a temporary station at the foot of an advanced spur of the main range of hills, where a chaotic pile of fallen rocks afforded to our small party a position at once covert and defensible.

All night long was heard the hoarse bellowing of the animals we were to chase upon the morrow, and as Jannock gathered from these sounds that they had been smartly

hunted during the day by the Indians, we waited impatiently for dawn with the determination of setting about and getting over our hazardous business at the earliest.

At length the rosy tint we looked for streaked the East, the cool breezes of morning, scented with autumnal frost, floated from the plain below, swept thro' the tufts of fir on the mountain sides, and passed into the gloomy gorge we were about to penetrate.

Everything being prepared over night we arose, and swallowing the while a few mouthfuls of dried meat, mounted our wizened steeds for the work of the day. Jannock and Robin had their respective rifles, myself my double barrel, and the Delawares (besides their pistols) bows and arrows—in the particular chase we had in view, the most effective weapon that could be used.

Fortune at the outset seemed disposed to favor us, for we had not gone much more than half a mile when we came upon an outlying troop of six buffaloes couched in a slight hollow of

the ground, of which two, a cow and bull, were speedily dispatched with arrows, our firearms not being used lest the noise might alarm the rest. After which, proceeding forwards piloted by our Delawares, we presently fell in with the main body, and approaching on the leeward side under cover of an opportune rise of ground, on topping this we beheld the plain literally alive with countless thousands of these uncouth animals, here packed in close masses wending on their southward migration, there chased by their relentless foes (for the hunters had already got among them), scudding with frantic roars towards every quarter of the horizon.

On examining the hunters carefully Jannock pronounced them to be whites—Mexicans he thought, but it was not long ere the sharp eyes of our Delawares detected the presence of Indians also.

As it would not have done to return with our object unaccomplished, it was resolved to unite our forces with the supposed white

party, and thus strengthened, brave any risk which there might be of collision with the common foe. Meat must be obtained at all hazards.

Forward we accordingly pushed, and mingling with the Mexicans (for such they proved to be) were soon among the herds, actively engaged in the general work of slaughter.

I had already dropped a fine cow and was drawing within shooting distance of another, when my horse tripped and fell, throwing me some yards ahead of him. Though neither myself nor the animal was much the worse, I found to my vexation my gun was badly fractured at the gripe—rendered, indeed, for the time unserviceable. Being too much excited, however, with the sport to think of giving it up, I remounted my mustang and still rode on after a knot of hunters whom I saw some distance in advance skirting another spur of the hills round which had swept a troop of buffalo they followed.

Among this group was Robin, whom I

wished to overtake in order to borrow his piece, or at least have his help in repairing my own, and I had already got within some rods of him, when suddenly a band of about a dozen Indians burst with loud yells from the adjoining rocks, and charging the unfortunate youth, together with the three stranger horsemen who were with him, in flank, unhorsed the former in a twinkling.

I was too far behind to render timely aid, and probably no earthly intervention could have saved him, had not the Mexican leader, who was in advance, wheeling round the moment he heard the hostile whoop, and recalling what men he had about him, hastened instantaneously to the rescue. Leaving his three countrymen who were still contending with the assailants, to be helped by his followers, he made at once to the prostrate figure of poor Hood, who having been overmatched in the death-grapple by his antagonist was now upon the point of being despatched by him. The Mexican's piece being uncharged, he had

seized the 'lasso' that hung on his saddle bow, and whirling it with marvellous dexterity over the Indian's shoulders as his arm was already raised to strike, reined his horse suddenly round, and ere he could utter an exclamation, dragged the savage off on to the plain.

By this I had got up to the aid of my unhorsed squire, whose gun had gone off in his fall, and was assisting him to rise, when struck by a peculiar cry, I turned my head—to behold the gallant fellow who had so promptly saved him fall to the ground transfixed by an arrow!

It appeared that while dismounted, and engaged in securing the antagonist he had lassoed, a dastardly Upsaroka (for to this tribe the marauders belonged) had seized the opportunity to steal up and shoot him from behind through the body.

The deed, however, did not pass wholly unavenged. The Indians had been mastered by the coming up of the reinforcement, and

compelled to fly, the miscreant in question, through the delay caused by his foul act, being the last. Ere he had passed over the few score yards that would have carried him into safety, Bryce Jannock came galloping up attracted by the tumult, to whom he was eagerly pointed out by the bystanders, none of whom, by some unlucky chance, happened to have their pieces loaded. To mark, level, and fire was but the work of an instant with Bryce, and almost with the report we had the satisfaction of seeing the wretch's bridle arm fall nerveless and broken by his side.

"There fri'nd," cried the hunter as he did it, "that'll sarve till we meet again; he won't pull foul bow again in a hurry, won't that child."

All our attention now was directed to the unfortunate Mexican whose aid we were so deeply indebted to. Such was the force with which the arrow had been shot that it had actually passed through his body, and projected in front full two-thirds of its length.



Though the wound did not appear to threaten immediate death, from the great pain attending respiration it was evident the lungs had been seriously injured, and the results must prove ultimately fatal.

Constructing a rude litter we placed him upon it, and leaving a sufficient party to gather and bring in the buffalo meat, with the aid of the rest conveyed him slowly and carefully to our camp. Here a comfortable lair was made for him, and Robin constituting himself nurse did all that our simple means allowed of to alleviate his pain and supply his wants.

A considerable quantity of meat was brought in during the course of the evening by our own and the Mexican hunters, the latter of whom remained with us through the night, awaiting the morning's report on the state of their wounded chief.

They were in sooth a motley crew, some dozen in number, composed of various nationalities, dressed in the wide pantaloons, jackets

and "sombros" of the Western republic, in which lay almost their sole point of uniformity save a certain hard wiry, weatherworn cast of physique, indicating (whether employed for good or evil) a life of an incessant action.

The one I least relished of the band was a renegade Yankee, who unfortunately seemed to have most influence in it, and now that his superior was likely to become burdensome, he busied himself through the better part of the night in stirring up mutiny and persuading the men to abandon him. Nor were his vile efforts ineffectual, for the next day while our party were all abroad fetching in meat, with the exception of Robin, who never left the bedside of his preserver, this recreant, with several others he had seduced, came to the hut, and had the cruelty to tell his suffering chief that as there now seemed no chance of his recovery they considered their engagement at an end, and that the lateness of the season would compel them to make their way back

without delay. They ended by demanding payment for their services, which, unable himself to move a limb, their wounded Captain directed Robin to take from his purse, and paid and discharged them all on the spot.

Robin on relating the affair added, that though the Mexican officer had said but few words on the occasion, the heartlessness evinced by his men seemed to have left a very painful impression on his mind.

It was indeed but too evident, as his unfeeling followers had stated, that with the serious inward lesion he was suffering from, there could be little hope of his recovery, and it thus became our duty to consider what measures should be taken by ourselves under these peculiar circumstances. To abandon a man who had sacrificed himself in defending us was not to be thought of for a moment; to take him on with us in his present state would be simply to accelerate his end, and to wait where we were during the term he might

linger on would expose us to a repetition of mischances, such as that which had already befallen us. It was eventually decided to suspend our journey for the present, establish our quarters in some securer part of the same locality, and lay in supplies with the view of our possibly remaining there, yet leaving it still in our power, according as circumstances should determine, to proceed as we had originally intended.

Our first step in pursuance of this plan was to remove our camp to a less exposed site.

A suitable position was accordingly selected at a greater height on the rocky spur overlooking our former one, which, while screened itself from observation, commanded a good view over the plain—a point of much importance to men who had to keep a perpetual look out for both food and foes.

Here, after constructing a snug and weather-proof "wigwam," we transferred ourselves, our patient, and our stores, the third day after that of our unfortunate rencounter.

Our waggon was stowed away in a secret cleft within gunshot of our quarters, and our trusty mules depastured by day on the plain below, whilst at night they were gathered into a sort of natural fold or "corral," which it would have been difficult to force without alarming us.

From this time days and weeks passed away occupied almost wholly in buffalo hunting, though our little party (it is almost needless to say the Mexicans had been as good as their word and gone off,) lessoned by past disaster, compelled themselves to observe a caution which detracted both from the pleasure and productiveness of the pursuit. Notwithstanding this, however, by the time these animals had left the neighbourhood, we had succeeded in amassing a store of provender, which, properly husbanded, we calculated would last well on into the winter.

Then we rested, kept quiet in our little fortalice, and amused, rather than employed, our time in erecting another and contiguous

but for the accommodation of our invalid, where, free from the noise of household work and conversation, he might wear out his remaining days in the utmost ease his state permitted.

It was very apparent he was of gentle birth and nurture, however ambiguous the circumstances in which we met with him, spoke English with much correctness, and when not prostrated by pain, would occasionally enter into conversation with me, shewing marks of a liberal and cultivated mind, though dis-tempered, as I could not help conceiving, by some deep and heart-locked misery.

Shortly after changing to our new quarters his health seemed so much to have improved that we began to entertain some hopes of his recovery, but this flattering promise quickly fled, and then began a steady and unvarying decline till the end of the fifth week, when his stomach refused all nutriment, and the struggle became evidently narrowed down to hours.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE "TRACKER'S" STORY.

AT this time, one afternoon, when after a continuance of fine clear weather, the atmosphere began to break and show signs of coming storm, I received a request thro' Robin to attend our suffering guest, and it was added by the bearer that it might be as well to lose no time in doing so.

On entering his hut I found him lying in a state of apparent repose, when in a low but quite distinct voice he addressed me as follows:

"I have ventured to ask your attendance,

Señor Ruysdale, that I might thank you for your care and kindness towards me, and in requital, if you should deem it worth listening to, give you a brief outline of your patient's history.

"Draw nigh to my bedside, Señor, and humour my lame attempts in relating it, as I believe they are in truth the last I shall be able to make. My wound is unusually easy to night, from which, after the pain it has occasioned me, and well knowing it to be mortal, medical science points to but one conclusion.

"I am by birth a Spaniard, but my parents having been compelled by civil persecution to seek refuge in France, the earlier part of my unquiet life was spent in that country.

"If you should have travelled in its southern parts you may have remarked the little antiquated town of — (the name unfortunately escaped me), nestling in a cleft of the sea cliff, and overlooking the sandy bay that separates it from the rocky island opposite, with its ruined abbey and dismantled castle of the



d'Aulaire's. In this secluded ville my parents in their flight from proscription took up their abode, and here a daughter was born to them, who died shortly after seeing the light. It was at this time, being then two years old I received a playmate in the young Leonore d'Aulaire, who having lost her mother whilst yet an infant, had been consigned to my own as foster parent.

“ Being reared under the same roof—by the same hand—sharing together every childish sport, we early conceived in our little souls, too little then to understand the difference of rank, a natural, and as deep as our years allowed, affection for each other. Few parts are there of that sandy bay that have not borne our coupled foot prints, few of its sea-mossed stones we have not gamboled round; seldom did the vesper bell resound but our blended voices returned the ‘Ave Maria;’ seldom the sun sink beneath the western wave without drawing our mutual glances on its glory. Ah! those big bright eyes of my little Leonore, how

often would I watch in them the innocent wellings of her soul, and wonder if they saw aught to answer their unspoken pleadings in my own. I scarce could tell; her spirit was mild, tho' sparkling, clear, and transparent as a glass vase, while mine lay deep within, tho' made of fire, which somehow or other the cunning queen divined, and seemed to take secret pleasure in eliciting.

“Thus we grew up till she had attained the age of eight, when her constitution (to strengthen which she had been placed near the coast and under my mother's care), being thought sufficiently confirmed she was, much to my affliction, removed from our own to her father's household.

“As I was naturally in the old nobleman's favour, from being associated with one so dear to him, he took upon himself the care and expense of my education, sending me, when old enough, to a good school at Avignon—the City of Laura, who even while quite a school boy, often presented herself to my fancy in

the guise of Leonore. Here the prospect of again beholding her was the most pleasurable of my anticipations for the holidays, and when they arrived, their happiest hours were spent in renewing our childish rambles amidst their former haunts, still with the innocent delight of old, but with thought already more developed, and blanking the cheek at times with the dread of our communion terminating.

“ At the castle (where a wing was still left habitable for the occasional occupation of the family), I was always a welcome visitor, and there again I was able to enjoy the ever-grateful presence of my foster-sister. A charming spot it was—that ruined pile posted on the rose-coloured cliff, eyeing in pride of place its vassal township opposite, and sweetly they varied our sea-shore walks—the romp and ramble through its shattered chambers, or idling sea-view from its battlements.

“ An end was at length put to this delightful intercourse by the removal of my playmate to the metropolis, for the purpose of educa-

tion, and my own transference to a place of more special training, for the particular profession I was to be brought up to—the medical.

“For four long years I pursued my scholastic studies, or rather floundered my way among them; the promise of talent, at times, evinced by me being often crossed by sallies of a somewhat wild and capricious temperament.

“My schoolday term being ended, I repaired to Paris for a few weeks, ere proceeding to finish my studies at your celebrated university of Edinburg. Here I did not long delay in calling on Mdlle. d’Aulaire, and was astonished at the wonderous change these four momentous years (for such, at her age, they ever are to woman,) had wrought in her. Though from the first exhibiting promise of more than ordinary intellect and beauty, I was quite unprepared for the dazzling display of both I now met with. But the change was to me for evil as well as good, and the personal superiority evinced by her, conspired with

that of her position in repressing my nascent hopes. She received me with that half apprehensive air of *gène*, that would have sealed the fate at once of ordinary love; but mine was far from such, and in answer to its potent pleading, I obtained from her, at last, the precious acknowledgment, that her ancient regard for me remained unchanged, but that by her father's express commands, she was withheld from making further demonstration of it.

“It needed but this obstruction to manifest in its fullest scope the passion that had rooted itself in my being. In its eloquent, untaught language, and with a suitable display of devotion, I was assuring her of the impossibility of my recognizing so harsh a sentence, when, as ill luck should order it, the austere old noble himself broke in upon our interview, and precipitated the very doom I was protesting against.

“The old man had taken us at advantage, and as parent of the one and patron of the

other, our spirits were tacitly swayed by his authority.

“Appealing to my sense of honor and gratitude, he extorted from me the reluctant promise that, for the ensuing three years of my university course, I would abstain from setting foot in France, and that my stay there at that time should be limited to but three days longer. Should any infraction be made of this engagement, the intimate relations that had hitherto subsisted between our families would be broken up for ever.

“Knowing his grave, unswerving character, and, as I have said, to escape more complete perdition, I gave him the pledge he required.

“Behold me then an élève in your famous Scottish university, one of the marquis’s reasons for choosing which (besides what may be inferred from the foregoing), had been his desire of my acquiring the English language, with a view to qualifying myself for the management of some large estates he held in

Louisiana; behold me I say a medical student—such at least in name, though little in sooth beyond, for a deep and listless melancholy soon grew upon me, rendering all study savourless, and the lectures of the professor and learning of the schools as profitless as the lore of alchemy.

“With your poet Ossian in my pocket I would turn my back on college and town, and wending to some wild glen or sea-washed cove, find amidst the moving strains and misty imagery of the Celtic bard something that would at once respond to and assuage the vague and incessant cravings of my soul. In these solitary rambles I contracted a strong and enduring passion for natural scenery, to which there are few parts of your Scottish realm that have not in their turn ministered.

“Two years had worn away of this unsatisfactory existence and I was sitting one evening in my chamber enjoying my pipe with a fellow student, when a letter was put

into my hand. It was from my parents, who were then living in Paris, and among other matters informed me that M. d'Aulaire who had a strong turn for scientific pursuits, had gone over to England on a tour of inspection through the manufacturing districts, his daughter, 'my old playmate,' accompanying him. This was news indeed. I read the passage over twenty times, giving I fear, but little heed to the rest of the letter.

"Impelled by my secret longings I formed the instant resolution of proceeding southwards and endeavouring to obtain an interview or at least a sight of Leonore, rejoicing to think the terms of my parole now interposed no obstacle to my doing so.

"Strapping a knapsack to my shoulders I grasped my staff and was ten miles away from Edinburgh that same night.

"Reaching on the third day one of those industrial districts that mark some of the most dreary portions of your island, I was



approaching towards evening, tired and dusty, the great manufacturing town that was its centre, when I beheld a small party of pedestrians coming along the causeway towards me. Absorbed in my own reflections I looked at them awhile unconsciously, until descending from the 'trottoir' into the road, the peculiar mien of a lady who was last suddenly fixed my observation.

"They were making for a gateway opposite, leading into some suburban nursery grounds, which — it being, I believe, one of your rarely occurring state holidays—were at this time pretty well thronged by parties of the neighbouring townfolk.

"Through this they passed, the lady still behind, and as her figure disappeared with a motion of airy grace peculiar to it, and a glance 'à la derobee' at the dusty wayfarer whose gaze she had attracted, I became all at once convinced it could be no other than Leonore herself.

"The next instant I was at the garden gate, and entered a little distance in their rear.

"Mingling with the groups that filled the place, I kept her carefully in view, watched her, unknown myself, bestowing her coveted smiles on all around."

The speaker paused awhile, and then remarked, "It is strange these by-gone scenes, apparently so trivial, should recur to me still so strong, and you may think it savouring of frivolity to dwell on them at a time like this; yet, if we reflect aright, it is not the hours it counts that make up life, but the events that give it colour and shape its destinies. The incidents I have related and am about to, were such to me. I was then but eighteen years of age, and deep in love, which threw its secret glamour on every circumstance connected with it.

"Though so little successful in the garden, I was able to get a billet to my mistress's hand during the course of the evening, and

obtain from her a consent to a meeting on that following.

“At some leagues distance from the town I have alluded to was one of those mystic circles raised by the ancient Druids. This had naturally engaged the fancy of the virtuoso Marquis, who with his daughter had repaired to an hotel in the neighbourhood for the purpose of examining it. The evening of the day preceding was that fixed on for our interview.

“Punctual to the appointed time there I accordingly was, waiting on a sombre summer’s evening for the advent of my soul’s desire.

“At this time the sky was overcast with a thick pile of cloud, laced here and there with strips of angry light, lending a look of terror to the sullen heath, and giving a necromantic meaning to those still, grey stones, yet telling in their unchanged uprightness of the power that had raised them in their remotest eld. This night—this scene—from the world of

feeling it evoked in me, has stamped its every feature on my memory.

“In the centre was a large altar stone or ‘cromlech’ that had reeked in its time with human sacrifice.

“Here the priests of old had practised their hieromancy by breaking into the house of life—here, acted infernal rites that shunned the day, and paled the orb of night they were enacted by. Might not their heathenish spells attend it still, and was it a seemly spot to attest the interchange of righteous love? Alas! that grey old stone with its collar of heath, and crown of moss, purged by the lustrations of two thousand years, was innocent, in sooth, enough, but the sad light of futurity gleams back on it, and presents it to me now as the meetest shrine we could have chosen for offering our ill-starred vows.

“I had been upon my watch upwards of an hour, and the moon had already shewn her disc thro’ the fissures of the clouds, when I

distinguished two figures against the lighter loom of the western sky.

“They were female too, and now stopping—now advancing, gradually approached.

“Awed by the solemn look of the ancient colonnade, they halted for a moment on the outskirts, where one remained, the other alone entered it; and I now beheld clearly the lineaments of my well-beloved Leonore:

“In a few moments we met, and ah! what were my sensations after such long and bitter separation as, feeding on each other eyes and wrapt in our stolen embrace, we exchanged the protestations of undying love. When urgently implored to grant me hope, she would say, ‘O, Roderique, my friend, my heart is yours still as ever, but you know my father’s obstinacy—fate rules us all—let us trust to time—a day may come when we may renew our early fellowship, and for my part, you may truly trust I shall ever live in looking for it.’

“Though it was all I could in reason ask,

I was far from being satisfied with this, and in the exaltation of my feeling led her to the sacrificial stone, and made her, not only swear she would be mine, but imprecate a curse upon her head if ever she should violate her faith. On my own part, I swore the same, and registered a vow above, that should I be defrauded of my prize I would seek my amends in death. Such are the fierce resolves of youthful passion, at which philosophers frown and grey beards smile.

“Well, I have done my best in manifold perils of war and travel, to fulfil the oath then taken, and yon savage, with his felon shaft, has given it effect at last.

“We were yet engaged in this engrossing converse when the rumbling of thunder was heard above—the clouds gathered pile upon pile over our heads, and thick darkness stole over the heath, rendering us almost invisible to each other; presently the lightning began to play, and heavy drops descend, making immediate return impossible, and warning us to

seek what shelter the place we were in could afford. I drew my cloak round Leonore, and seating ourselves under one of the Druid columns whilst the elements raged around us, passed one of those borrowed hours of bliss that we may challenge life to parallel. It was indeed the renewing of early fellowship, and has clothed that Druid temple in my memory with the sanctity of a holy shrine.

“The clouds cleared off at length, the moon came forth, and our interview alas, ended. It was the last our happy stars were ever to gleam on.”

Here the speaker paused—interrupted as it seemed, by the painful force of his recollections.

“The following year, my academical term being ended, I left your melancholy shores without regret.

“After passing a few weeks with my parents in Paris, I proceeded once more southwards, on a visit to my former home, partly to realize some property we still held there, and partly

(matter of most concernment to myself), in the hope of renewing relations with my noble sweetheart, who was staying, for the bathing season, at her father's castle.

“As I trotted my horse down the hill that overlooked the place the bells were merrily ringing, the sounds I used once to deem so pleasant when heard with my childish *bien aimée*. They pleased me not, however, now—rather produced a feeling of melancholy, and conveyed a presentiment of evil.

“Our old residence being occupied by strangers, I made for the house of an old woman, who dwelt by the sea side, where Leonore and I, in our younger days, used to resort for aid and counsel in our schemes and sports. As I clattered over the pavement towards it, still the joy bells rang—still rang with the same ill-boding sound as I drew up and descended at our ancient gossip's door. She was seated by its threshold busily engaged at her spinning wheel.



“ ‘ Ah, *mon* Roderique, you, and at such a time !’

“ ‘ For God’s sake, Therese, tell me what these bells are tolling for; they drive me mad.’

“ ‘ Tolling, *cher* Roderique ! but alack you may well say so; know you not then the lady Leonore is wedded this moring to the Spanish count, Aquaviva ?’

“ I heard no more—the reins dropped from my hand, the blood rushed back to my heart, and I felt as one smitten to the ground with a thunderbolt.

“ At that very juncture the nuptial cortège issued from the sacred edifice—

“ The bride and the bridegroom came forth hand in hand,  
I saw my false love, and my bosom I manned.  
With the pride of despair as I met her !”

(“ I’ve read up your ditties in my day, señor, for love and poetry are twin sisters.)

“ As they came near, my horse abandoned to itself became uneasy at the pomp and

clamour of the procession, and created some disorder by its caracols.

“ ‘Whose is that horse? Switch it out!’ was the cry. A grey-headed old servant caught the animal, and leading it back to me, as I stood statue-like at the cottage door, said, as he replaced the reins in my hands, ‘I suppose, Sir, it belongs to you.’

“ ‘Yes,’ I replied, and as I did so Leonore and her Spanish spouse came by; ‘and I must ask your lady’s pardon for its restiveness; the animal like its master was scarce prepared to witness such a spectacle as this.’

“ My look met hers as my words reached her ear—a look that must have savoured of the sepulchre, as my words might have issued from its depth. They had their effect. She sank with a sigh into the old domestic’s arms, who with trained fidelity supported her trembling form as the train proceeded.

“ The incident, however, had not escaped the notice of her Spanish bridegroom, and from that hour I am given to believe—and it

is another bitter record of the past—might be dated the unhappiness that was destined to mar their union, and fulfil her sad portion of the self-imprecated curse.

“For myself I mounted ere they were well out of sight, turned my horse’s head towards the Pyrenees, and never set foot on the soil of France again.

“During these latter years the Spanish Revolution of 1820 had run its course, and wishing to divert my mind from vain and depressing recollections, on returning to my native country I sought and obtained a commission as captain in a force destined to repress the rising insurrectionary spirit in our Mexican colonies.

“It was here I first met with the Indian tribes, and entered into that new field of action which was to furnish me with employment for the rest of my short and aimless life.

“Stationed in a Californian frontier town, exposed to the ravages of the Camanches, I

had ample opportunity of observing this savage yet not uninteresting race, witnessing their barbarous exploits, and retaliating their bloody inroads.

“It was from this latter branch of my occupation, and the aptitude (partly a gift of nature) I evinced in tracing out the depredators, that I gained the title by which I have been since widely known in those regions of the Tracker.

“Those who marvelled at my restless enterprise little divined its cause—little deemed that like the fleetness of the Roman race-horse it was prompted by the secret pricking of the spikes attached to me by destiny.

“Four years have passed since my first setting foot in the New World. I recently got tidings of my father's death, and through the influence of time, my mind having attained something like tranquillity, I yielded to the secret wish I had long felt and combated, of revisiting my native land, and settling among the scenes of my early life.

“An unlucky wound I was laid up with had prevented me from using the necessary exertions for procuring provisions for the journey to the States, and it was whilst endeavouring to obtain these from the first buffalo herd we had met with since passing the mountains that I fell in with your party, and was made by yon miscreant Crow so useless and cumbersome an addition to it.

“Those men you saw about me (continued the Spaniard, after a pause), wild, unruly spirits as they were, I yet had thought would have been faithful to me, for I had lived with them on terms of brotherhood for years—partaken their toils and perils—some indeed saved the lives of at the risk of my own. I got an unlucky wound and—”

The wind which had been southing for some time in the gorge below, here rose in a sudden gust upon the height, burst open the flimsy door of the hut, and scattered a shower of sparks from our wood fire over its floor. By the time I had closed the entrance, and

laid some fresh faggots on the hearth, we could see by the freshened flame our wounded charge lying with his eyes shut, either asleep or in a state of lethargy. The story I had heard from him had been spoken in a low tone, but with clear and continuous utterance, evincing much collectedness of mind, and that vivid reminiscence of past events which often characterizes the last moments of life; his efforts, however, had exhausted him, and anxious not to break his apparent rest, after waiting some time longer, to see if he would resume his theme, I betook myself to my own sleeping lair.

The following day was passed by him in the same tranquil torpor, and it was not till towards evening of the one after that, symptoms of restlessness set in, which indicated a change for the worse.

His mind began to wander, breaking abruptly from shortlived lulls, to wild distracted ravings of heaven and Leonore. A

little after the winter sun set these again subsided, and from this, and the painfully cadaverous colour of his countenance, the closing scene I felt convinced was now at hand.

It having become dark in the hut, I had lighted a torch of pitch-pine to serve the purpose of a candle, and heedfully continued my watch by the dying man's bed-side. Suddenly I perceived his eyes open spasmodically—the fingers of one hand began to twitch the coverlet, whilst those of the other were tightly clasped round some object he had taken from his breast. Snatching up the link, I was again, in a moment, at his side, and bent down my ear to receive his latest words.

“Let it go with me,” such they were, while the fingers of his closed hand relaxed, “to the grave; lay it on my breast—if you should meet with Leonore, tell her this—say, that our shadows rest together, and finish the fond dream we've lived in.”

These were the last syllables that came from him; the object he held in his hand was the portrait of his life-linked mistress.

Such was the end of the Tracker Roderique—the close of his disastrous love-story. Young, and of semi-tropic strain, the passion had fastened itself on him with a force unknown in northern climes, keeping his life-tide at the flood, and ruling its currents to the last. Amid the howlings of the wintry storm the votarist's spirit had passed away, and kneeling by the worn out corpse I fervently prayed to its repose.

From the envelope of the portrait, his name I found to be Roderique Diez, and his age not more than twenty-six.



## CHAPTER III.

HAVING many momentous matters to attend to ere winter should set fairly in, we buried the remains of the Spanish wanderer with all befitting ceremonial—especially regarding his last declared wish—two days after his decease, and immediately commenced preparations for transferring our camp — which now that the buffalo were gone had lost its chief recommendation—to a locality less liable to observation.

The few weeks that had passed by had enabled us to explore the neighbourhood more thoroughly, and choose a new camping site some miles yet further on the Hills, on the

side of a narrow 'strath' or valley, where an elevated terrace reached by a slanting causeway, formed by the stratification of a steep mountain slope, offered the requisite advantages of retirement and inaccessibility, while commanding hunting ground of apparently average promise.

The valley stretched below it for some miles, watered by a stream still unfrozen, and presenting a show of herbage which though not of the most flourishing appearance—as was natural at that season—we hoped might yet be made available for winter fodder for our cattle.

Sensible of the vital importance of these animals to our further progress we resolved to lose no time and spare no pains in providing effectually for their safety during the hard season that was approaching, postponing even the consideration of our own necessities to this.

Not being able to house them near ourselves upon the height, we chose out a shel-

tered spot at the opposite side, within rifle shot, where, cutting down the fir trees that grew around, we constructed a comfortable shed, by slanting the timber against a rock slightly hollowed underneath, and large enough to harbour the entire number—nine in all. For the present their shelter was left open that they might have access to their pasture as long as it should remain free from snow.

The autumn hay which all hands were then set to gather in, was secured day after day on a ledge adjoining, but out of reach of the animals, and devoting ourselves diligently to this work for nearly a week, we at length beheld a goodly stack grow up, which eased us of some of our anxiety for their well-being.

This stack, however, like the cured meats destined for ourselves, was to be regarded only as a reserved store, and not to be drawn on till provender should fail from other sources.

As the sky became day by day more filled

with clouds—the harbingers of coming snow—we at length felt the necessity of turning our attention from our beasts to the task of making a habitation for ourselves.

The little terrace where it was to stand was reached by the sloping pathway I have before mentioned, at a height of some hundred feet from the 'strath' below, having a sheer precipice of this depth on that side, and a towering cliff, of which we could not see the top, on the other. The approach was sufficiently narrow—scarcely averaging six feet in width—and sprinkled with dwarf pines, which furnished ready materials for our architecture.

Following the course pursued in reference to our quadrupeds, we chose out a spot where a sort of cave was formed by the crumbling away of the under strata, which, by placing against the overbrowing cliff the stems of fir trees, sloping at a good angle from it, gave us all the accommodation we required.

A snug and roomy hut was thus speedily

constructed, which by filling the interstices of the timber with dried grass, and thatching all over with a thick fell of pine branches was rendered completely weatherproof.

At the apex, where the tops rested against the rock, a small opening was left in the roofing to allow due passage for the smoke.

In this rude but far from uncomfortable structure we had no little satisfaction in establishing ourselves on the eve of what was about to prove a long and rigorous winter, and storing what was left of our worldly goods, which we next, and with no little interest, proceeded to take an inventory of. The account stood thus:—In respect of provision we possessed about a month's supply of our lately acquired buffalo meat; the greater part to our deep chagrin having, through some neglect in the curing, become putrid. Of that laid in at the outset—hams, salted pork, tongues, &c.—about half the original quantity was left. Of flour and biscuits all had been consumed with the exception of a few pounds

of the former, which our stock also of coffee and sugar seemed scarce likely to survive. On the other hand our tea was almost untouched, and in spite of persevering smoking there yet remained a respectable amount of tobacco—an extra stock having been laid in for trading purposes—which we had already learned to eke out with ‘Shongshasha’ or the bark of the red willow.

Though not exactly an article of provision, I have classed the tobacco with them, as ‘many a time and oft’ it served as substitute.

The residue of the flour and sugar it was voted *nem. con.* should be reserved for our few and far between days of jubilee.

Having made all snug within our wigwam, whilst frugally faring on our store of sound meat, we thought it prudent to lose no time in setting about the task of augmenting it.

Though not destitute of wild animals the aspect of the country we had got into was better qualified to have pleased the eye of my pictorial namesake than that of an English

sportsman. Stationing himself at the door of the hut he would there have beheld little else than a wild and savage jumble of sombre cliffs and shaggy pine-woods, till his half-cowed gaze would seek relief in the narrow belt of verdure underneath him. Should he brace himself to extend his view, a repetition on a still ruder scale of the same scenery would meet it, and impress the inevitable conviction on his mind that if game were to be obtained at all, it could only be by the exercise of unusual energy, address, and nerve.

After their late general migration to the South, there would be little present chance of falling in with the buffalo, but an active hunter might still strike the black and grizzly bear, the elk, the black-tailed deer—a variety nearly twice the size of the common one—the ‘ashahta’ or mountain sheep, as well as that rarer species of the latter, which, characterized by its smaller horns, is even yet more shy and unapproachable.

Limiting our endeavours therefore to the

latter animals enumerated, we gave ourselves to the work of hunting with a diligence proportioned to our need.

Our party was divided for the purpose into two detachments, going out on alternate days, and each generally accompanied by one of the Delawares, who, by their innate aptitude for the chase, were ever looked on as our trump cards.

Maugre, however, all our efforts, the game was found difficult to come by, and as the winter advanced, our days of fasting and short commons became multiplied in an even ratio with its rigours. Still, before Christmas, the sharp bite of absolute privation had been yet unfelt by us; the buffalo meat (which I scarce need say was carefully husbanded), holding out for a length of time, and after it had gone, a deer, sheep, or mountain hare being forthcoming in the nick of time to avert the threatened void.

It was not until the close of this festive period that positive want became experienced



by us. Then, however, for three whole days, during which it had snowed incessantly, famine had reigned within our dwelling, and we greatly feared we should have to welcome the new year with empty stomachs and hippocratic faces. To escape, however, this grievous consummation Providence once again purveyed us means.

One of the Indians, (Pegtop, I think), who had happened to rise earlier than the rest, on the day in question, awoke his melancholy mates by a sudden exclamation of joy. Stepping in a body to the threshold we discovered the cause of his jubilation to be the apparition of a buffalo—one single solitary animal—browsing on a knoll below, which had been partly bared of snow by the winds.

Here, then, our new year's dinner had come to meet us more than half-way, and we felt we should richly deserve our doom if we failed in what remained to appropriate it.

The two Indians being cleverest in 'approaching,' were sent off to shoot him, if possible.

where he stood, or at any rate cut off his retreat thro' the further end of the valley, when nothing would be left him but a flight through our own, which terminated in a gorge where the rest of the famished party posted at short range, could scarcely fail to bring him down.

Our two stalkers stealing down the sloping causeway succeeded in getting each a shot from a clump of firs at the bottom, when the animal dropping, and from its immobility appearing to be dead, they ran up with more haste than discretion to obtain full assurance of the fact.

Honest Swiftfoot, who happened to hold that faith, was disagreeably undeceived, for no sooner did he catch the animal's eye, than springing at once upon its legs, it made at him with the velocity of a rocket, and but for a timely shot from his brother Delaware, who had taken the precaution of reloading, would have sped him more quickly to the next world than his swift feet had ever taken him

in this. Finding the odds, however, thus against him the grizzly bison sheered away at a good pace towards the gorge where the remainder of us were now in waiting to receive him.

Labouring along thro' the deep snow we soon beheld the brute draw near with the two natives hard behind, when stopping as tho' disabled by his wounds within easy shot of us, a volley from Bryce, Robin and myself, laid him once more on his broadside never to rise again.

On overhauling the creature, to our ineffable chagrin and disgust, we found him to be "old bull"—very old bull indeed—so old as to excite a grimace even on the seasoned muscles of Bryce Jannock. Antoine, however, who presently came up, did his best to renew our blighted hopes, by protesting that nothing was insuperable to the genius of cookery, and proceeded to cut him up with a professional gusto, when his quarters were duly transferred to our habitation.

It is only due to our *chef du cuisine* to say that at noon we sat down to some very passable *bouilli*. In fact, Orpheus' music, when it mollified the rocks was but a type of Antoine's boiling in softening the old bull, and though a good deal of its nutritive property had passed into the operative water, yet not so was it suffered to escape us, as we took especial care to appropriate the latter also. Followed by a flour dumpling (well laced with suet), from our hoarded 'leavings,' and wound up with tea and pipes, it enabled us to celebrate the day with something of befitting ceremony.

The winter's sun set early, obscured by gathering storm, and as soon as the shades of night had wrapped the vale, we closed round the well-piled fire, each with a beaker of tea (sweetened for the nonce with the last of our sugar) on his knees, and a well-plenished pipe in his fist, and related his story of past adventure, or listened to those of his comrades.

It was truly a most composite assembly;

among the six of whom it was made up there being no less than four different nationalities. Yet, notwithstanding this variety of race, all were so well in their right places, their tastes, and habits, so in unison, that the utmost harmony prevailed among us.

The fire being in the centre of the hut, there was no 'inglenook' for any acknowledged primate of the party, neither stood there any arm chair or round table for individual ease or general accommodation, but we sat as we best might round the blaze like jolly woodsmen as we were, proud of our calling, each propped on his own good backbone, posed in his peculiar attitude, and dispensing eloquence of his own particular brand.

As a supplementary means of procuring food, some traps had been set in different parts of the valley, in one of which (an unusually strong one), a white wolf had been lately caught and this (the trap) on the present occasion was, by way of amusement,

being passed from hand to hand as a means of trying our respective muscular powers.

Bryce was the only one who could set it by hand alone, which after duly doing, he eyed it for a time, as though some ludicrous reminiscence were suggested by the sight of the implement, then holding it towards me, he remarked, "You'd be rayther scandalized now, squire, I take it, if I was to axe you to let off this kickshaw with your nose."

"I should feel given to decline the invitation, certainly."

"Aye, I dar' say you would, and owe, may be, no thanks to the asker; but what should you say now if I was to tell you I had seen a great, fire-eating 'grizzly' execute that humor-some performance?"

"A grizzly bear," cried Robin, brimming with youthful eagerness, "let off a steel trap with its nose, Bryce! Oh, tell us how that was—tell us all about it."

"Well, lad, fill us another can o' cat-lap, for if I try myself, I shall spill the liquor wi'

larfin', it tickles me so yet whenever I think on it. It was on these very hills too, only so'thin' further no'th, and nigh half a lifetime agone it happened, when Ralph Benyon and me (you'll remember poor Ralph's story, squire) was out tharaway arter beaver; for the country, though as rough, or even rougher than it is here was full o' those quiet creeks the creturs are so fond o'; but it was full of grizzlies as well, and had a bad name for secret onfalls and bloody deeds. Well, I cared as little as any man at that time for things o' this sort, but though I kep my eyes skinned and my ears cocked as I never did afore, I came nigh gettin' some harder rubs than I could well ha' done wi'. I mind the time when I had five open-mouthed Ephraims round me all at once without counting whelps—"

"Lord! and what did you do?" quoth Robin breathless with admiration.

"Clumb a cherry tree boy, and shot'em down one arter another, while they was sayin'

grace to a meal they'd never get. Another time the cretur came on me in the dark as I was solemnizing by my fire arter a hard day's hunt, and I could only save my bacon by ramming a blazing faggot down his throat. The grizzlies was a caution there I tell *you*—enough to ha' given King Nimrod himself a 'winkle.'

"But consarnin' this partic'lar grizzly I was a telling on—

"Me and Ralph had been out one evenin' by a creekside a settin' traps for beaver, and had just found a likely spot for our last under a big boulder on the bank. Ralph had given me his rifle to hold while he laid it cleverly down, and I was s'archin' for a 'med'cine' stick to bait it with, when out rushed an almighty big Ephraim from the other side of the stone, and had poor Benny on his back in a twinklin'. It ain't no joke now, to fall into Ephraim's clutches, that's a fact (an assenting grunt was made to this by the shorter Indian) aye, Pegtop has found that



out, I dar say, in's time—well, Benny found it out too, so feelin' hissself in a pickle, he rammed the beaver trap—ready set as it was, right into Ephraim's face, when off it went, quite nat'ral agin his nose, and there by the powers it stuck, past all bruin's power of unfixin', tho' he riz on his hind legs to do it, and brought his fore paws to help him. Ralph, finding hissself at liberty, started up and sloped off across the creek, while b'ar kept pawin' at's muzzle to get rid of his ugly fixen. Findin' rubbin' only made the matter wuss, he'd then stop for awhile, and hold down his head as if tryin' to realize what strange wisitation o' Providence had fallen on him; then his dander riz again, and at it he'd go whack, smack—whang, bang, beatin' his grizzly visnomy to everlastin' smash.

“While the brute was playin' off these antics, I managed to get two shots into him, tho' I was so shuk under the short ribs I reckon they was mostly wasted, and Ralph who had waded to the safer side of the

stream, and soon entered into the pastime (a' was a light hearted coon—Ralph) fairly caved in wi larfin.' 'O Bryce,' shouts he to me at last, as the b'ar tired o' carpenterin' raised his nose into the air, screwed up his jowl till you could see his hind gums, and seemed to be asking' natur' if ever seed ditto to thisn, 'O Bryce,' says 'a 'take that animal away, or he'll do what huggin' didn't; my poor sides is agoin', and 'O Ralph,' says I, a tryin' to load my shootin ir'n, a'most ready to split 'for goodness gracious sake stop that cretur's goin's on, or I shall be puttin' in the lead first.'

"Well, I loaded at last, and guv him another broadside, but it only increased the comicality of the performance, till Ralph could stand it no longer, but fairly wriggled and roared on the ground, ready to give out. On my own part I loaded and larfed, and shot, and sh s cill the ammunition was nigh gone from my pouch and the wind from my bellows, so at last I sat down, and waited as

quietly as my lights would let me, to see what would be the upshot of it all.

“‘Is that cretur gone yet?’ cried Ralph, by and by from the clover, ‘tell me when he’s gone—for massy’s sake, not afore.’

“‘No, he’s a huggin’ on it now, as if it was the best friend he had on ’arth. Oh! Antony, I feel like a goin’ myself, if he stays there much longer.’

“Well, arter hammerin’ and huggin’, and coxin’, and lettin’ it alone—all to no purpose, Bruin I s’pose began to think the devil was in the game, and streaked away all of a suddenty towards the sundown, with the trap on his snout, as fast as ever, and a howl o’ larfter at his heels, such as I do think was never raised either for b’ar or human, afore or since.

“It was nigh the death o’ both on us—that spree; but it has been vittles and drink many a time since, when b’ar and better meat was scource in the land.”

Bryce wound up his yarn with a sober

cachinnation—the fading “reflet” of past hilarity, which we more than echoed by a general and unstinted round of laughter.

This story led to others from the rest of the circle, myself giving a chapter of my former bear experiences, and Pegtop in his hybrid lingo describing sundry encounters he had had with grizzlies, wherein he had come off victorious by simply seating himself on the ground as the beast came near, and then felling it dead with a single well aimed shot.

Amusing ourselves after this fashion we passed the first day of the year of grace, 1826, which the providential advent of the old bull enabled us so unexpectedly to solemnize.

The mountain air being extremely keen, and our appetites to the full, as much so, the last of its meat, though husbanded with every care, was consumed during the following week, and then came pining days of short rations alternating with actual want.

Towards the close of the month of January, the entire country being wrapped in snow and fixed in the icy grasp of winter, notwithstanding our daily, and far extended forays, entire weeks passed by without our being able to procure anything more satiating than a stray hare, or fox, (for even to this latter we descended) and when, but for the help of our tea and pipes, our position would have been truly desolate.

At such times fragments of rejected victual, nay the very bones and offal we had cast away in better times, would be eagerly sought out again, and by the manipulations of the ingenious Antoine, made up into something solatial for our inwards.

Through the exertions chiefly of Jannock and the Delawares a black-tailed deer was occasionally killed, or a mountain sheep knocked over on the heights, though with an amount of toil and danger that would have staggered if not 'used up' an ordinary sportsman.

This latter pursuit, in fact, resembles cha-

mois hunting in the Alps — offering little chance of success to any but veteran practitioners.

Whether feasting or fasting, however, we managed to maintain our cheerfulness, and to avoid dwelling too much on the gloomy side of our condition, employed the long evenings in preparing, so far as our dwindled means allowed, for the exigencies of the next campaign, renewing or repairing our leathern raiment, patching up our mocassins, and even the half-rotten harness of the waggon, in the hope—vain as it was destined to prove—of Providence sparing us the means of using it.

This, however, we were sorry to find, as the winter advanced, became every day more problematical.

The store of hay gathered from the valley being barely sufficient for our riding horses, in whose preservation our own might be considered as bound up, the unfortunate mules were constrained to forage for themselves on

the few spots around where the snow was not impenetrable, assisted by willow sprays, lopped for them from the thickets on the rivulet side. Two, reduced to mere skeletons, died of sheer starvation, in the latter part of January, and one, early the following month, having rambled too far from its shed, perished in a snow storm it was overtaken by, thus reducing our hardy and well-tried team to three, a number which was still further diminished by subsequent casualties.

Thus struggling on with scarcity and want we got through the first month of the new year, when the increasing difficulty of finding game excited in us the most serious fears that we should not be able to hold out till the snow went away, and animals of the chase appeared in greater plenty.

Weakened and attenuated as we were from these causes, the necessity was yet laid on us of having two hunting parties out daily, and night after night did these come in bringing

nothing but their own lantern visages, and reports of ill success given in voices hollow and hoarse from abstinence.

On the fifth of February, Jannock, Robin, and myself, having made a wider than ordinary circuit over some distant and untried ground, were wending unfreighted without and within on our way homewards, over the scalp of a wood-covered hill, when our steps were suddenly arrested by a steep and apparently impassable precipice.

The day was drawing to a close, and the thick setting of the pinewoods under which we walked, already made it difficult to see our way when this obstacle presented itself, and with it the accompanying conviction that unless passage were effected speedily, darkness would render it impossible, and we should be forced to pass the night on the wild height where we were stationed.

Accordingly no time was lost in examining the line of cliff, but eventually to no purpose, and in sorry and reluctant mood we retreated



into the heart of the fir wood, there to make the best of our enforced position.

We had our blankets by us, it is true, but nothing to eat or drink save a little tea, so that the prospect of our night's sojourn was anything but a genial one.

The weather, too, threatened to be wild, and among the pine tops was heard that hoarse, sea-like roar made by the rush of winds, and waving of multitudinous branches. Snapped by the freshening blast a shower of rotten sticks came hurtling down—falling upon ground bare both of grass and snow, and covered but with kindred spoils. Here and there, amid the timber, might be seen shapeless blocks of stone, carved by the brooding fancy into sepulchres, and nigh them tufts of fern threw dots of deeper shade upon the earth—where the eye involuntarily sought for bones, nor sought in vain, for fragments of brute anatomy lay scattered round, completing the resemblance of the spot to some abandoned burial ground.

It was one of those forest haunts where twilight nestles at noonday, and long ere the sun descends the wanderer, who would enjoy the blessing of light, must trust for its production to his own resources.

We were all, however, by this time pretty fair adepts at fire raising, and not many minutes were let pass ere a vigorous blaze threw its cheering glow on our rueful figures and savage vicinage. By filling our quart tins with snow from the cliff edge, tea was speedily extemporized, which, tho' a wretched substitute for a solid meal, served partly to fill up the vacuum between our belts (already in their last hole) and bellies. After which, betaking to our pipes, we indulged in sundry commentaries on the animal remains that lay about us.

Taking up the "tibia" of what I deemed to be a deer, I handed it to Jannock, requesting his opinion as to its derivation; "deer killed by bar," was his reply, and my mental rejoinder, a wish that we might fall in with

the animal in a less advanced stage of dissolution.

Robin, less wedded to tobacco, or perchance less given to anatomical research, went off during the course of our disquisitions to the more profitable duty of gathering firewood.

The weather grew gradually wilder, the gale mounting to a height, which at length put a stop to our conversation and kept us involuntary listeners to its progress.

There is something remarkably impressive in witnessing the might of Nature in haunts where she has long reigned uninvaded. More especially to those who love her loftier manifestations—who feel them strike a key-note in themselves, and awaken a sympathetic exaltation.

The storm, after gathering on the mountain top, swept down with resistless force on the tracts below, swaying our pine grove like a willow bush, and rushing thro' the neighbouring gorge with howls almost resembling human lamentation. At one time, indeed,

during its highest pitch, the likeness was so strong and startling, that Jannock seized my knee with his iron grip, and, his features working with strange emotion, exclaimed:—

“Massy! did ye hear that, squire? one might a'most ha' taken it for the wild woman's screech.”

“The wild woman! who was she?”

“Did ye never hear of the wild gal of the Black Hills? The story's so'thin' old by this, but when I trapped here in my younger days the whull country round was ringin' with it. She was the darter of an overdarin' emigrant, who had pushed too far west'ard, like our friend, Wainwright, and was tomahawked, with all his family, except herself, by a band of butcherly Blackfeet.

“The gal was spared by the redskin chief, the 'Splittin Thunder,' who fancied, I s'pose, to have her for a wife, and led her away captvyve to his wigwam. Not findin' Injyn wedlock to her mind (which they say went quite wrong on seein' her kindred scalped)

she one night split the 'Splittin Thunders' head with his own tomahawk, and made her way off to the mountains, where though traces was found of her from time to time, and her ravin's heerd o' nights for months after, she was never seen again in bodily form by any hunter as would tell about it. It's like eno' the chief's relations would ha' finished her misery by that time, or if they didn't, hunger and the winter couldn't miss.

"Such deeds is far from scarce in this wild land, till, what wi doin', and what wi bidin' on 'em, the heart becomes as hard as these very rocks themselves.

"Well, she has found her rest poor cretur, long ere now, but when one thinks of her night wanderin's, and hears these howls, it's easy to conceit them the wailin' of her troubled spirit."

As Bryce finished his short relation, a spectral looking figure stalked from the outer darkness into the full red blaze of our camp-fire, and a momentary thrill of horror shot

across me as the imagination confounded its appearance with the image raised by the drear tale I had heard. To relieve the reader of a similar feeling, let me say at once the apparition proved only to be our friend Robin, who having returned with his bundle of firewood during the course of Bryce's narrative, had been listening (with much awe) to its conclusion behind a neighbouring pine.

Throwing down his fuel by the fire, he proceeded to inform us that whilst engaged in gathering it, he had discovered a cavern at no great distance off which would afford both better shelter from the weather, and secure us from the danger (now becoming imminent) of falling trees.

Our curiosity being roused by his report, we took a lighted brand, and proceeded to inspect the spot. Under a face of yellowish rock, almost within the reflection of our fire, appeared a dark patch, marking a cavern's mouth, about which were strewn many bones

of various animals—some of them deposited there at evidently a quite recent date.

Lighting a second torch to mend our view, Jannock carefully examined the earth at the entrance, and at length proclaimed the important fact, that it was a bear's den, with the animal then actually in it.

This was good yet tantalizing news, for though we were never in better cue for an ursine rasher, at the present hour, and with our present appliances, it would have been folly to venture on the creature intrenched in its unknown stronghold.

Being in the depth of his winter's sleep there would be little chance, by using common precaution, of his escaping us by stealing off, so it was resolved to let the enterprize lie over till the morrow, when we would send for Pegtop, and provide the usual means for achieving it *secundem artem*. Having come to which conclusion we returned to our fire, wrapped ourselves in our blankets, and com-

forting our craving stomachs with visions of prospective plenty, lay down, despite the elemental uproar, to a sound hunter's sleep.

By the earliest light the next morning, the weather having become again serene, we resumed our exploration of the cliff, to find a practicable passage for our messenger, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing him at the bottom, speeding on his way to headquarters.

It was past noon when he returned, unaccompanied, however, by either of the Delawares, who, like ourselves, were yet abroad; but he had brought with him the chief requisites for our purpose, viz., a couple of beeswax candles, and we decided upon putting it into execution without further delay.

Jannoek, to whom such business was no novelty, cheerfully undertook the leading part, with myself and Robin for his supports.

Having well looked to the state of our arms and lighting apparatus, we accordingly entered the den, pitch dark as it was, on our



knees; after crawling in which fashion for some yards, Bryce got out his punk, already fired, and lighting a candle, carefully inserted it in the earthy floor of the cave. Here he took his rifle, which I had hitherto held for him, and retiring into the shades behind, stood, with ourselves, in perfect silence, endeavouring to pierce the gloom that encircled the candle like a wall. Having remained thus for a certain time, and there appearing no sign of the beast's presence, he softly took up the light again, and moved noiselessly forwards till coming to a part where the den narrowed into a mere cranny, and one alone could pass at once, he stopped, and was in the act of re-securing the candle in the earth, when I caught a view beyond him of a black, shapeless mass, in that oscillating sort of motion peculiar to the more savage animals—it was the bear slowly arousing from its winter's sleep.

Jannock perceived it almost at the same moment, but nevertheless, while keeping an

eye upon its motions, persevered in his endeavours at fixing the light firmly in the ground, which, from its hardness, was a matter of some difficulty; this done, he again went a few paces backward, watching, with his piece to his shoulder, the monster's progress toward resuscitation.

Though deep and threatening growls began now to show its anger at our intrusion, it still made no sign of advancing to the light, which alone could ensure us an effective shot; but as our vision became familiarised with the gloom of the murky den, we could clearly see the fierce gleaming of its eyes, which might serve in some sort as a point of aim.

Fearing the light might fail, or our chance not be improved by waiting, I was on the point of proposing to take it with both our pieces as it stood, when I beheld Jannock's rifle at his shoulder, the darkness of the cave illumined by its flash, and the instant after, the candle falling from its socket, became extinguished.

Here was a situation! That the animal had not been killed was at once apparent from its redoubled and exasperated growling, now mingled with sounds of pain, and it was equally certain we stood in a fair way for being so ourselves, should it charge us in the darkness and narrow pass where we were posted.

In this critical juncture the old woodsman's presence of mind proved probably the salvation of us all.

Aware that a movement of retreat might draw the enemy upon us, he coolly got out his flint and steel, relit the fallen candle, and again secured it in the ground, his every motion accompanied the while, by the growling and groaning of the wounded beast.

Why it forebore to rush upon us, it is difficult to say, unless it were on the supposition of its being cowed by the calm and resolute style of our attack.

Whilst thus engaged in renewing the light, I had reloaded my comrade's piece for him, and we now, though the animal was even less

visible than before, pulled both our triggers upon him simultaneously. A terrific roar of agony was heard amid the reverberations of the discharge, followed by a plunging rush towards us. The light was again capsized, and with all the expedition practicable we retreated towards the cavern-mouth.

After listening awhile on getting out, for any sign that might shew the effect of the last shot, and perceiving all still, in about a quarter of an hour, with a fresh candle, we re-entered the creature's den, and proceeding cautiously to the scene of conflict, found it lying dead on the ground, over the crushed candle—the two apparently extinguished at the same moment.

It did not prove to be of the brown, grizzly species, but the more common black one, as superior to the other in edible qualities, as inferior in strength and fierceness.

It is scarce necessary to add that we lost no time in cutting it up, and after solacing our-

selves with a hearty meal upon the spot, transferred the remainder to head quarters, where (the Delawares having also met with luck) a week's unstinted feeding recompensed us in some sort for our past famishment.

## CHAPTER IV.

THOUGH the region in which we were established seemed one of such apparent solitude—so locked by natural barriers from human access, it is not nevertheless destitute of inhabitants; many a little mountain dell like our own being occupied by single or associated trappers, who, their Autumn hunts being ended, repair here with their Indian squaws or accustomed comrades, and maintain themselves through the winter months on the stores they have already laid in, or can procure by the continued exercise of their calling.

There are many portions of that wild, broken, and extensive country called the Black Hills where, notwithstanding our own ill fortune, game is at all times plentiful, and, aided by their previous experience, its temporary denizens may gain subsistence the whole year round. But when the snow has gone, and the year begun to open, they find themselves in a true hunter's paradise, amidst abounding means for satisfying every want their hardy and half civilized habits leave them open to.

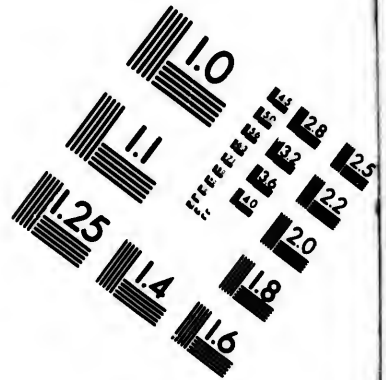
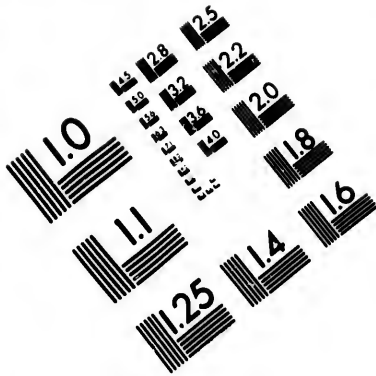
Yet Nature seems still to have stamped the region with an exceptional and emphatic impress. A feeling of solitude attaches to it, even while the voices of some filing band of Indians or Whites yet vibrate on the ear. Superstition also adds her influence. Amidst its sable crags and horrent woods, the peculiar mysticism of his creed exerts the fullest force over the mind of the untutored native; nay, not unfrequently infects the more capable intellect of the white man, who has here been

known to join with his more savage brethren in the usages of their heathenish worship. Yet while prone to obey the call and repair to the temples of devotion, there is something repugnant in the human mind to making them permanent abiding places, and among these haunts where they most confess its power, the sojourn of the tribes resorting there is generally of but short duration—for the purpose chiefly of cutting tent poles, procuring supplies of buckskin, or (actuated by the religious feeling above spoken of), seeking out some solemn spot for offering their vows to the Great Spirit.

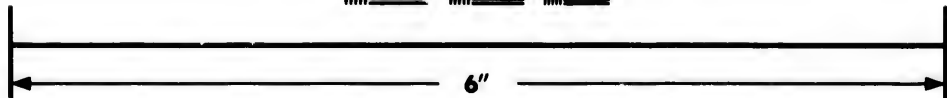
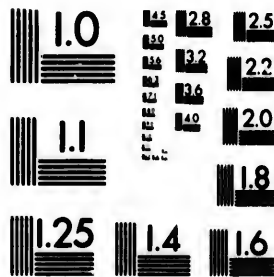
Though the district is nominally in the Upsaroka country, we had experienced no molestation during the winter — unless to them was due, as Jannock thought, the abduction of two of our remaining mules—from this vagrant and formidable clan; the deep snow having doubtless had a repressive influence even on Crow vagabondism.







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As this, however, began to melt towards the end of February, we held ourselves in readiness for their unwelcome visits, and while setting about preparations for our departure, took care to maintain a more rigid watch in respect to both ourselves and animals.

The capture of the bear, related in the preceding chapter, terminated our worst trials in the fasting line, both elk and black-tailed deer appearing shortly after on the hills, and affording a fair return for our venatorial labours.

The little valley having at length become clear of snow, we turned out our horses daily, under guard, to acquire something of strength and condition ere putting them to further service.

Now the peeping blade and bursting bud—types of the lovelier hopes reviving in us—presented their cheerful forms, whilst the songs of innumerable birds mingling with the various notes of the brute creation, and noise

of waters swelled by melting snows, sounded on every side the 'reveille' of o'erslept nature.

One little alloy there was to the enlivening prospects we indulged in, but which it was trusted would be only transitory. Symptoms of dysentery began to appear among us, induced, perhaps, by the constant use, through the winter, of snow water as a beverage, and affected more or less nearly every member of the party. Robin—his constitution being less seasoned than the rest—was the greatest sufferer from this cause; to such a degree, indeed, at length, as to be wholly disqualified from rendering anything like active service.

By a little additional care as to diet, it passed away in a short time from the rest of us, who now busily betook ourselves to making the last arrangements for our onward journey. Our stores, with small exception, having run out, there would have been little further need of the waggon even if we had had means of drawing it, but possessing only a single

surviving mule, its abandonment became matter of necessity.

The provision we had latterly been able to lay in, and ammunition were divided equally among us, whilst our solitary mule, converted into a pack animal, was made useful in carrying a light tent we had constructed out of the waggon tilt, and a few utensils required for daily use.

At the beginning of March we accordingly fared forth once more upon our enterprize, each man clad in his leathern hunting skirt, leggings and moccasins; his well used rifle (I may here mention I had again become possessed of a very good one—a deathbed gift of the unfortunate Spaniard) resting on his saddle bow; a wallet filled with necessaries at his back, and his store of 'provant' bestowed as commodiously as might be on that of his horse; winding in Indian file, and at a slow pace through the various passes in a course, as near as we could lay it, due West towards the head waters of our old friend the Platte.

For the first two or three days the country was so broken and impracticable (in many parts still covered with snow) and our animals in such poor condition, that it was deemed best to proceed by but short stages. Getting gradually inured to their work, and the ground improving, we by degrees made better progress, and were even calculating with some nicety the number of days it would yet take to reach the mountains, when Robin, who had been from the first scarce able to sit his horse, became so seriously ill, that it was found necessary to halt on the banks of a bright stream we had arrived at, and defer our further journey till we had done what we could for his recovery.

The river was well fringed with willows and poplars, and bordered on either side by grassy plains, offering excellent pasturage for our still gaunt and drooping cattle.

Setting to work with our knives we soon cut down sufficient brush to form a temporary hut, in which our patient was deposited,

attended with all care, and supplied with what comforts could be raised from our meagre means.

Though this untoward incident both delayed and unhinged our plans, we resigned ourselves to it as unavoidable, and set about improving the occasion by renewing our stock of meat from the herds of deer and antelope that swarmed about us.

Here, for upwards of a month, the precarious condition of our comrade compelled us to remain stationary, and I had consequently ample leisure for considering our position and prospects in all their bearings.

We were now approaching the goal of our long journey, after many weary months of labour, privation, and peril, but the little that remained before us was by far the most hazardous part of all.

The tract of country that skirts the Rocky Mountains in this latitude is emphatically the battle field of the red men; in particular of the predatory and rival tribes of Crows and



Blackfeet; the former whom we have already had occasion to mention more than once, and whose enmity indeed lately suffered from, being a race of horsemen, pursuing their vocation in the plains, while the latter, equally redoubted for savage prowess (which we were soon more than equally to rue), for the most part frequent the high ground along the mountain skirts, eschewing the use of horses as less suited to the nature of their warfare, which is peculiarly one of ambush and surprise.

Stationing their scouts on every commanding point, it is difficult for either friend or foe to pass through their country undiscovered, and this being the very centre of Indian barbarism, should it be our ill luck to fall in with them, the meeting would be tantamount to a fight for our scalps and lives, in which case, with a party too weak to maintain even an ordinary guard without undue taxation of its strength, it would require no wizard to tell the issue.

Eventually, it would, of course, be needful to confront these fierce marauders, negociation with whom was indispensable for the attainment of our main object, but we wished to defer the interview till, under the partial protection of some trading post, and meetly appointed from its stores, we might hold it with every aid for ensuring a favourable result. Until then we cherished a fervent hope our 'dangerous cousins' would give us as wide a berth as possible.

The buffalo had begun to shew themselves about our camp ere we were yet quite ready to renew our march, and when Robin's slow recovery at length enabled us to do so, it was with a considerable addition of weight in the shape of good dried meat, got at much risk, and husbanded with proportionate care.

After traversing the grassy plains I have spoken of, the country became again broken ; hills began to cross our course, alternating with sullen glens, rocks interspersed once more with forest trees—and sandy and sage

grown tracts of desert, succeeded by ever narrowing belts of pasture.

On the third or fourth evening of our resumed journey after a prolonged fall of rain the clouds began to lift, and in the western horizon we beheld for the first time, clearly drawn against the sunset, signs of the long desired region we were bound to, in the silvery foreloom of the Wind river range.

So rejoiced were we at the auspicious sight, that though yet several hazardous days' travel distant, we impulsively spurred forward our flagging steeds as though to annihilate the interval by the simple process of volition. The poor animals, however, soon brought us back to reason by relapsing into their usual plodding pace, and in this guise, wiling the way by remarks on the scene before us, we were jogging along through a patch of wood, when one of the Delawares, who had pricked ahead in pursuit of an elk, was seen riding swiftly back, making signals of alarm as he did so.

On coming up he reported that having

pushed somewhat unguardedly through the wood into the open ground beyond, he had discovered a number of Indians engaged in hunting buffalo, and, though retreating instantly on having done so, yet partly feared he had been descried by them.

At this intelligence it was resolved to remain stationary in the woody cover we had reached, water being ready at hand for refreshment, and a fair day's journey having been already made. Dismounting accordingly, we proceeded as noiselessly as possible to make the usual preparations for a night's camp, picketting the horses close at hand, and placing two men as guards over them.

Antoine had just given the last turn to the buffalo steaks, and we were on the point of sitting down to a hasty but necessary meal, when our scouts rushed in giving the alarm we were more than half prepared for, of Indians approaching. The sound of galloping hoofs upon the forest sward shewed it was well founded, and that they were bearing down on

us at a rapid rate. Using all possible expedition the cattle were instantly brought in again, the party put under arms, and the next moment we found ourselves surrounded by at least a score of wild, whooping, unknown savages.

Their sharp eyes, ever on the pry, had no doubt espied Pegtop in his incautious sally from the wood, and the subsequent appearance of our smoke supplied all that was wanting to inform their quick senses of our whereabouts.

At first matters wore as ugly an aspect as they well could, the Indians, who were all in their war paint, coming on with loud menacing yells and arrows ready fitted to their bows, whilst on our own side was heard that boding tick of the rifle lock so often the precursor of strife and death.

At this juncture, when our lives (to use the common trope) hung upon a hair—for untrenched and outnumbered as we were, there could be little doubt as to how the fray would

have gone, Swiftfoot fortunately recognized a former acquaintance in the ranks of the adverse band, whom he confidently pronounced to be neither Crows nor Blackfeet, but a troop of Bannecks, whom by the exercise of a little tact and forbearance we might readily dispose to friendly intercourse, the tribe being generally considered well inclined to the whites.

Eagerly availing ourselves of this advisement, we lost no time in offering the needful overtures, invited our wild visitors to take their seats at our fire, and plying them well from our waning store of tea and tobacco, speedily had the satisfaction of seeing matters placed on the amicable footing we desired.

After a good hour's confabulation, during which we learned to our dismay that the Blackfeet, on whose trail the Bannecks had been hanging, were out in force on the mountain skirts ahead of us, our formidable visitors remounted their horses, and bade us a blunt but friendly farewell.

Their conduct left on our minds a decided impression in their favor till the advent of the morning light, when on looking up our scanty stock of moveable property, we found at least one half of it had disappeared. However, we had saved "corps" if not "biens," and on the whole congratulated ourselves on having got rid of our wild guests even on these terms.

Shortly after day break we crossed the little plain that had been the scene of the buffalo hunt, finding the earth strewed with the mangled remains of hundreds of these persecuted animals, which the wolves had already got to work upon, and with the aid of the Turkey buzzards, would probably pick clear and clean before another sunrise.

In the afternoon we took our leave of the pleasant stream that had hitherto served for our guide—the Sweetwater—its course now deviating from that we proposed to follow.

The spot where we thus parted from it was fixed on as a place of future rendezvous in

the event of any unforeseen mischance compelling a separation of the party.

The mountains now loomed larger and larger every mile as we approached the pass by which we were to cross them; yet from the great, though imperceptible elevation of the "terrain" out of which they spring, failed to impress at least myself with the sense of sublimity one is apt to associate with great altitude.

On the second night after our meeting with the Bannecks, we were lying encamped in a retired nook at the base of the ascent, taking the last mouthfuls of our supper, when Robin who had happened to stray towards the entrance, declared he had seen the figure of an Indian furtively following up our trail. This was ungrateful tidings, as, though the prowler would in all probability be alone, yet we were led to think from the information lately given us by the Bannecks, the odds were ten to one he was a Blackfoot, and the rest of his party at no great distance off.



Our intention of encamping was therefore changed, instead of which, after finishing supper, we got in our horses silently, threw some fresh fuel on the fire, and as soon as it grew dark enough to hide our track, went on for some miles further, where a spot offering, equally suitable both for defence and concealment, we again quietly established ourselves, making no fire, and passing the night without molestation.

The whole of the next day was spent in affecting our passage over the first range of hills which here form the vanguard of the Rocky Mountains proper, and towards night-fall drew up in a deep valley densely wooded on either side, and having a fine stream of water tumbling along sonorously through it.

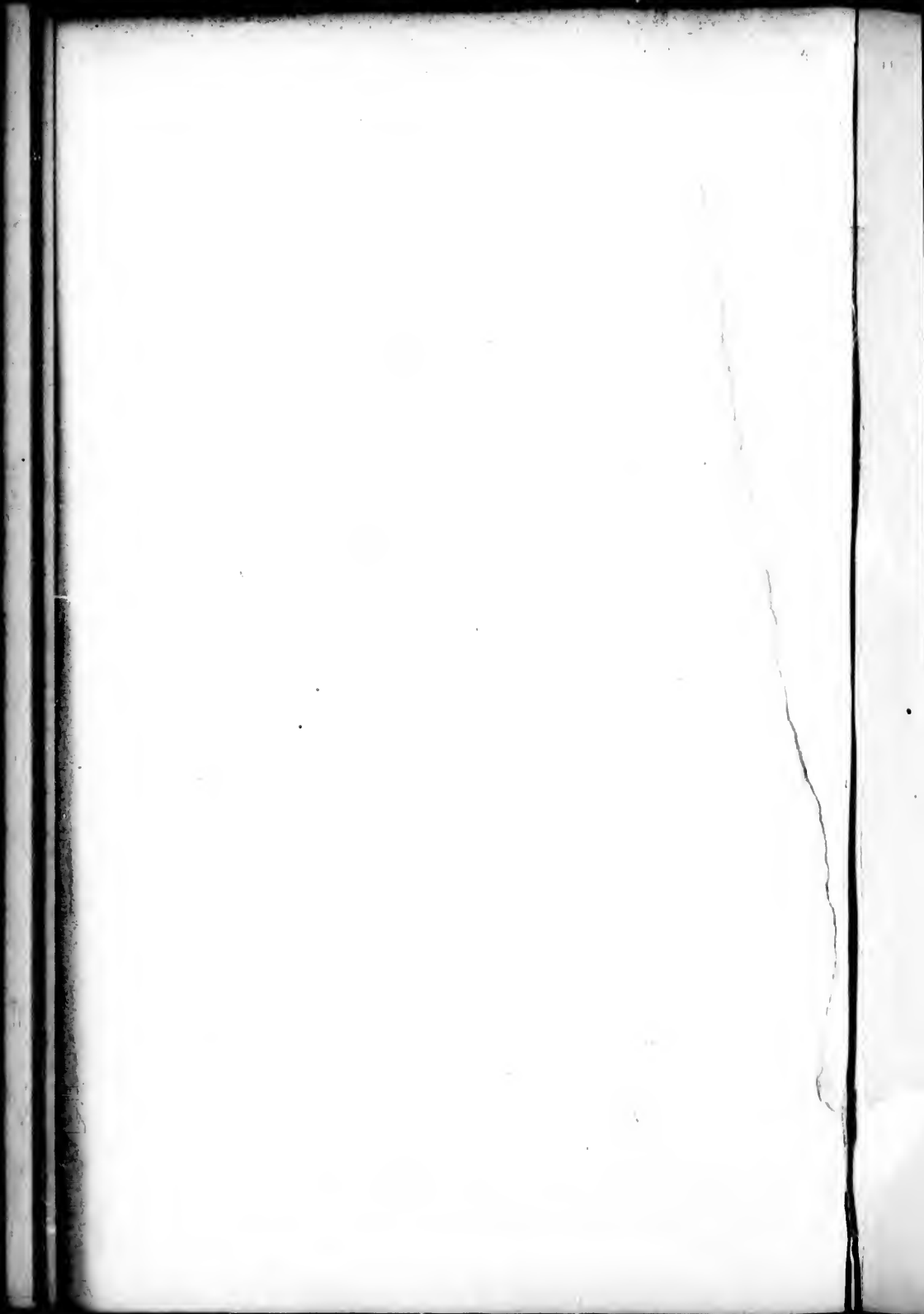
## CHAPTER V.

WE had calculated on arriving the following day at a temporary post of the fur traders, situate in the hunting grounds of the tribe who — as we were led to believe from the information we had received — had the kidnapped child in keeping, and congratulated ourselves on the good fortune which had enabled us to reach our present stage, with our numbers undiminished and prospects as bright as ever.

Too little mindful, it might be, of the All-ruling power which had hitherto so signally protected us, and on whom it yet behoved us to

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rely for future support and ultimate success, we began to entertain a sottish confidence in our good stars, to look upon our arduous mission as accomplished, and feel a strong disposition to eat, drink, and be merry, instead of heedfully collecting ourselves for the one stroke more that was to crown our labours.

This ill-timed recklessness—in great part, I believe, the effect (experienced by others than ourselves) of the high and exhilarating mountain atmosphere—was soon to meet with a crushing check.

As the night we have arrived at was destined to prove what may be called the turning point of our enterprize, and, in its consequences, forcibly illustrative of the ways—at once mysterious and merciful — of Providence, I will endeavour to relate its incidents with as much particularity as may be.

It was late when we took up our night's quarters in the bosom of the little valley I have spoken of, having killed an elk on entering it, the cutting up of which — being in

want of a supply of meat — had caused us some additional delay.

Unscathed as yet by the heats which so furiously beat upon these valleys at a later season, a narrow belt of pasture lined the rivulet, closely hedged in by the woody breasts before mentioned, and only here and there where the stream took an unusual "trend" to one side, affording sufficient space for the accommodation of our little troop. On one of these grassy bays we at last drew rein by the dim twilight—the starry host alone, in these regions of surpassing brilliancy, being all there was as yet to light us. Dismounting then ourselves, equipage, and provision, on the creek, we beat down its dew-sprent herbage and lost no time in lighting the needful fire.

Antoine, exulting in his recent acquisition of "provant," bustled about his cooking operations with more than his usual alertness, and the rest of us, stimulated by the savoury rewards he was preparing, set about our several

duties (unsaddling and securing the horses, &c.) with a diligence that soon brought them to an end.

After paying due homage to the elk steaks that were by that time ready, each worthy got out his pipe, and bestowing himself in the posture most agreeable to him, wound up a day of hard travel by an hour or two of conversation, jest, and song.

Pegtop alone, of the whole group, seemed unusually serious and preoccupied, keeping aloof from the fire, and wearing an air of watchfulness that earned him many a gibe from the more light-hearted members of the company.

Whilst thus enjoying ourselves in the approved backwoods fashion, the form of some animal—a wolf or dog, apparently, was observed by some of us gliding about the skirts of the camp, which, on Swiftfoot giving it a call, came up and allowed itself to be handled. It proved to be an Indian dog in very poor condition, and had been doubtless attracted to

our camp by the savoury smell that issued from it. As this seemed all that could be made out of the matter, I tossed the creature a bone, left it free to stay or go as it pleased, and gave the incident no further heed.

Not so, however, the moody Pegtop, who, pointing to the intruder, as it ravenously discussed its morsel, said in a warning voice: "Blackfoot dog, dat; Blackfoot no far off." Bryce Jannock directing our attention to its condition, remarked that it was nearly starved, and must long have wandered from its master, if indeed it ever had any; to which the Delaware replied by pointing to its neck, where the hair seemed somewhat frayed as by sleigh harness, and repeating his original bode.

Inspired by the careless confidence I have before spoken of, we did not allow his misgivings to affect us, but piling some more fuel on the fire, laid ourselves presently down with the exception of Robin and Antoine, who were amusing themselves with a game of cards, to take our natural rest.



I had not yet composed myself to sleep, but was lying listening to the pleasant murmurs of the plaining stream and sighing woods, with my eyes fixed on the moon, just heaving into sight over the mountain top, when Jannock came up to me, and said in a low voice: "Squire, that dog's here yet; there may be so'thin' in what Peg said, arter all; I don't half like the critter's ways; it's going round and round arter a queer fashion."

"They always do so, Bryce," replied I, philosophically, turning my gaze from fair Luna to the woodsman's broad, grave visage; "they always go round after their tails, I've noticed, before settling down to rest; Aristotle I believe, hasn't given the reason, but I suppose it's as a guest follows the chambermaid, to make sure of a warming pan; Bran, here, does the same, and so, no doubt, should you and I if we enjoyed a similar appendage."

"Aye," returned Bryce, not at all disposed to join in my pleasantry, "but this critter ain't progressing a that way at all; it's

drawing rings round *us humans*; lookee how it goes—”

“Ha—ha—yaw,” yawned I, raising myself up “so it does ‘*Siehst du den schwarzen hund durch saat und stoppel streifen?*’”

“Mark how sidelong it coasts round Robin, and see how its eyes glimmer; massy! d’ye think it’s in the flesh?”

“Swouns! yes, and so am I, prythee don’t squeeze so hard; it’s both in the flesh, and the flesh is in it, as your own eyes can testify; what the dickens, man, d’ye think a ghost could crack a marrow bone?”

“Drat me,” rejoined the hunter savagely, “if I wouldn’t try a bullet on its carcase, if it warn’t for fear o’ wakin’ wuss snakes; who knows but it may be some medicine bogle of the Blackfeet? I’ve heard of such things.”

“*Du siehst ein hund und kein gespenst ist da’.*”

“You may spout latin by the gallon, squire, but neither latin nor greek would save our bacon, let me tell ye, if the inimy were

outlying in these woods, within pitchpenny of us; we'd be smashed like egg shells; yon scouter, the other night may have fallen in with his fellow varmints, who could easily have headed us through passes well beknown to them, and for all the quiet look of yon birken copse, there they may be ambushed at this moment, for anything we know to the contrary. I reckon it will be as well to put the fire out, so you had better wrap your blanket about you, for the dew's comin' down like a Boston watercart."

Accordingly, taking up the camp kettle, he filled it with water from the rivulet, and was in the very act of throwing it on the tell-tale blaze, when a volley of rifle shots followed by a burst of yells broke from the suspected cover, and the next moment a cloud of demonlike figures were seen by the faint moonlight, rushing with rapid bounds over the open, towards us.

I was so utterly astounded at this sudden and frightful interruption, that I stood for some

moments motionless, during which interval I observed the figure of the unfortunate Canadian stretched lifeless on the ground, Robin standing by it, the counterpart of my own confusion, and the two Delawares dart over the brook towards the woods on the opposite side.

This short delay had allowed the savages to come nearly within striking distance, and a few minutes more would assuredly have settled my worldly affairs for ever, when I felt my arm seized by Bryce Jannock, who crying out as he did so "to cover! to cover! follow the Delawares," darted over the water in the direction taken by the latter.

Thoroughly aroused now, from my trance, I followed him at my best speed, with two or three whooping savages hard behind, and plunged into the first thicket that presented itself, the whistle of a tomahawk passing my ear as I did so, showing how narrowly I had escaped my pursuers.

Behind me were then heard (an evil omen

for poor Robin) the sounds of a conflict as though in the water, mingled in infernal concert with the continued yells of the assailants, the angry baying of the bloodhound, the galloping and snorting of our terrified steeds, and one or two dropping shots from our own side.

The enemy were evidently numerous; appearing, indeed, from the noise they made, to fill the glen, and beset the entire skirt of wood through which I was escaping.

Guiding myself in part by these sounds, I made along the mountain side, as well as the darkness would allow, towards the further end of the valley, pausing ever and anon to listen for any sign of my companions or the pursuing foe. More than once I caught the sound of persons forcing their way through the brushwood, but uncertain whether they might be friend or enemy, deemed it wisest to abstain from hailing them.

At length all grew silent, with the exception of an occasional distant whoop, and I

resolved on halting till daylight, when I hoped to make my way to my party.

The anxiously awaited morning at last appeared, and imagining from the noises I had heard overnight my companions must have been left in my rear, I cautiously retraced my way in the direction I had come the night before. Passing along a natural path that led to a little open glade, partly illuminated by the early sunbeams, I descried the lower limbs of an Indian, whose face was still hidden by the foliage, but whose erect, arrow-like form seemed so much to resemble that of Swiftfoot, that I heedlessly ventured upon hailing him.

A most unlucky hail it proved. Three or four additional pairs of red limbs became immediately visible, assuring me of as many enemies. I had fallen on a knot of out-lying Blackfeet, who instantly dashed forward with a loud yell towards me.

The moment I perceived my error I darted

aside from the path into the denser bush, and made at my best speed (never had it been more needed) up the mountain side.

It being still too dark in the forest shade to follow me up by tracking, the only guidance they could have for doing so was the rustling of the foliage as I pushed my way through it, and as here and there open spaces intervened where I was able to avoid this, they were at length thrown off my trail, when instead of continuing my ascent up the height, I resumed my original course along its side.

Reaching, after a little time, a bare shoulder of the mountain which offered an open view for some distance round, I then stopped to rest awhile, being nearly spent, still keeping, however, a vigilant look out about me.

Fortunate it was I did so, for I had not been long set down, when, slowly following on my track, though still at a considerable distance, my hunters again appeared in sight.

Trusting they might not have espied me, I once more took to flight, making over the

rocky shoulder in the hope of finding some available cover on the other side.

Here, however, a wide stony gulley was all that met my view, destitute of even a shrub, and tapering off in utter barrenness towards the mountain top, where it ended in a mere hole, which was the only spot within ken that offered even the semblance of a hiding place. Poor as seemed the chance thus presented, it was not nevertheless to be thrown away, and all would now depend upon my being able to reach this point ere the savages should turn the rocky shoulder and have me again in view.

Stimulated by this consideration, it need scarce be said I strained every nerve to gain it, which breathless and bruised (for the slope being strewed with large stones the effort cost me several falls), I at length succeeded in doing ere the forms of my pursuers came again in sight, and instantly buried myself in the friendly aperture.

It proved to be a sort of natural culvert,



through which at one time must have issued the torrent that had worn the channel I had come up by in the mountain breast, but so narrow in its dimensions, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could force my way into it; nor was I yet quite sure my feet had cleared the entrance when the cries of the Blackfeet at fault over the stones reached my ears.

The reader may imagine the anxiety with which I listened to these sounds, and endeavoured by the sense of hearing alone to judge of the comparative chances of their penetrating my concealment or retiring baffled.

From the silence that for a time ensued I began to harbour hopes they had abandoned their quest as vain, when the illusion was unpleasantly dispelled by their voices again falling, and yet more audibly on my ears, impressing the persuasion on my mind that the undeceivable instincts of the savages would ultimately lead them to my detection.

Under the pressure of this feeling, casting

an anxious glance ahead of me to see if the tunnel would admit of further progress, my eyes now somewhat familiarized with its obscurity, discovered the glimmering of light at its upper end. Worming my way onwards by repeated efforts, I succeeded at last in reaching this point, and detaching with my hand one or two of the stones that formed its terminus. Through the opening thus made streamed a pure tide of daylight, and by renewing my exertions the hole was so far widened as to admit at length of the passage of my body.

On getting fairly through, a scene presented itself which it would exceed my ability to convey to my readers' mind, or, flushed as I was at the time by the glow of reviving hope, describe its effects even on my own.

I had broken through the crust of an ancient volcano, and stood within its extinct crater.

At my feet lay a still and limped pool—overhead stretched the azure heavens, and

around me swept a circular basin of rock, strewn with strange looking stones, glistening in the morning sunlight. Here from the day of its formation no human foot had ever trodden save my own; here no human eye, no eye perchance of living thing been cast, save mine and that of the solitary eagle which was soaring in the rare atmosphere above me.

The cavity where fire had once performed its work was now filled with water from some hidden source, the tunnel by which I had made my entrance having furnished the outlet for its overflow.

Though astonished at first sight by this wondrous scene, the critical nature of my situation forbade me from fully realizing it. The foemen might be yet at hand, on the watch outside, or even following me up into this choice shrine of solitude and rest. I therefore made it my first business to build up the screen of stones I had displaced, and as it was necessary to use the greatest caution in doing so, lest by any unlucky noise I might

betray my whereabouts to the Blackfeet, the labour took considerable time.

The tunnel being fortunately tortuous, they would be unable to see the light from the outside, and all danger of discovering it, as I had done myself, I took care to prevent by raising a pile of stones, proof both against eye and hand, in place of the flimsy screen I had broken thro'.

Then, for the first time, I sought the rest I was so much in need of, and placing my back against the barrier, with my rifle lying at my side, I presently sank into a profound sleep.

It was well on into the evening when I awoke amidst a blaze of light, the sun having now got round to the other side of the crater, and gradually recovering the consciousness of my situation, I made a more deliberate survey of a spot so calculated to arouse the most vivid emotions of the soul.

The margin of the pool at my feet was strewn with volcanic fragments—scoriæ, tufa, &c., and so exquisitely pure were its waters,

that it struck the eye rather like a piece of fallen firmament, than the tangible element it was; yet no sign of animated life appeared about it; there were no fish in its depths—no bird upon its shore—even insects were wanting to flutter in the air above, or trace their giddy mazes on its surface.

Yet, wholly destitute as was the scene, of derived life, God the eternal—omnipresent seemed here to be emphatically resident; here, as in his chosen temple, the soul felt lifted up in adoration of Him; here might it realize something of Adam's state, when, fresh from his maker's hands, he sought but Himself to commune with; here, amidst solitude and silence, seclusion and sublimity, might the stubbornest heart resign its will, and yield delighted homage to the Author of the Great and Good.

These, and such as these, were the sentiments and thoughts that filled my mind, as I beheld the pure sunshine fade at evening from the volcanic crest, and turned out to seek

some suitable retreat wherein to pass the night.

Tho' from the evenness of the encircling basin no place of peculiar shelter was discoverable, the air was so dry and pure I might have rested securely anywhere, but actuated by considerations more directly affecting my safety, I retired to my former sleeping berth ; and passed the night by the key of my position at the tunnel mouth.

The whole of the next day I remained quiet and resting in my mountain lair, suffering not a little from hunger, but willing to endure even this if the delay might disengage me from my pursuers.

On the third day, however, having had nothing to subsist upon from the night of our surprise, but water and some scanty relics of dried meat gleaned from my pocket corners, I felt I should be starved into absolute debility if I held out any longer, and resolved to attempt my escape by twilight that same evening.

## CHAPTER VI.

ACCORDINGLY, a little before sunset (my impatience causing me somewhat to anticipate the time) I cautiously removed the guardian stones, and, much after the fashion of a badger, emerged from my opportune hiding-place.

Displacing, while doing so, some cobbles near the outer entrance, I started a mountain hare from its form, and on examining the latter, discovered a young leveret, which I straightway made prize of, to fill, as far as it would go, the vacuum caused by my late fast.

Though somewhat a perilous position, I stopped for a few minutes here to set my course, and take a passing glance at the rich, though rude magnificence of the scene around.

The slanting rays of the sunset were shining full on the dry, grey mountain side, defining, more than half way down, every crag and pebble with almost preternatural distinctness. Below this line the twilight spread its gloom, and night seemed already nestling in the uncultured glen beneath; but the light that had been thence withdrawn, was gathered in tenfold glory in the heavens, which, painted with every conceivable hue of rose and purple, shed their elysian colouring on the heights around, burnished the solemn pine trees on their sides, and flushed even the paltry lichens at my feet with a brief and tinsel comeliness.

The scenery resembled that of the Black Hills, being equally wild and broken; the same rude world of towering heights, gloomy glens, and trackless forests, which, darkening



as the daylight faded, began now to assume a drear, ominous, and savage aspect.

Having rapidly settled the general bearings of my course, I descended into the glen below (a different one from that where we had been attacked) hoping to find a more practicable path by the rivulet side at its bottom.

Aware I had but little more daylight to expect, I made what speed I could to reach it, but the declivity proved so long, and the timber so difficult to penetrate, that it was all but utter darkness, when the rippling of water at my feet, announced the termination of my descent. By the side of its murmuring current I then made a fire, and cooked the leveret I had taken, which being the first good meal I had had for several days, furnished me a much-enjoyed repast.

Lighting my pipe, after despatching it, I sat some time longer, listening amidst the deep stillness of the woods, for any sign they might betray of the neighbourhood of my late

enemies, or the now scarce less to be dreaded danger of wild beasts.

In these scarce trodden wilds where Nature is engaged in perpetual warfare, the firm nerves and vigilant senses of the wayfarer are the only guardians of his safety. Here the grizzly bear roams undisputed lord, and even where man may chance to cross his path, maintains his rights unflinchingly, contending against his human foe with even chances, and generally with results that uphold his terrible prestige.

Conscious that the position I had taken was such as he is well known to affect, and apprehensive of the probable propinquity of the Blackfeet, I kept awake and watchful for a length of time, till my fire having died away I was insensibly yielding to my drowsiness, when the cracking of a stick as though trodden upon, caught my ear. Alive as I now was to every sense of danger, I seized my rifle, and listened for a repetition of the noise.

Ere long, the sound of distinct footfalls became audible, apparently approaching.

In an instant I was on my legs, with my piece to my shoulder; a short silence followed, then the bushes rustled close beside me, and bursting from the midst, a dark, tawny body bounded forth, at the same instant that I levelled and drew trigger upon it. The night air had, however, damped the priming, and the gun most fortunately missed fire; I say most fortunately, for I was thus saved the sorrow and remorse of sacrificing my faithful bloodhound Bran. Poor fellow, he was already in but evil case! It was not long after our recognition that I discovered an arrow in his side shackling his movements, and forcing an involuntary howl through his whine of joy.

It had passed through a portion of his flank, which was much inflamed from the constant dangling of the shaft. The vital parts, however, appeared uninjured.

Relieving the poor creature of its grievous

appendage, by means of an incision but skin deep, I made little doubt of its coming speedily round, formed it a lair of grass near my own, and felt no little satisfaction as I lay down, in the thought that I had gained, however humble, a trusty friend and right useful guardian.

Rising as the East was reddening over the mountain tops, I directed my course down stream, being anxious to disengage myself from the hills and reach our appointed rendezvous at the Sweetwater, wending my way in the meantime in much disquietude as to the fate that might have befallen my companions.

So engrossed indeed was my mind with this subject that I was within a little of missing a chance of a fine shot at a herd of deer crossing a shallow of the river a little distance in my front. The main body had already got clear ere I could bring my gun to bear, but an unfortunate year old buck that had been frisking too far in the rear, fell to my

bullet as it was following them. On this myself and Bran made a hearty breakfast, and cutting off what I could of the remaining meat, slung it about me for further use.

When fairly engaged in the depths of a rugged country, the work of extrication is not easy, but I had little doubt by bearing steadily in the direction I had originally laid for myself I could have reached the open ground ere nightfall of the next day, had not signs now vague, now too distinct, of the neighbourhood of Indians, enforced constant deviations from my course.

The evening of the second day found me still involved among the mountains wandering; I knew not whither, through a winding valley, when I suddenly beheld a column of smoke rising from a thicket some half mile or so ahead. Reconnoitring the spot with my glass, I made out a small party of Indians, probably Blackfeet, and instantly sought cover in the mouth of a lateral dell I had just passed.

Into this I pushed for some miles, and here it was, while preparing to camp for the night, I first beheld two of the dreaded monsters I had heard so much of.

At the other side of the narrow stream that watered it, and not far from the place I had chosen for my lair, there was a group of willows in which I thought I detected signs of breakage and displacement. The wind being in my favor I concealed myself near the spot, and watched if anything should come of these unusual indications. It was not long ere I beheld a huge bear of the grizzly kind walk forth on to the bank, look up and down the stream suspiciously, and, being presently joined by its mate, retire with her along the waterside in the direction I had come. They had probably heard my footsteps, or detected a tainted flaw, and, it being mealtime with them, thought to make the most they could of the advertisement. They were truly grim and grizzly creatures, and, as they went off prowling amid the gathering

shades of night, loomed on the sight like some of the more horrid incarnations of the evil principle.

Determined to lay a good space of ground between myself and my ill-favored neighbours, I pushed on some miles further, and at length worn out with toil, halted among a group of middle sized firs, where, if suddenly set upon during the night by the savage brutes, I might find security by climbing. It however passed by undisturbed.

The following day was destined to afford me a still closer interview with them. I had eaten all my deer's-meat, and was approaching about noon, a spot on the river side which looked like a repair for game, when on nearing a thorny thicket in which I proposed to hide myself for a shot, I fancied I descried through the light foliage, the outline of a huge head.

My distance from it was about twenty yards, and I had left a small clump of wild cherry trees about eighty paces in my rear.

Aware of the sort of customers I had about me, I stopped but a moment to assure myself of the truth, and then ran back at my utmost speed towards the friendly timber, at the same instant that the bear rushed forth with a loud growl in pursuit. It was a short but fearful race. I dared not look behind me for fear of losing ground, and on reaching the first of the trees which luckily proved of suitable girth, I made a spring nearly my own height up its bole, not knowing but even that last act of agility might be arrested by the clutch of my grim pursuer; in the instant after I found myself in safety. The animal had reached the tree, to use a witticism, just in time to be too late, and I knew Ephraim was no hand at climbing.

On coming up, he snuffed at the rifle I had thrown down at the tree foot, and then after sundry growls and display of tusks, fell incontinently to scratching and digging with his huge paws at its roots. Such is the tremendous strength of the brute, that I verily believe could



not his proceedings have been stayed, he would have had it down at length and enjoyed his morsel after all; but at this juncture the brave but ill-starred Bran commenced a vigorous attack upon his haunches, which immediately diverted his attention to himself. The poor dog, weakened by its recent wound, was instantly caught up in the monster's clutch, and a half-stifled howl of anguish sounded the death-knell of my staunch and well-tryed follower. By this I had got out my long pistol—too late, alas! to save the faithful beast, and fired shot after shot into the bear, whilst busied in his murderous work, which compelled him at length to desist, when he again came up to the tree grinding his tusks, and filled with redoubled fury. In this position I was able to take more deliberate aim, and a ball through the ear at last terminated his vicious antics, stretching him dead by the side of his nobler victim.

Filled with much grief at his untimely end, I made for poor Bran a grave at the foot of

the cherry tree, and after cutting off some meat from my huge game, resumed my route up the narrow glen.

In a few hours more I reached its end, which proved to be of that unsatisfactory formation called a "cul de sac." It was in fact one of those stupendous natural quarries characteristic of the Rocky Mountains, where topless cliffs frowned down on the intruder, forbidding further passage, and appalling him in his futile search for it, with their dread Medusæan aspect.

Here no living creature—no leaf of tree or blade of grass were to be seen—no feathered warbler broke the oppressive stillness; even the mechanical sounds of the purling rill were wanting, and the huge and tomb-like blocks of freestone that strewed the forbidding area completed its picture to the fancy as the temple of solitude and desolation.

I speedily turned my back on its silent terrors, and retracing my course for some half mile or so, commenced an ascent of the

range with the intention of forcing a way over the summit, till a valley should be met with stretching in a suitable direction, viz., towards the east.

On reaching the top I found another deep dell, with a precipitous though broken descent, immediately beneath me, and another long mountain slope similar to the last in front. Into the former I descended with much difficulty, letting myself down from rock to rock, and had half mastered the opposite ascent when daylight failed, and compelled me to take up my quarters by a small spring of water I had luckily fallen on.

The next day was spent in the arduous labour I had entered on, of forcing my way between, where practicable, and over, where not, the stupendous heights of the Wind river chain, the elevations of which increased as I proceeded, till at length I reached the roots of a mountain whose crest was whitened with perpetual snow. Steadfast in the purpose I

had formed of keeping eastwardly as long as possible, I commenced the ascent over its shoulder, and after several hours labour attained what I conceived to be the highest part I had to traverse.

Here I stopped to rest, and from this lofty station beheld a prospect such as fancy may indeed suggest in dreams, but which neither pen nor pencil would avail to give even a faint idea of. I looked on either hand, on a limitless array of mountains, stretching away into the distance like a tumbling sea of land billows. Within a circuit of near fifty leagues their most secret recesses were exposed to view. Beneath me appeared the black defile, the gloomy glen, the broader valley, and isolated mountain mead, all laid out as on a map, and astonishing the mind with their new, strange and infinitely varied features.

In some of the nearer mountains were seen, locked up in rocks, miniature realms of untouched and undreamt of beauty—little airy

Edens clothed with enchanting verdure, studded with fairy groves, and glistening with sky-blue lochs, waiting, as it were, the occupancy of some diviner denizen than man, whilst dashing down their craggy sides rushed rills of purest water; swelling even beneath the ken into goodly streams, and under the names of the Sweet-water, Wind-river, Yellowstone, Columbia, and Colorado, destined to carry life, commerce, and civilization through a continent.

It was truly a panorama of new and unimaginable grandeur, but I looked at it worn and weary, my clothes torn to rags, my feet bleeding with rough travel, and my mind full of anxiety for the fate of my companions, myself, and my enterprize. My inspection was but of a short duration, and knowing I had now reached the apex of the mountain range, and my journey to the plains likely to be less difficult, I was filled with impatience to conclude it.

Descending however the other side of this mountain, my steps were abruptly checked by a tremendous line of precipice, which, save by reascending as I came and undoing half a day's work, I could discover no means of getting past. It was some hundred feet sheer down, stretching away undiminished to my left as far as I could see.

To the right was a ravine, deep cut in the rock, looking like a Cyclopean ditch, running at right angles to the precipice, and being of about the same depth, obstructing also further passage in that direction. Remembering I had passed a brook some few miles back which appeared to flow into this ravine, and might possibly afford access to it, I retraced my steps thus far, and on careful examination thought that through the passage it had worn for itself in the rock, a descent might, by using great caution, be effected. Slinging my rifle on my back, I accordingly let myself down into the watercourse, splashed along

shallows, waded through deep pools, and with infinite difficulty mastered the many falls that broke its channel.

Eventually the descent was accomplished, and I then hastened to traverse the ravine it had led to ere night should lock me up within its dank and chilling walls.

It proved to be of but little width, scarcely broader indeed than a metropolitan sewer, to which its resemblance was strengthened by its serving as conduit to the rivulet whose channel I had descended by.

Through this extraordinary natural canal I waded for nearly two miles, the water being seldom more than shoe tops deep, when, to my great delight, I beheld the bright sun shine in my front, and issued from the gloomy fissure into a wild and stony mountain dell. This was of the narrow dimensions common in this elevated region, encumbered with freestone boulders on its higher slopes, and overstrewn below by a drifted mass of pebbles

through which stole the crystal stream whose aid I had been lately beholden to.

Having unslung my piece and rested a few moments from my toil, I continued my way along its side, the sun being at my back, lighting up the rugged pass with its rich and parting radiance.

As the traveller wends his way through these desert glens, whose tranquillity seems unbroken by aught but elemental turmoil, he cannot divest himself, however hardy, of a certain presentiment of danger. Whilst the grandeur of their scenery astounds, the quietude that wraps it mystifies, and he involuntarily prepares himself to meet with and repel an enemy.

I had scarce left a mile of ground behind me, ere I came upon a scene which shewed how fully these secret presages are justified.

The sun had already passed the parallel of the little glen leaving it in shadow, and I was on the point of halting for the night when a



thin line of smoke became observable, stealing up against the rocks at no great distance in my front.

Prompted by the wary feeling I have mentioned, I got out my glass and examined the suspicious spot. There I beheld three wild looking savages, different in appearance from any I had yet seen, seated round a fire, and engaged, after their primitive fashion, in satisfying the wants of nature.

They were evidently some of that shy sept of the Shoshonee nation I had before heard something of, which haunting the more inaccessible parts of the mountains, are seldom met with by white men, and from their inoffensive habits, generally exempt from their attacks. Not so, however, from those of their savage neighbours, who ruthlessly and incessantly pursue them, like the wild sheep that share their haunts, for the sake of that coveted and barbarous trophy, the scalp. Having satisfied myself of their harmless character, I had made up my mind to join them, when it oc-

curred to me, it might be as well to examine the neighbourhood of their camp, to ascertain whether these might form the whole of the party. Fortunate it proved I did so. My glass had been scarcely turned on to the adjacent hill side, when, from my elevated post, I perceived, lurking behind rocks, a band of eight or ten low-land Indians, closely watching the wild men at their meal, and apparently on the point of rushing out upon them. In but a few minutes afterwards the horrid warwhoop sounded in my ears, reverberating thro' the rocky dell like the voices of answering demons, and the ambushed band burst forth with brandished tomahawks on the surprised and affrighted Shoshonees.

Taken at disadvantage as they were, there seemed to be little chance of escape for them.

Two I saw instantly captured without resistance, whilst the third fled swiftly up the glen towards me, with three or four enemies hard behind him.

His activity might yet have saved him, had not the formation of the ground presented a hindrance to his flight. Not many yards below me a sort of ledge or dyke ran across the pass, about seven feet in height which though easily surmountable in parts if leisure served, frowned like the page of doom upon the poor fugitive, whose enemies were already nearly within striking distance. As he neared it, I could see his eyes casting anxiously about in the futile quest for some passable part, and impelled by pity for his extreme strait, I rose, without reflecting, to aid him. He had made towards a waterfall in the centre, formed by the mountain rill I have mentioned, as the likeliest place to offer passage, and the foremost of his pursuers had raised his weapon to cleave his head as he attempted it, when, levelling my piece at the latter, I tumbled him to the earth with a shot through the body. The two others, not knowing the amount of force they had to deal with, stopped in their tracks, and then retreated, while the poor

runaway, taking advantage of the unexpected respite, made good his flight into the mountains.

It was high time for myself, it then occurred to me, to effect a similar movement, and availing myself of my elevated station, I succeeded in making my retreat unmolested, and as I thought, unperceived, though, in this latter supposition, it appeared from subsequent events, I was deceived.

After another weary spell of trudging and climbing, for which I was in but ill condition, I gained another range of heights, just in time to see the sun set over a waste of arid pinnacles, and then found myself forced by darkness to encamp there, with both hunger and thirst unappeased, and my spirits damped by the prospect of having to make a fresh detour on the morrow. Worn out however, by excessive exertion, I lay down as I was, and slept soundly.

In the grey twilight of the next morning I ventured to cross (slaking my thirst as I did so) the dangerous defile I had traversed the

day before, and after scrambling some hours over the opposite heights, came at length upon another that seemed to run parallel with it. Along this, devoutly trusting it might be less perilous, I took my way at a good pace, and by evening made out the best day's progress I had achieved since the commencement of my wanderings. At nightfall I must have been several thousand feet below my starting point, and was greatly gladdened by the milder aspect of the scenery, the mountain glen expanding into something like a grassy vale, and promising in another day's work to bring me fairly into the open plains.

Anxious to reach the appointed rendezvous I rose at early dawn, and found the auguries of yesterday happily realized, as I proceeded the steepness of the descent constantly diminishing, till at length, late in the afternoon, I found myself, to my boundless satisfaction, on a perfectly level plain, watered by a stream of ample volume, and delighting the jaded eye with the prospect of wide-spread verdure.

## CHAPTER VII.

THOUGH thus happily extricated from the mountains I was yet far from esteeming myself in safety. I had seen, during my yesterday's descent smokes rising from the river banks, where the thickets that lined them were so dense, there was danger of stumbling at any moment on the lodges or outposts of the enemy.

My destination—the rendezvous—however, being well nigh within view, I boldly pushed along, with every sense on the *qui vive*, till, on nearing a new reach of river, the sound of human voices, which from their shrill,

treble tones seemed to be those of women, struck my ear.

Taking advantage of a clump of willows that lay at hand, and offered a suitable hiding place, I made my way therein, and laying down my rifle on the ground, with my knife cut out a peephole in the foliage, through which I obtained a view of the part from which the sounds proceeded.

The mountain brook I had followed almost from its sources, was now, as I have before mentioned, swollen into a fine, full-volumed river, and in its stream, here lacquered with yellow sunlight, there pleasantly speckled by its beams, filtered through the adjacent willows, a bevy of Indian maidens were disporting with the glee and "abandon" that usually attend a bathing scene.

Some were seen venturously swimming about in the deeper parts; others, splashing the water with ringing cries of merriment upon their comrades; and on the further side I observed several dusky figures, wearied of

their watery sport, ranging themselves with clamorous glee round a companion who had been quietly watching their operations.

Habited in a costume which, wholly barbaric as it was, had yet a certain air of pretension, she was sitting on the bank with her moccasins off, laving her feet in the running flood, and though taking no part in the noisy pastimes of her sisters, from their frequent and friendly challenges, seemed an object of marked observance to themselves. While some of the dark naiads wreathed fresh culled wild flowers in her hair, others came dripping from their bath to refer some girlish squabble to her judgment, whilst a few who yet lingered at their aquatic sports endeavoured by various antics to awake a smile upon her beautiful but thoughtful countenance.

From the thick woods behind them lines of blue smoke ascended above the evening mists already settling on the stream, and shouts were from time to time heard in the same direction.



Attracted apparently by these sounds, the wild companions disappeared by twos and threes from my view, leaving their interesting comrade sitting as before 'in maiden meditation' on the bank.

Now with vague movements of her feet she would ruffle the stream that washed them, now toy with some of the many flowers she had been decked with, and anon, as the wail of the evening breeze met her ear, she would turn to the sound in a sort of abstraction, and muse as though under the influence of memory, or communing in secret with some unseen and airy intelligencer.

Whilst thus engaged in watching her, a canoe came floating down in front, and had passed my station ere I was well aware of the circumstance. The doubt immediately came into my mind whether I might not myself have been observed by the two warriors who were in it—a doubt which, as the sequel proved, there was only too good reason for.

Fleeting on its course down stream the little bark speedily disappeared behind a point below, and yielding again to my curiosity I had turned to take a parting view of my savage Dorothea on the other side, when I suddenly felt the pressure of fingers on either arm, and found them the next moment pinioned in the gripe of two athletic Indians.

Resistance would have been worse than useless. My rifle lay some paces distant, and taken at advantage as I was, my knife and pistol—which I was soon deprived of—were unavailable. Making, therefore, a virtue of necessity I quietly surrendered to my captors, who leading me between them along the river bank, in the course of but a few minutes found themselves in front of their village. Here with a loud whoop they summoned several of their fellow-tribesmen — the tribe I found to my cost were Blackfeet — to their aid, by whom a canoe was shortly launched into the stream, which soon transferred us to the other side.

The village consisted of some twenty lodges, formed of buffalo skins stretched upon willow poles, and disposed without plan or regularity along a verdant flat, skirted half round by the river, so as to leave a spreading lawn of some six or eight acres in extent between them and it.

The encampment seemed to be of quite late formation, much of the grass around it being still untrodden, and bore the ephemeral appearance in keeping with the nomade habits of its founders—the tents planted at random among the trees having something of the aspect of huge fungi, the offspring of a summer's night, while the repellent odours that issued from them, and semi-brutish sounds of savage life came gratefully on my senses as I passed along.

On reaching the heart of the wild colony it became evident its population were labouring under some fresh and unusual excitement. A large crowd was collected before the lodge of the principal chief, and it was not without

some difficulty that my guards, who were bound thither, were able to make their way into it.

Night having by this, fallen, the interior was lighted up by a torch of pitch pine in charge of an aged squaw, and round this were gathered a throng of swarthy, grim-visaged warriors, some of the more privileged being seated on rude settles, inhaling the "kinnek-kinnek" from their tomahawk pipes, and all of them watching with ruthless gravity the countenances of two strange Indians, who had been just brought in captive, (it was this that had caused the shouts I had previously heard) and were now undergoing the examination which in their situation is generally the prelude to a cruel and not distant death. Wilder looking objects than these latter I had never yet beheld, though I thought the savages I had seen assailed in the mountains two days before, might have furnished fitting counterparts. In fact it was not long in occurring to me that these might be the very ones then

captured, and when I considered the part I had myself taken on the occasion, it was with no little uneasiness this impression fastened itself on my mind.

The entrance of so unusual a figure as a white man in bonds, immediately drew the general attention on myself, and whilst my two guards were relating in their uncouth jargon the circumstances of my capture, every eye in the lodge was turned in silent scrutiny upon me.

Beset as I was on every side by these ferocious beings, in whose breasts the impulses of mere humanity are unknown, and not certain but that among them might be found some who had witnessed my participation in the fatal strife which had cost them one of their warriors—isolated from all of my own colour and sympathies—from all who could offer either counsel or assistance; I began to feel my position grayer than I had hitherto thought it, and despite my resolution to put a bold face upon the matter, the horizon of hope

since my entering the tent, narrowed and overcast considerably.

Neither did the idea which thus disturbed me, prove at all unfounded, for I soon became aware that, whilst by the greater part of those assembled I was regarded chiefly with an air of curiosity, there was one among them whose eye surveyed me with a more earnest gaze, and whose features were at length lighted up by a vindictive smile of recognition.

Well I knew its meaning, which touched the very core of my misgiving. In rapid and emphatic style he addressed the chiefs beside him, whose impassive countenances gradually assumed an expression of astonishment, and finally settled into one of determined vengeance.

Meeting all this on my own side with an air of confidence, I was very far from feeling, I demanded, in as plain English as I could, to know the reason of my seizure—pleaded the privileges due to the traveller and stranger, and claimed an immediate release.

My speech was received with a general and eager exclamation of "Yengee, Yengee!" mingled with the frequent use of the word "Kosata," the meaning of which was presently cleared up by the old Hecate who held the torchlight, and had been despatched for the purpose by one of the chiefs, returning into the tent with the identical maiden I had watched with so much interest on the river side, and whose charms had been in fact the virtual cause of my capture. From the repeated usage of the word, it appeared that "Kosata" was her name, while the "Yengee" I knew to be the national designation of myself.

The grave and grizzled chief, by whose order she had been summoned, then in a few brief gutturals gave her the instructions necessary for the part she was to take of interpreter, which having received with due submissiveness, as well as his opening interrogatory, she turned to where I stood, and in hesitating,

mutilated English proceeded to deliver its import to me.

She seemed scarcely yet to have attained the state of womanhood, her straight and well turned form being still short of its full development.

Her rich black hair, glistening with Indian unguent, fell in luxuriant folds upon her shoulders, but was so battened down upon her face and forehead after the fashion of her people, as to hide much of their natural expression.

On her delicately chiselled features browned by exposure, yet ruddy still with health, and in the large hazel eyes that lighted them, sat an air—strange and unwonted at her early years—of habitual thoughtfulness, as though her mind had already undergone its secret discipline, and been rendered proof against the giddy impulses and vivacious follies of her age.

She stood before me habited in a tunic,



reaching but a little below the knee, of blue traders' cloth, profusely and untastefully ornamented with red beads, leggings of whitened doeskin neatly fitting the limbs, and fancifully fringed down the exterior, while her feet were protected by moose leather moccasins, stiffened and decorated with various coloured quills. From her neck a little bugle made out of the horn of the "Ahsahta" or mountain sheep was suspended by a wampum baldrick, completing the idea suggested by her airy form and light attire, of a votaress of the Indian Dian.

Though strongly savouring of barbaric taste, her dress rather enhanced the native beauty of her person, and it was with a feeling of relief, not unmixed with admiration, that my eyes rested on her gracious countenance, where alone amidst that scowling throned the softer instincts of humanity seemed traceable.

Approaching me with the grave but unimpassioned air of one obeying a behest, whilst herself unconcerned in the result, she ad-

dressed me, pausing at every word to find out the next, as follows:—

“My father (pointing to the presiding chief) say—hearken Yengee. He say, why you hide at night by him village? He say, friend no hide, but come to wigwam and smoke. My father ask why you hide, and no come smoke.”

“Tell your father, if such he be, Kosata, to listen to my words, and he will listen to words of truth. Tell him I have come into this country from over the great Salt Lake to fulfil a vow to the Great Spirit; that only a few suns since, whilst going on my way to perform it, my camp was set upon by enemies who drove my party astray; that I have been wandering since in search of my companions, and was proceeding on my way to rejoin them, when his warriors seized me on the river bank.”

The fair interpretress after pausing a space to possess herself of the meaning of my speech carefully rendered it in Blackfoot to the crowd

of listening warriors, when a grave and ambiguous "hugh" was the general answer it elicited.

Having been lessoned anew by the old chief, whom, in courtesy or otherwise, she had called her father, Kosata returned to her duties, and in the same slow elective manner said :

"My father wish know why you come so far over Great Salt Lake to country of poor Indian."

"On a sacred service, as I have said ; to restore the daughter of a great white chief to her parent. If your father, Kosata, were to lose you, would he not shew friendship to him who should bring you back. Your father has a large heart, and will respect my errand. Tell him in me he sees no enemy, that I am neither trapper nor trader, that I seek no dealings in any way with his people, but wish only to pursue my path in peace."

Another exclamation of the same doubtful

character greeted my words, and an interval of some minutes succeeded, during which the three or four leading warriors were engaged in close and earnest conference. They then again summoned the maiden to her task, and their countenances assumed a stern denunciatory expression as they watched the effect of the speech she proceeded to deliver.

“My father say, Oh, Yengee, tongue speak one thing, heart (laying her little hand on her own), speak another; dat no good. My father say was it peace when you shot him young man, in the stony mountains three suns ago. He say, it no good him brother go alone on de death trail; de Yengee, and de Shoshonee go with him; he say, blood for blood—life for life.”

A hoarse and general murmur of assent arose as Kosata finished her short and fateful sentences, taken up and swelled into a truculent roar by the crowd without the lodge, which, even had I been able to make myself

understood would have prevented any effectual pleading against the ruthless verdict of my self-appointed judges.

Submitting myself, therefore, to the orderings of Providence, I followed the two Indians who had resumed charge of me, out of the tent, hoping almost against hope that my colour might yet in some way deter my captors from proceeding to the extremities they seemed to meditate.

In a casual glance I cast, as I went out, I fancied I saw signs of intelligence exchanged between my late interpretress and the two mountain Indians, my fellow prisoners, the countenances of the latter as they followed me to their fate being lighted by a sudden gleam of hope, and the former clasping her hands, and looking upwards as though in mute appeal to a higher Power.

The place appointed for my custody was an insulated rock in the river, at the point of the tongue of land which held the Blackfoot village, and separated from it by a very nar-

row channel, across which a few stepping stones furnished a precarious passage. At the other side flowed the main volume of the stream, in a deep and furious rapid, impracticable to the strongest swimmer.

The rock had something of the appearance of a round English haystack, its resemblance to which, was increased by the conical shaped hut that crowned it—at the present time in use as a medicine lodge.

Into this structure I was conducted by my two guards, and my bonds being examined anew, and fresh ones added—bound, in short, with painful tensivity, both hand and foot, I was then left to the undisturbed reflection of my case.

This was, indeed, far from re-assuring. Ready trussed as a sacrifice to the vengeful passions of a heathenish horde, a sacrifice legalized by their customs, and too consonant with their nature to be easily relinquished, I felt the painful consciousness my mortal career was drawing to its close, and that the

necessity had become urgent for employing what little remained of it, in preparing myself for the great change I should soon have to undergo. The summons seemed as serious as it was sudden, yet I recalled (as I braced my mind to meet it), how many there were I had read of—nay, known—to whom it had been even more so; how many had had to bid adieu to life, their families, their friends, their riches, their aspirations, in a day—an hour—an instant, as fondly wedded to them as myself. The bitter pang came on them unavoidably; with it they passed away a few brief hours before their expected term by contingencies inherent to their lot, whilst Nature went on unchanged, nor recked their loss, more than the fallen leaf or fleeted shadow of yesterday. Would it not be better then, instead of embittering my fate by vain repining, to fall back at once on the hope of my Christian creed, and submit to the inevitable stroke with the stoicism of the race that were to inflict it?

Such were the cold suggestions of philosophy, but they were checked by a small insuppressible voice more potent still, which told me my life was yet of importance to myself, and that to abandon "the vocation wherewith I was called" to fulfil the ends and exchange the benefits of existence was not to be submitted to without a struggle.

In these inward strivings and reflections, to which the low murmurs of the stream kept meet accompaniment, I passed the night, lying on the cold rock, numbering, with a miser's carefulness, the few and slender chances of deliverance there might yet remain for me in common with all who draw the breath of life, even in its worst extremities.

Could I have released but an arm from my fastening, I might have made an effort at escape, by working a hole in the lodge side, and consigning myself and fortunes, rather, to the rushing flood below, than remain in the pitiless hands that were now too likely to dispose of them; but powerless in every limb,



and guarded by a watchful sentinel outside, who, by the light of a pitchpine torch, placed in the hut, could command my every movement; this source of hope, together with every other that suggested itself in a definite shape, vanished almost as soon as entertained.

When the sun shewed itself above the horizon the following morning, my guard entered the hut, and drawing my attention to the rising orb, slowly traced with his finger its course to the meridian, when seizing his tomahawk he made with it sundry cuts and passes in the air, which, to render yet more intelligible, he concluded by a gesture round his scalp-lock, and the utterance of the word "Shoshonee;" he then continued to mark the course of the luminary to another setting, rise and noontide, when he again stopped and went through his emphatic pantomime, illustrating it this time with the repetition of the word "Yengee." Having thus summarily set forth his meaning to the best of his power, he left me with a

grim leer upon his countenance to ruminate on the import of his lesson.

As the day wore on, there were signs abroad that seemed to show this was far from being intended for empty menace.

The hubbub of a gathering crowd, shouts of men and excited screams of women, came with fell significance on my ear, as the death-knell of my comrades in distress—the poor unfriended Shoshonees. To-morrow their fate would be my own.

Nature contended strongly against the thought, and yearned with futile craving for the comforting presence of some familiar friend, who, if life indeed was to be rendered up, might afford support in its final moments. How invaluable now would have been the company of the experienced Jannock, or the faithful Robin, unconscious both, of their friend's fate, nay, perhaps, equally unknown to him, themselves subjected to a similar one.

Though the distant noise seemed to be on

the increase, all remained still about my prison save, the voice of the ever-flowing river, as it rippled and plained round its rocky walls.

The sentinel himself appeared to have left his post, seduced by the irresistible fascination of the death scene.

Relieved in some sort by his absence, my mind cast about once more for some yet unthought of means of liberation. The vision of the Indian girl now presented itself to me. Could I but contrive to see her, there might, I thought, yet be hope.

As the idea warmed upon me, the sound of a light movement near the threshold struck my ear, and twisting my head in the direction, what should I behold but, just entered like an angel of light, the form of Kosata herself!

Gently closing the door behind her, she fixed her eyes sparkling with indignant emotion upon me, and thus remained without uttering a word, till a burst of yells reached

our ears, when holding up her finger with a warning air, and shaking her head in a way I could scarce interpret, she said in half-whispered tones, and the rapid utterance produced by high excitement, "Listen, white man! to-day Blackfoot kill de Shoshonee; to-morrow have de scalp dance for Yengee." Here the child of nature, in her excitement, enforced her speech by imitating the measure she alluded to, and as she did so the exquisite grace of her figure contrasted with the fell movement she executed, formed a picture at once interesting and grotesque.

The yelling from the distant death scene being renewed—

"Hear you dat," she continued, ceasing her movements, and placing her hands on her ears, "to-morrow shout so for Yengee; Kosata no like hear it; de Shoshonee her brother."

As she said this an emotion of unfeigned anguish filled her fine eyes with tears.

"If they be your brethren," I replied, "you may look on me as your brother, also, for that

I now lie here condemned to death is owing to my having saved a Shoshonee. Can you stand by, Kosata, and see your brother perish, when even with the thought you might set him free?"

"Then would Blackfoot kill, kill, kill Kosata; Blackfoot very fierce; kill and scalp Kosata."

"But might you not fly from them as well as I, maiden, and return to the people you belong to?"

"Ah! my people no much warrior; Blackfoot much warrior."

Here she paused awhile as though endeavouring to collect her thoughts, then said with a manner equally earnest and more confidential than before, "Listen, Yengee! many bad white men come to this country; trader, sell soul for beaver skin, trapper, shoot Shoshonee like deer, loafer, worse than wild beast for firewater; Kosata no love them, no trust them; tongue all forkee"—stretching out her two fingers—"You no dis," speaking half

interrogatively, "no bad white man. You come seek lost piccaninny, save Shoshonee, not shoot him, love de Manitto. See now," glancing a look at the door to see that all was safe, "Kosata call you brother, cut your cord, go with you from here—so! You call Kosata sister, save her from harm; you help her back to her people—so!"

The reader will scarce need be told with what eagerness I laid hold of this proposal, made with the hesitating timidity, yet touching trustfulness of her sex, and how urgently I exhorted her to make no delay in executing it.

To this she replied "Softly! no good yet. Hearken, Yengee! Kosata find favour with Blackfoot, find favour with Wapiti, great chief Wapiti come guard you dis night, when moon rise he seek Kosata by yonder wood, Kosata come here then, then cut your cord, then take flight—so!"

After listening an instant at some sound that had alarmed her, and making a sign of

warning, she repeated twice with emphasis, "when moon rise, Kosata come." She glided softly out of the lodge.

My guard shortly afterwards returned, and the rest of the day was spent in that anxious flutter of reviving hope so naturally awakened by my unexpected interview, and when attended with doubt of its fulfilment so agitating an inmate of the human breast.

The outcries in the neighbourhood still continued unabated. The jubilee of benighted heathens over the immolation of kindred beings was yet in celebration by the scalp dance, when the cooler feel of the air and increasing gloom within the hut warned me the hour was nearing when my fate, resting on the caprice of an Indian girl, was to find its decisive settlement.

As an earnest of a favorable issue I perceived with a satisfaction difficult to express, a little before the time appointed, the place of the sentinel before my door had again become vacant. The first part of her plan then had

succeeded, and the love-lorn Wapiti was now probably waiting in some sequestered grove for the fair one who should gladden his eyes no more.

The darkness increased, the frogs began their chorus from a neighbouring lagune, then through the chinks in the door the silver orb of the signal luminary became visible, and my suspense had reached a pitch that was becoming scarce endurable, when a soft voice from an unseen form whispered in my ear, whilst my ligatures gave way beneath her active knife—"quick, now my brother; Wapiti gone, but come back soon—rise—make track for mountain—come take Kosata to her people!"

My limbs had become so numbed with their confinement that it was with difficulty I could follow my conductress out of the lodge to the crossing stones, and take my seat in the canoe which had been already secretly moored there as our fittest means of flight.

With a forecast scarce to have been looked



for she had already purveyed some simple stores which had suggested themselves for our venture, and having darted past me to her station in the fragile craft, she motioned me to undo its lashing, and was soon guiding it with skilful hand down the rapid current of the Wind River.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ERE I had drawn many breaths of my newly recovered freedom, or had time to address my thanks to my liberatress, I found we were nearing the thicket where I had been captured the night before, and where I entertained a hope my rifle, which I had laid down at the outskirts might have escaped the prying eyes of my captors. Directing her to the spot I was so fortunate as to find my trusty weapon uninjured save by the night dew, and though deprived of my powder horn and accoutrements, there yet remained stored in the butt the six or eight service charges

reserved for exigencies of this sort, which might be made, with care, to suffice till a fresh supply could be obtained. We then gave ourselves again to the current, floating along it for two or three miles, which as the river here described a curve, whilst it gave us greater offing from our enemies, did but little increase our distance from the high lands we instinctively made for as our surest refuge.

Having reached a convenient spot for landing, Kosata brought the canoe to the side, and loading myself with its scanty cargo, I swiftly followed her light figure on to the bank. Our situation was too critical to admit of talking. It could not be an hour—it might not be a minute ere our absence would be noticed, and the horde of savages we had fled from heard hue and cry on our trail.

We therefore pushed silently along at our best speed toward the mountains, my companion shaping our course as she listed, agreeably to our understanding, and both too intent on making progress to think either of

conversation or amusement. And thus we marched along through the dewy hours of a summer's night, our path illumined by a nearly full moon, till the first streaks of dawn appearing as we reached some high well-wooded ground, we deemed it a fitting occasion to call a halt.

The fair Indian seemed but little distressed by her march, and when she seated herself on the blankets I had laid for her settlewise under a branchy tree, it was more to commune with her own thoughts than recruit nature either by rest or reflection.

We dared not light a fire for fear of betraying our presence to our foes, but satisfied the cravings of appetite with some dried buffalo meat that formed part of our stores.

Kosata spoke but little. It was not, I felt assured, from any want of confidence in her companion, but the consideration of the many dangers that beset her defenceless sex and situation, naturally weighed upon her mind, and put even Indian fortitude upon the strain.

After finishing our slight repast, she said in her low musical tones (for she had that low soft voice "so excellent a thing in woman"), "My brother, you no tell me what you called by de Yengees; what your name among your people; me (pointing to herself) Kosata, you—"

"Philip, maiden; see, I will write the names upon this cherry tree, that you may know them by the eye as well as ear, and we will leave them as a souvenir for our friend Wapiti."

I accordingly carved her name with my penknife on the bark, and my own underneath it, while she bent curiously over me to get them by eye and heart.

This question, answer, and inscription formed in the then occupied state of our minds, the sum of our discourse and doings during that our first bivouack in the wilderness. She relapsed into silence which I forebore to break, knowing how indispensable it was for our safety, and that all our senses should be

kept on the alert to guard against the danger of surprise. My eyes nevertheless would occasionally wander from their more urgent duties to fasten on the wild attractive figure, which with hands clasped upon its lap, reclined like a resting Dryad near me.

A little before sunrise, nothing having occurred to cause alarm, we resumed our way, which I now found was leading to those very mountains whose difficulties and dangers I had so lately and painfully experienced. On questioning my fair guide as to her plans, and hinting my fears with respect to them, she replied with so much confidence that *there* we should find her friends, and reach a place of safety, and her ready movements and apparent knowledge of her ground, seemed so fully to bear out her statements, that, bound as I was by my engagement to escort her, I could not do otherwise than proceed. Such, however, was my repugnance to encounter these trials anew, that it needed the full force of this consideration, backed by the probable alterna-

tive of being made the subject of a Blackfoot broil, to overcome it.

Knowing the unwearied pertinacity with which the Indians follow up a trail once opened on, I was anxious, ere entering the mountain gorge through which our route next lay, to defeat the anticipated pursuit by making a false track in a different direction. Kosata agreeing in the suggestion, we spent the first hours of the morning in traversing the low ground along the mountain skirts, making as palpable a trail as possible, terminating at the entrance of a stony dale leading to the country of the Eutaw Indians, after which we returned to our starting point by a higher level on the hill side, where the rock and stones that covered it would afford no traces of our passage.

Both of us by this time being again ready for a halt, we made into a hollow on the mountain side, a little within the entrance of the pass, screened from observation on every side, but one which commanded a fine view

of the snowy summits of the Wind River range. A little rill came tumbling down the rocks hard by, at which we quenched our thirst, and bathed our sunburnt faces and fevered feet. Kosata, whom the elastic atmosphere of the region seemed to inspire with its own buoyancy, did not remain long quiet, but having produced what remained of the buffalo meat, proceeded to gather sticks and turf grass for a fire, which she shortly kindled, saying as she did so: "Light fire now, Felipe, and eat meat—sun high—Blackfoot no see—Wapiti go visit the Eutaws—find there better squaw than Kosata."

After despatching our rude fare, the restless maid arose, and going to the mouth of the hollow, stood there awhile looking at the prospect in front of her, then returning to where I sat, and touching me on the shoulder, said, pointing to the distant peaks: "See, Felipe, there Kosata's home—there, her people—there Kosata great Squaw."

"Queen of the wild men of the mountains,



eh! pretty Kosata? great squaw of 'les dignes de pitié?' and were you born to the dignity, or did you drop down from heaven among your wild and woeful subjects?"

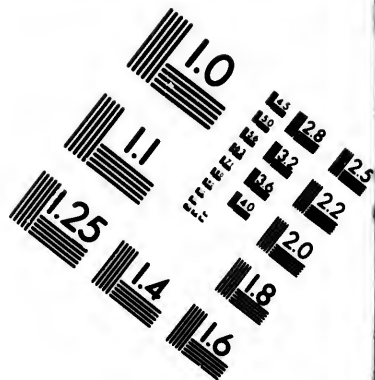
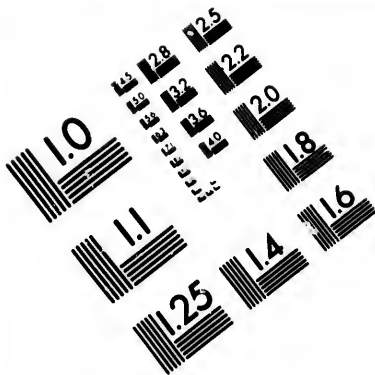
She looked grave at these words, as though they were *επεα κροτητα*—touching on matters of mysterious import, but replied with sober naiveté "So, Felipe."

A vein of serious thought seemed to have been struck, and she seated herself demurely on a hillock near after giving her brief response.

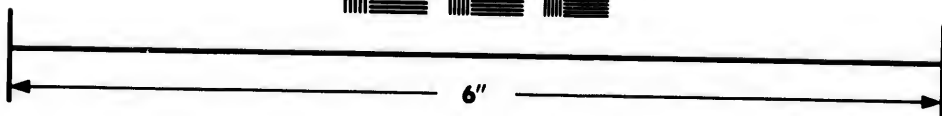
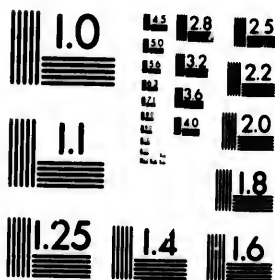
Whilst sitting there, gazing at her snowy home, it would not have been difficult to fancy her the mystery queen she had professed herself, her airy and spiritual mien so well according with the idea.

Unconsciously almost to myself, the interest the young Indian had awakened in me from the first, increased the more I became acquainted with her. Her exquisite simplicity, yet piquant grace of manner, the offspring I judged of native amiability—her stealing,





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deerlike movements partly proceeding from natural agility, but partly also I fancied, from a life beset with hazard—"the shooting lights of her wild eyes," as they wandered in search of danger, or mirrored the passing thought—even the broken parlance by which she strove to convey the latter, had each and all their secret charm and fascination for me, which grew more potent with the exercise.

Yet with them were mingled so much virgin purity, such an all-potential air of innocence, that scarce in the corruptest heart might a thought have been harboured detrimental to them.

What a pity a creature so endowed should be dedicated to a life of barbarism!

"Kosata," I said, as I went up to her on her grassy throne, and threw myself on the turf at her feet, "when you return to the sway of your snowy realms yonder, you must take me, I think, for your guardsman and prime minister. (She shook her head at this, of which she probably understood nothing.) But

I want to know, fair princess, where it was you first learned to converse in Yengee."

"No say, Felipe, 'cept there;" pointing to the sky, "it come when me speak with Yengee trader."

We then sat silently looking at each other for a length of time, my gaze attracted to her countenance, not so much by its actual and extraordinary beauty, as a singular faculty possessed by it of awakening curiosity and interest, which I was as little able to satisfy as account for.

At length a serious look came over it, she suddenly started up, and clasping her hands together, exclaimed:—

"Oh, Felipe, me think, canoe—no push him off!"

"By Jove! and that's the truth; we left it on the bank, and the Blackfeet will have struck our trail to a certainty."

This reflection filled our minds with such a sense of haunting peril, that we determined to limit our time of rest to what was actually in-

dispensable, and then push forwards as far as possible till nightfall. What little we said was now spoken in an undertone.

After the lapse of about an hour we therefore again got in motion, shaping our course as before, at a high level along the mountain slopes, in order to avoid lurking enemies, and leave no trail.

Several head of elk were seen as we passed along, but albeit our provisions had got low, I forbore to fire at them from the prudential considerations that were now uppermost.

Having made our way through this valley, we entered another, wilder, as it was more elevated than the last, and reaching a convenient locality as the moon began to rise, resolved upon halting there for the night.

We had now thrown such a space between us and our apprehended pursuers, that we thought we might venture on taking up our quarters in the lower ground, by the side of a good sized stream, which would supply a want we had much suffered from in our march

along the arid heights. Choosing out, therefore, a little green glade projecting into it, fringed on the water side with willows, and protected behind from surprise by a natural curtain of rock; we here threw down our burdens, and prepared to establish ourselves as comfortably as circumstances permitted. Our provisions being all but finished, I left Kcsata to kindle the fire—a task she seemed to take a pleasure in—and getting out some fish-hooks I had managed to retain through fair and foul, repaired to the river side to try what might be done with them to mend our fare.

In front was a tranquil pool, with a fierce rapid above and below it, both one and the other of which I lashed for two mortal hours, with my line, in various directions, without any greater result than the capture of a small bass, which, with half her little handful of buffalo scraps, extracted by Kcsata from the wallet, made up our faint and feeble apology for a supper.

When we had ended this, whilst the moon-



light enabled me, I proceeded to form a sort of sleeping booth for my fair comrade, by sticking willow boughs in the ground and joining the leafy tops together overhead, which with others laid on the ground by way of mattress, a good blanket to lie on, and the rippling water for a lullaby, made up accommodation she had often met with, and beyond which she knew no craving. Such are the simple wants of Indian life; such, the little required by unpampered nature to maintain it in the perfection of its form and functions.

Sensible how necessary it was to recruit her strength in order to achieve the crowning toils of the morrow, I soon commended Kosata to her slumbers, and retired to the little pass that commanded her verdant bedchamber, and by which alone danger either from man or beast could approach it.

Here, wrapped in my blanket, with my back resting against a tree, and my rifle on my knee, I was soon lulled to sleep by the monotonous murmurs of the river.

It was in the very depth of the night, when the moon had passed over the mountain tops, and everything around lay in undistinguishable gloom, that I felt my shoulder touched, and found the young Shoshonee standing beside me. "Felipe, good brother," she said, in a half whisper, "me no like you leave me, me 'fraid Blackfoot near, me no sleep, me hear no good."

"Be of good cheer, Indiana, tell me what it is you hear."

"Listen, Felipe, you hear it too, now ; there over water, bad sound."

I listened as she desired, for I knew how wonderfully keen are Indian senses, and fancied at one time I perceived a low indefinable noise like that of some wild animal, from what seemed a blacker blotch in the shade of the other bank, where I had previously remarked there was a thicket of willows. It was nothing, however, that seemed to augur danger, or, indeed, have any reference to ourselves, and I accordingly made light of her

fears, recommending her to return to her couch, in the assurance no danger could come nigh her without receiving timely warning. She had, however, been so overcome by her alarm (and indeed we found afterwards there was but too much ground for it) that I could not induce her to retire without my consenting to take up a position nearer to her.

Attending her, therefore, back, I spread my blanket by the arbour side, whilst the maiden re-entered it, and apparently enjoyed her needed rest for the remainder of the night.

At length the morning dawned of the day that was expected to conclude our flight, and see the fair fugitive restored to her home and people.

Awaking as the grey light over the mountain tops was changing into saffron, I stole noiselessly to her lair, and found her still steeped in the "honey heavy dew of slumber," her head resting on her arm, and her parted lips respiring the balmy breeze (not more balmy than the breath that returned it) of the

morning. Plucking a wildflower from the turf I drew it lightly across her lips, when she awoke with a slight start.

Arising with a smile, she shook her tresses in the air, and said :—

“ O Felipe, me so glad—soon get home now—soon get there ; (pointing to a range of heights about half a day’s journey off), no more Blackfoot now—Kosata, great squaw there—Felipe, her brother—be great chief there too—never leave Kosata—never.”

As she uttered, with emphasis, the last words, she rendered the appeal irresistible by seizing my hand in hers and pressing it to her bosom.

“ I will not leave you, Kosata, be assured, till I have seen you safe among your people, but then I must think of finding my own, and fulfilling the vow which has brought me hither. Do you not think, my Indiana,” I continued, wishing to divert her thoughts from what seemed to sadden her, “ we should both feel all the better for a mouthful of meat

to begin the day with? I suspect we shall want it before it's over."

"No bad, Felipe," she answered, with a racy smile; "but where get meat? See," she suddenly added, pointing with her finger, "there come meat—now you shoot meat to make us strong—good!"

Looking in the direction she indicated, I descried a herd of deer just drawing into view at the other side of the water, which, the better to understand what follows, needs a somewhat more particular description.

Though its average breadth did not exceed some twenty yards, it widened to double that extent in the part opposite our camp, being dammed up by a ledge of rocks that crossed it to within a couple of fathoms of our own side, where it abruptly ended, leaving an opening, through which the whole body of the stream poured with the impetuosity of a mill-race.

Some hundred paces further down occurred another partial bar, formed of disconnected

boulders, thro' the interstices of which the water found its way, yet set so close together as to be capable, to an active person, of serving the purpose of a bridge to the other side.

The rush of water thro' these two obstructions filled the air with a hoarse roar, producing, at a little distance, a pleasing irritation to the senses, tho' the sight of dead fish, floating belly upwards in the eddies, shewed the dangerous force of the currents that generated it.

It was at the further end of this lower ledge that Kosata's quick eye discovered the forward files of a herd of deer pasturing at leisure, on the opposite bank. They were, however, just out of rifle range and seemed in no hurry to come within it. If we could only succeed in driving them up the bank to some point more directly fronting me, I had little doubt I should be able to drop one for the benefit of our craving stomachs.

Kosata soon perceived where the difficulty lay, and well skilled, for her sex, in the wild arts of the chase, darted off in spite of my whispered warning to the lower bar with the intention of beating up the game to the required point.

Gliding thro' the bushes like one of the fleet creatures she manœuvred, she soon reached the nearer end of the barrier, and played her part so cleverly that the deer, without being actually scared, edged slowly up in the desired direction, and at the extremity of the higher bar gave me a good shot with my Spanish rifle, which threw a fat buck into the death kicks. I then loaded again with all speed, and well it was I observed this essential canon of the chase, for I had barely driven down the ball when a shrill prolonged shriek of terror struck my ear. A single glance explained its meaning. Before me I beheld Kosata flying, panic struck, towards me over the rocks of the higher barrier, her hair

streaming meteor-like behind her, her looks aghast with terror, and a huge grizzly bear in close pursuit.

What a frightful situation! In front an impassable torrent—a merciless, wild beast in her rear!

For a moment I remained fixed where I stood in sympathetic horror, and in that moment the poor fugitive had nearly reached the verge of the furious rapid that would have cut off further flight.

Obeying impulse rather than reflection I then fired.

At the same instant I beheld Kosata throw herself into the water below the barrier, where there was a back-current produced by it, whilst the fierce brute, irritated by the wound it had received, and seeing its aggressor opposite, plunged with blind fury into the racing flood for the purpose of attacking me. Carried away in an instant by the strength of the current, I had shortly the satisfaction of seeing it dashed with considerable force



against the rocks of the lower bar. Not wishing, however, to leave in doubt an issue so essential to our safety, I followed it up, after having again loaded, along the side, and whilst endeavouring to raise its unwieldy bulk upon the rocks, sent it a shot in the ear which ended all further demonstrations with its life.

I then turned with much anxiety to ascertain the fate of the young Indian. Crossing the lower bar so as to reach the point—which could only be done by going round—where I had last beheld her, I happily had my apprehensions dispelled on nearing the place, by seeing her issue from a cleft in the rocks, and hasten, all dripping, to meet me.

She had suffered such a fright that I scarcely had the heart to chide her, more especially as it was presently apparent that her escape had not been scot free, but clogged with the penalty of a very perceptible limp.

It appeared from her account that after crossing the lower barrier, actuated by curi-

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osity, she had followed the deer up the other side in order to see the effect of my shot; that on reaching the spot where I had dropped my game, she found it to her great terror already in the possession of the brute that had pursued her—it was doubtless this animal that had disturbed us during the night—and whose notice she had attracted by the shriek she had raised on the occasion. In the precipitation of her flight, her foot had been caught in a cranny of the rocks, and though unnoticed at the time, it proved now to be severely sprained; indeed, ere we had gone half way back to the camp she found herself unable to use it, and I was obliged to carry her the remainder of the distance in my arms.

Lighting a fire near the arbour that she might dry her dripping clothes, I then repaired again to the other side for our much needed venison.

This untoward occurrence had taken up the best part of the morning, and it had worn

well on towards noon ere I had prepared my deer's-meat dinner.

On carrying her a portion of this I found the disabled girl swathed in blankets, leaning against a tree, and groaning with pain, "Oh, Felipe, foot sick—no make track now—no get to Arkla—Blackfoot come now and take us—make scalp dance for Felipe and Kosata."

"Fear not that, Indiana, we'll soon have the foot all right again, if there be no bones broke; let me, I pray you, have a look at it, and try if I can help the process, whilst you eat this dainty bit of venison you've so well earned."

Yielding to my solicitation, she took the bark platter from my hand, whilst bending down over the ailing limb, I proceeded to examine the nature of its injury.

Who may conceive my feelings, the tumult of astonishment and joy, mocking all power of utterance that filled my breast, when on a foot as white as my own, and riveting my eye at the first glance, I beheld, a little below

the instep, "a red spot, the color of a cherry and shape of a pear," the birth-branded and indelible token of her whom I had come so far, undergone such anxiety and toil, and was now well nigh despairing to find—the "Young Fawn."

Yes, there it was, the clear and infallible sign, before my eyes, and there lay she groaning in the midst of the wilderness, just escaped from a ferocious wild beast, and in momentary dread of being scalped by savages; there, ignorant alike of her country, rank, and kin, doubting whether she was the daughter of an out-cast tribe of Indians, or fallen with the snow from heaven, sat the tenderly nurtured Laura, of my first pilgrimage, the daughter of my friend, Lord Ardcapell, the heiress of far-distant Leighton.

## CHAPTER IX.

As these reflections rushed through and convulsed my mind, I continued gazing in speechless absorption at the object that had excited them ; and whilst the unwitting girl rested the delicate foot and swollen ankle in my hands, and plaintively enquired if I could relieve her pain, I could only reply by tears, which in the sudden surprisal of my feelings, I was momentarily unable to repress.

Puzzled to account for this manifestation, "No weep, Felipe," she said, thinking I might be overcome by my sympathy, "foot no bery bad, soon come well," a speech to which the moans that broke it, and tumified appear-

ance of the part, gave something like the lie direct. Then observing me still gazing at it absorbed in wonder, another idea seized her mind: "Oh, Felipe!" she exclaimed, smiling through her tears, "me see now, foot white, face dark; foot Yengee—face, Blackfoot! lo! my brother, when Kosata come there (pointing to the snowy mountains), long, long, ago, face, foot, hand, all white, white as yonder snow. Shoshonee call her daughter of snow, say she come down from heaven (looking up at the sky), make her great Squaw, then Blackfoot take her. Blackfoot no love white. Wapiti no love white; when he seek Kosata for Squaw, make her red like Blackfoot, make Kosata bery, bery fine Squaw for Wapiti," and the arch maiden laughed in spite of her pain at Wapiti's wasted care.

Receiving no answer to her words, and seeing my looks immovably fixed as before, her thoughts suddenly took a new direction natural enough considering her sex and circumstances; with a movement of maidenly

modesty she withdrew her foot from my hands, wrapped herself more straitly in her envelope, and saying her limb would now do very well, hinted I might take my gun and endeavour to procure us some more venison.

Aroused at length from my trance, and feeling how essential it was to our safety that my patient should be restored with all possible celerity, I collected some soothing herbs, of which, wrapping them in a piece of my sleeve, I made a poultice, and repossessing myself (not without a show of reluctance on her part) of the withdrawn member, carefully applied the fomentation to it, after which, recommending her to observe perfect repose, I retired to where I had left my dinner cooking, and endeavoured, while discussing the long-delayed meal, to realize in my mind the wonderful discovery I had fallen on.

Profoundly impressed with the newly-acquired importance of my charge, I felt fairly at my wits' end what course to take so as best to ensure its preservation ; whether to

attend my *protégée* to her imagined countrymen, or make our way at once out of the mountains by a southern route.

The delay (otherwise so undesirable), consequent on her lameness, would, I thought, give me time to consider each plan deliberately, and meanwhile it became urgently needful to place ourselves out of jeopardy till the time should arrive for its adoption.

Though under the pressure of hunger and thirst, we had ventured one night's lodging in the thoroughfare, as it were of the glen, it would not have been prudent to hazard the same a second time, and I therefore climbed the mountain side for the purpose of choosing a more eligible retreat. After some little exploration I discovered one admirably suited for our purpose, but a short distance in advance of our present camp, and a considerable height above it, whither I lost no time on my return in transporting the lame maiden and our few moveables.

The new asylum I had fixed on was a re-



cess in the mountain side, full three hundred feet above the bottom, partially overbrowed by rock so as perfectly to shelter us from the sudden storms incidental to the region, and fronted by a little grassy plateau, from which bubbled forth a pellucid spring of water, so needful an accessory to a homestead, however rude.

For my companion, I made a couch in the inner part of fir branchlets, overlaid with deerskin, and it was as she lay stretched upon this, after our evening meal, resting her hurt limb, that I set myself to sound her recollections of her past life, so as if possible, by touching some long-dormant train of ideas or feelings, to secure a readier faith in the wondrous tale I had to unfold to her.

Forbearing at the outset to acquaint her with the full truth, for fear of overtasking her power of credence, I endeavoured to raise up in her imagination images that must once strongly have impressed it, such as the persons of her parents, the fire at the Far Pines,

her long journey over the Prairies, &c., but was greatly chagrined to find her memory as yet at fault, and her mind mystified by Indian fable, and stunned by the vicissitudes of her latter wilding life, unable to realize the pictures of its earlier and remoter stage.

Perceiving her at length wearied with my catechising, I thought it prudent to desist, after obtaining from her a promise she would meditate during the night on what I had said, and prayed that the truth might be revealed to her.

As the night fell, and, seated at the entrance of the grot, I pondered on the discovery I had made; the position of the interesting foundling, and the multiplied perils that environed her, I could not help asking myself half aloud, "What would they say at Leighton, could they see their young heiress now? What would its noble lord think? What, Cyrus Farleton feel? and what, my esteemed friend and father-in-law, 'be of opinion?'"

I recalled the night twelve months before, when I walked about the park absorbed in vague conjectures as to her fate, and wondered what I myself should have thought had anyone foretold me the events that had since fallen out; that thousands of miles away from that English ground, I should by the same time next year find myself successful in a quest that had so long lain like an incubus on my mind—successful too, under such strange, unexampled circumstances.

Lastly, what would the world think of the tale, should it ever be related by the pen of some "ready writer?" And how comes it (I conclude), that in this melo-drame of real life, I, who am scarce concerned in it save by the bonds of a general sympathy, should find myself the chief actor, and sole attesting witness?

The moon was shedding its white light on the rocky heights around, and everything lay sealed in unbroken silence, when, constrained

by a mastering religious impulse, I knelt down upon the dewy sward, and endeavoured to compose my thoughts by prayer.

Whilst thus commending myself and ward to Divine protection, I felt an arm resting on my neck and found Kosata standing by me. "Felipe," said she, in a low and tender voice, as befitted the occasion, "you pray the Great Spirit for Kosata; Kosata come pray for you; pray He may send you, good, dear Felipe, and keep us both together, evermore."

"I was offering up prayers, Kosata (I somehow was unable to resign this name, whose romantic wildness pleased me), that we may both get back safely to England."

"Tell me where is England, Felipe?"

"It is the country you came from, at a time, it seems, you cannot remember; there you have a parent living still, and—"

"Say on, Felipe, me listen."

"You heard what I said in the Blackfeet Council Lodge?"

"Me heard," she answered with a sort of sigh.

"Well, you are the very daughter I then spoke of and took a solemn vow to bring back to him; return now to your couch, that your foot may have the rest it needs, and think yet again on what I have told you; to-morrow we will talk of these matters more at large."

The next day found us occupying our snug retreat in the full enjoyment of that repose, which though scarcely quite safe under the circumstances, was so agreeable after our late over-tasking toil.

I was gratified to find my patient's lameness much abated, and after sponging her foot in the cold fountain, we sat ourselves down by its side and made a hearty breakfast off our venison.

Whilst we were engaged in discussing it, the sun rose cloudlessly in the heavens, diffusing a burning radiance that seemed to penetrate the very stones. Refracted on the mountain side where we were sitting, it soon

became too hot for our endurance, and retreating once again into the grot, we spent the remainder of the day in conversing on the interesting subject we had broached the night before. My companion shewed more irregularity of mood than I had yet observed in her, being alternately wrapt in silent reveries, and questioning me with eager interest on some one or other of the facts I slowly and cautiously disclosed to her.

Thought and memory were evidently doing their work, and I was pleased in the various questions that she put to me, to mark their progress and anticipate their growth into full and perfect faith.

At length the sun began to sink, and our side of the valley being now in shade, I carried my lame comrade on to the green, where, while pursuing our conversation, we might regale ourselves with the cooler air and changeful pageantry of evening.

Our position was on a shoulder of the

mountain, formed by the main valley and a lateral glen, scarcely wider than a ravine, that entered it at right angles.

Directly fronting us on the other side of the vale rose an immense range of mural cliff (a continuation, I found afterwards, of that which had stopped me a few days before my capture), running along it as far as the eye could reach, consisting of yellow free-stone, resembling the well-known Bath stone of England, perfectly precipitous, and now warmly lighted up by the farewell glow of the sunset. Along the summit ran a ragged line of firs, stretching athwart the sky their eldritch arms, twisted by winds into every shape of distortion, and forming a fitting climax to the barbaric scene they crowned.

As the day had dawned, so was it now departing, in the perfect stillness of an unpeopled waste. The heavens were stretching over the unconscious rocks their varied maze of coloring, stamping on the giant features of the

landscape, now brought out by the evening shadows in their full vastness, an expression at once beautiful and solemn.

Not a sound broke in on its breathing stillness save that of our own low tones, and we surrendered ourselves to the loveliness of the hour and effusion of our feelings, with an *abandon* that caught rather relish than alloy from a still lingering sense of insecurity.

Kosata, her hair flowing about her shoulders, and her delicate countenance beaming with the light that so well beseemed it of her innocent and gracious spirit, was seated by my side, now absorbed in thought, now smiling at the forlorn condition and unbeauteous encasements of her foot, and anon exclaiming with delight (for she shared my appreciation of the beautiful) at the glorious view in front of her.

Thrown thus together in the midst of the wilderness--glance meeting glance, hand locked in hand—with none but the all-seeing God to read our souls or note our acts, not a



thought that might offend His goodness for a moment entered the minds of either of us. An unfeigned interest in each other's welfare, enhanced by our hazardous situation, a tender trustfulness on her side, the offspring of a good nature and varied in its manifestations by the playful eddies of her sex and age, a profound solicitude on mine, mingled with a peculiar sympathy engendered by old associations, were the sentiments that ruled our hearts and kept them from betraying us to error.

At length my companion became silent, and her head sank upon my shoulder. What was the precise tenor of her thoughts I could not tell, but my own were involuntarily wending back to the time, thirteen years before, when I held her a child on my knee in her father's cottage.

Carried away in their current I unconsciously pressed my lips, as I might then have done, on the lovely head that was reclining on me.

"Pardon me, dear Kosata," I said, as she looked up with an innocent smile, "I was fancying you the little fairy I used to salute so in the days of yore."

She mused on what I said with a half bashful air, gave me a sort of side smile, and replied with a certain emphasis of manner, "me grown big fairy now, Felipe."

After meditating again some little time, she addressed me as follows: "Good brother, you say me come from the sunrise, over the great Salt Lake, from England; Shoshonee say me come with snow from heaven; Kosata no tell only this; she little piccaninny on big mountain here-by, no white man, no red man near; she see smoke, Indian wigwam there; snowstorm come and make her very cold, Shoshonee then come and take her to him wigwam, say she come down with snow, she look so white, love her very much, make her great squaw; Shoshonee very good, Kosata love him; Felipe very good, Kosata love him; now tell me, good brother, how me

little fairy by sunrise when me piccaninny here in Arkla, with Shoshonees."

In answer to her speech I now unreservedly made known to her the entire history of her earlier life, the dark and treacherous plot of which she had been the victim, how necessary her abduction had been to its accomplishment, and that her persecutors had exposed her in the position which seemed to have left the earliest impression on her mind, in the full persuasion that, as though prisoned in the grave itself, she would never return to trouble them.

To all this she listened in unbounded wonder, and at length a tear stole down her cheek as she haply thought the very Blackfeet she was fleeing from would have used her less unmercifully.

Wiping away the silent token, she rejoined "But how you know me that young Fawn you speak of, good brother? how you know that 'lordee' my father, that 'ladee' my mother?"

“By a great ‘medicine’ I carry about me, and by which I could tell you to be the fawn I seek though you were hid in a herd of thousands. I will show it to you.”

I then presented her her mother’s portrait, to which, her Indian tint excepted, she bore a remarkable resemblance, and at which she long gazed with silent interest.

“There you behold your mother, Kosata, and looking on your face I see her copy. It was over that mother’s grave I vowed to befriend you in her stead. I have crossed the big waters and traversed the boundless prairies that I might do so, and now I have found you,” said I, pressing my lips on the lovely head which was again resting on my shoulder, “O maiden of many cares, most richly do I feel myself repaid!”

Kosata mused awhile on what I had said, then looked up at me, and then away; but my words had found their way to her heart, and in her fleeting glance I gathered that

which rewarded me for the long labours of a twelvemonth.

“Moreover,” I continued “the young fawn I speak of had a red mark on its left foot. Have you not that mark, Kosata?”

To this she replied by smiling, and slightly moving the bandaged member.

“And above all,” I proceeded, “it had another planted by nature here,” taking her forefinger and placing it a little below the articulation of the neck and shoulder, where according to her nurse’s statement there would be a mole now covered by her dress; “by that mark let the truth be now determined. If you find it where I say, you are the Yengee maid I seek for; if you find it not, you may remain if you still so please, the heaven-sent snow queen of the Shoshonees.”

Induced by my observations the maid unloosed the robe around her neck, when the tell-tale token was immediately manifest, and I was turning my eyes from the attractive

sight in a last silent appeal to her blushing countenance, when I beheld, to my astonishment, its every feature frozen into an expression of intense horror.

Following the direction of her looks with my own, I at once discovered what fearfully accounted for the change.

The sun had already left the other side of the valley, leaving its wall-like cliff in utter shade, save where it faced the ravine before spoken of as entering it from the westward at right angles.

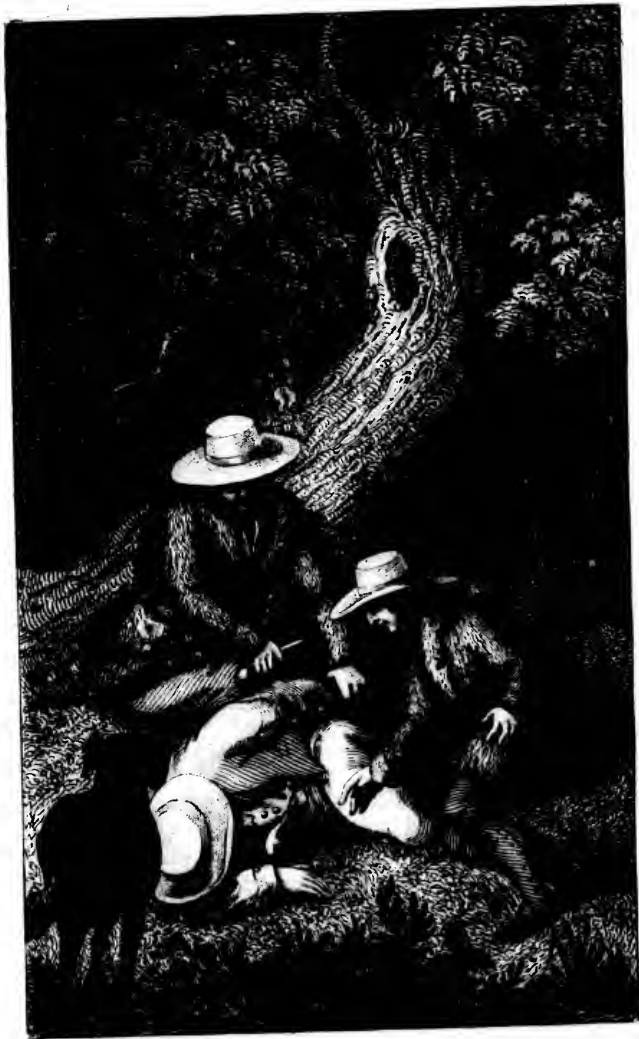
Here, by the light still streaming down the latter, it was yet illumined for a certain space, and flitting athwart this bright part like the lusive spectra of the magic-lantern, were seen—magnified to colossal size—the moving shadows of a file of Indians, advancing up the dell with the stealthy pace and eager attitude of bloodhounds following on a high scent; their number (fifteen), mien, and guise, even to the nodding war plume of their crests, were all there distinctly figured, and as we

watched the fearful pageant (each party as yet unseen by the other), carried the terrible conviction to our souls that our enemies had tracked us up at length, and were now ready to run in upon their prey.

Well might Kosata look aghast.

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## CHAPTER X.

IN a few minutes more they would reach the point where our trail (which we had taken too little care to hide) ascended the mountain side, and tho' among the stones and rocks likely for the moment to be thrown out, there was little doubt of our pursuers then making a cast which would inevitably sweep our position, and with my companion in her present disabled state, it seemed next to impossible we should escape it.

Fortunately she had just received the fresh applications to her foot, and we had both of us been recruited by a long rest, so there being but one course open to us—seizing my

rifle in my hand whilst I supported her drooping form with the other—we commenced a hurried flight up the mountain.

For some little distance a thick setting of dwarf birch trees afforded us a temporary screen, but above this lay a bare and prominent tract of hill which I foresaw would be the critical part, there being scarce a possibility of passing it without being descried from below.

As I feared, so it fell out. We had taken but a few steps over its treacherous area when the warwhoop sounded from the glen, falling upon our ears with all the significance of a death knell.

Such, indeed, I thought it had proved to Kosata, for she sank to the earth at the sound, and on continuing our flight I found it necessary to carry her forward in my arms.

Here was an ominous addition to the odds against us, which, fleetfooted and numerous as were our enemies, left us apparently but little chance even at the outset.

We possessed, however, the advantage of a good start to begin with, being a full half mile in advance up a steep mountain side ere we were discovered, and another belt of scrub lying a short distance further ahead, inspired us with the hope of again, perhaps, being able to conceal ourselves.

With the yells ringing in our ears, this we at last reached, and here I replaced Kosata on her feet, urging her to use her utmost efforts to keep up with me. The poor girl accordingly essayed to proceed unaided, but her frequent falls and ill-suppressed moans shewing how little she was able to do so, I once more found myself obliged to bear her, and being now hidden by the copsewood we turned off again at a sharp angle from our former course, and made through the brush towards the summit of the mountain, where it had appeared of least elevation.

After a desperate struggle with its difficulties this we at length gained, though over-

come with excessive exertion, I fainted and fell on reaching it.

Revived after some minutes by the cooler breeze, wafted from adjacent snow tracts, I eagerly turned to reconnoitre the movements of our tireless foes.

No longer having us in sight we could perceive them engaged in slowly picking out our trail through the lower copse, which affording us a momentary respite, in order to make the most of it, I turned to examine the line of our further flight, when an unexpected scene presented itself.

We had attained the border of one of those little rock-bound realms I had before been so fascinated by in my late wanderings among these mountains. A verdant area of some hundred acres resembling a large lawn lay before and below us, in a sort of flexure, the bottom occupied by a little tarn, and its higher sides by suites of rocky terraces, spotted here and there by caves, and diversified by dwarf shrubbery.

At the further side, and opposite to us, a shoulder of rock stood out in a manner that marked it to our eager apprehension as a position where many might be kept at bay by few, and inspired the sudden hope that as continued flight was impossible, the struggle for our lives might be there maintained for some time further. Though all would depend on our reaching it before our enemies, so utterly were we prostrated by toil that we found it unavoidable to rest some minutes longer, myself supporting, with sensations scarcely less poignant than her own, my vainly recovered prize, and she, poor wretch, entreating me rather to kill her with my own hand than suffer her to fall again into the power of the hated Blackfeet.

“Oh, Felipe,” she cried, pointing woefully to her scratched and bleeding limb, from which the dressings had been torn off in her flight, “all sick foot (thus she worded it) do this—here me die, my brother—me run no

more—but you no lame ; you run, make track, and save yourself.”

The yells of the Blackfeet, who had now made their way through the wood, soon put an end to this tender by-play, and noting for an instant their position, I grasped my rifle with a vengeful clutch, and turned once more to bear the hapless maid over the last stage of our retreat.

A change had, however, I observed, come over her countenance even in that short space ; her eyes, averted from our foes, were now fixed sparkling on a clump of trees not far from the spot we were making for, and whether she recognized its features, or discovered smoke arising from it, to this she eagerly pointed, exclaiming :—

“ Felipe, see ! friends there, run, run, run, run.”

Inspired by the thought she uttered, overcoming for the moment all sense of pain, she ran before me down the steep descent, and

across the little lawn towards the rock on which all our hopes now rested. Already had we reached its base when she again stumbled and fell; catching her hurriedly up, I was eagerly searching about for some access along its side, when our pursuers appeared again on the mountain crest behind, and the two parties being now in sight, raising another of their hideous yells, poured down into the valley after us.

Kosata's keen vision was not long in discovering a practicable track, and with a readiness I at the time marvelled at, directed my failing steps through its cramped and rugged windings.

The rock was gained.

Laying my helpless burden in a hollow which would secure her from the enemy's missiles, I flew back to defend the passage we had come up by—the only one as it appeared to our position.

Esconsing myself behind a projection of rock, I beheld them approach at slackened



speed, and at a safe distance hold a brief council for the purpose of settling the best mode of circumventing us.

This being shortly ended, they scattered themselves with practised readiness, and sheltering their persons behind the irregularities of the ground, proceeded with the snakelike movements that characterise Indian warfare, to attempt the capture of our strong-hold.

Keeping close in my cover, still as death, I strained my eyes almost to bursting on the all important pass, the lower part of which was already beginning to be darkened by the evening shade, and at length became aware of a living form prostrate on the ground, advancing up it with a scarcely more perceptible motion than the creeping shadows it was mingled with. That it did move, however, I was confident, and as the path wound directly under the flank of the cliff, the idea suddenly occurred to me I might be able to avert this danger without expending my ammunition—now so unspeakably precious—or exposing

myself to the awful casualty of an empty barrel.

Laying down my piece, and grasping a large stone with both hands, I stole along the verge of the cliff, to a point immediately over the lurking figure, and cast it with my whole force down upon it. The muffled sound that followed assured me the blow had told. Though not slain upon the spot, he had been beyond doubt disabled, and his vacant lair soon proved that one at least of the blood-thirsty crew was off our hands.

A deep silence followed this lucky stroke, almost more trying to the spirit than the clamour of an actual onslaught, and it was broken not by this or any other sound of mortal warfare, but the shrilling strain of a horn, issuing from some unseen source, but apparently close at hand. The tone was high-pitched and piercing, and as it pealed through the little vale, awaking the long-dormant echoes of its terraces, there seemed something preternatural in the sound.

Ere it had fully died away the yells of the savages, rang in the air around us, and I silently prepared myself for the struggle for life and death that was to follow.

I had not long to wait. A string of warriors, sprung, as it seemed, out of the earth itself, dashed like lightning into the pathway, mounting the ascent with wonderful activity, and confidently counting upon mastering the position by a sudden rush. The leader—a herculean savage, armed with a fusee—discharged his weapon as he advanced, and exposing his body, as he did so, to my aim, received the contents of my rifle, which tumbled him on the two warriors who followed.

During the momentary confusion that ensued, there not being time to load, I hurled down fragments of rock upon the latter—who were stationed directly underneath me, and again with good effect, disabling another assailant, and compelling the remainder (for Indians are apt to shrink beneath a first and telling check), to an instant tho' but temporary retreat.

This afforded me an opportunity for reloading my piece, and I opened the trap in the stock in order to obtain a fresh charge. By some accident, however, it had got open, and I now found its precious contents wanting.

Deep was my dismay—deep my execrations, as I flung the useless implement upon the rock, and revolved the desperate extremity the mishap had reduced me to.

Again I perceived signs that menaced a repetition of the assault, and it was during the momentary lull that preceded what I could not but feel sure would be a last and successful charge, that the shrill notes of the horn again reverberated in the air near me.

Scarce were its echoes silent, when, as tho' evoked from the mountain side by the spell of some powerful exorcist, figures of dwarfish size and wildest aspect, armed with bows and arrows, appeared on my right hand and my left, to the number of a dozen or more, who stationing themselves at the top of the contested pass, prepared, with looks of resolution,

to repel the assault I had feared so much from.

Could they be real? was my first thought, or were they not the creation of a disturbed and despairing fancy?

My doubts were speedily dispelled by seeing a prowling Blackfoot, who by some unknown means had scaled the rock behind, and come unawares upon us, transfixed on the spot by their ready arrows.

Tho' thus joyfully visible to myself, the new and strange auxiliaries were yet out of view of the hostile band below, and when, with a loud exulting yell, the expected rush took place, they little dreamed of the crushing reception that awaited it.

Posted at the head of the pass, and along the verge of the cliff that flanked it, the mountaineers lay still till the six warriors, who formed the storming party, had half accomplished the ascent when, suddenly greeting them with a shower of arrows, they stretched three of the number on the ground,

and put the remaining three (two of them bearing away in their bodies the avenging missiles), to an instant and headlong flight.

Our enemies being thus a second time repulsed, and as I hoped, for good, (for five of the fifteen lay dead, and three we knew to be badly wounded), I anxiously repaired to the place where I had left Kosata, and happily found her unharmed, her little bugle lying at her feet, and a number of wild women around her, who were testifying their joy by every species of loving antic and gleeful homage.

“O Felipe!” she cried out as she beheld me, “saved! saved! my people kill Black-foot and save us—save us both! O Felipe!” clasping her hands, and with a deep sigh of relief, “See, Ark-la, Felipe—this Kosata’s home—this your home now—no fear Black-foot now—my people drive them and make us safe—you live with me now in Ark-la,” and stretching out her arms she threw herself passionately into mine.

Breaking from me at length she applied her little bugle to her lips, and produced the magic notes I had before heard, which had so happily changed the fortunes of the day in our own favor.

“Kosata call her braves now,” she said with a smile, “see your brothers now, Felipe.”

Obedient to the wonted summons the wild cragsmen came flocking in from the chase of their routed foes, and exchanged delighted greetings with their lost and new found Lady.

Leaving these singular beings to render her their kindly offices I returned to the scene of conflict, over which the moon was now shedding its mild and peaceful lustre. The dead were found already despoiled of their scalps, the trophies of Indian warfare—objects of their vindictive raid—which they had little deemed they were so soon themselves to forfeit. In the warrior who carried the firelock I recognized one of my captors on the Wind river, and on his person found a small store of

powder and ball, which in my present circumstances were more valuable to me than so much gold, though the latter, being too large for my rifle, cost me some trouble in reducing to a proper size.

On returning to the platform rock a cheerful fire was seen sending up its flame and sparks into the frosty air (on these airy heights it is thus till nearly midsummer), and round it gathered in earnest converse the members of the little mountain tribe, listening with eager interest to the narrative of their fair twice-rescued chieftain.

The dubious glances I was at first greeted with were gradually converted as she spoke, into those of cordiality and welcome, and when one of their number, who had eyed me with more attention from the first, bounded forward and announced himself to be the individual I had saved in the "stony glen" by shooting his pursuer, it seemed as if they could set no bounds to the exhibition of their gratitude and regard.



Whilst engaged in this genial intercourse two of their clansmen joined the circle, whose belts, in the reeking scalps that decked them, told at once the nature and success of the business they had been engaged in, and how completely the tables had been turned upon the luckless crew who had so perseveringly wrought for our destruction. They must thus have lost, out of their original number of fifteen, no less than eight warriors, who would never again sit at the council fire, whilst of those who had escaped more than one would probably be rendered useless for anything more active. We had now evidently nothing more to fear from them.

Our simple hearted allies spent the night in feasting and dancing, or giving fuller outlet to their feelings by occasional yells of triumph. Taken in connexion with the circumstances that gave it birth, and the scenery amid which it lay, it was a strange and striking spectacle—worthy of the wild pencil of Salvator.

For myself, exhausted by the excessive toil

—bodily and mental—I had undergone, after seeing my tender *protégée* properly cared for, I was soon wrapped in a sleep that set din, danger, and the picturesque alike at defiance.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON awaking the next morning the sun was already risen on our mountain refuge, called by its wild inhabitants "Ark-la," lighting up its bright green sward, its azure loch and romantic cliffs into a perfect blaze of fairy-land.

The miniature character of the landscape, joined with the chrystalline purity of the atmosphere, incidental to its great altitude, seemed to reduce the whole within the compass of my handgrasp, and, save that on every side—in the flowing and trill of streams—the waving of grass or foliage, the hum of insects,

the voice of men, was manifested Nature's agency, it might less have been deemed her work than some alluring phantasm destined to dissolve in air after leaving its startling impress on the senses.

In this fair and unexplored retreat we abode for upwards of a week in order to give time for the cure of Kosata's injured ankle, again thrown back by her late exertions.

The time was agreeably spent in studying the character and habits of its strange residents, taking part in their hazardous mountain hunts, and exploring the wonderful region they inhabited.

The community consisted of but eight families, numbering some dozen effective males, with as many more women and children, who found a precarious subsistence on roots and the little game they were able to procure with their rude and imperfect implements.

Their stature (unlike that of mountaineers in general) was small and stunted, their appearance the wildest of the wild, and their

dress composed of skins such as lent little help to the niggard handiwork of nature.

Their arms consisted chiefly of bows made (many of them with much neatness) of pine-wood strengthened and braced with sinews, and arrows, of the stems of the wild rose carefully straightened, and tipped with serpentine. With these simple weapons they will bring down the deer, the elk, and mountain sheep, but in severe seasons when these animals retire to the lower grounds, where it would be dangerous to follow them, they are frequently reduced to great extremities—such indeed as none but those born and broken to a life of privation could possibly endure.

If their haunts should be invaded by their warlike neighbours or those still rarer visitors, white hunters, they fly at once to their rocky fastnesses, seldom opposing force to force, and then only when pushed to extremity, moved (as on the late occasion) by some mastering impulse, or emboldened by clear superiority of odds. Yet while manifesting

this peculiar shyness and aversion to intercourse with other races they are kind and sociable among themselves, sharing willingly in each other's good and evil fortune and readily responding to friendly treatment from whatever quarter it may come. Not having the wit to enrich themselves by despoiling their neighbours, or the taste to make a trade of aggression, they are looked upon as a race of outcasts, and bear the name among the voyageurs whose calling brings them occasionally into contact, of "les dignes de pitié."

It is not surprising that by these simple and superstitious beings the mysterious appearance of the fair white child when exposed during a snow-storm near these scarce accessible haunts should have been regarded as something more than natural, that they should have connected the one event with the other, or that, enhanced by the sweetness of her disposition, and superiority of her endowments, the circumstance should have given her the

sway it did over their crude and credulous imaginations. Accepted as a gift from Heaven they had tended her till her capture by the Blackfeet, eighteen months before, as the guardian "genie" of their tribe, her will their guide and law, her safety their chief study.

Foremost in devoted homage was the now aged squaw, Shagachla, who had been first to find her after her abandonment, and had reared her up with an affection that knew no difference, together with a child of her own—a boy of the same age named Kosato.

As their years increased an attachment naturally grew up between them, largely leavened on the part of the latter by the reverential feeling due to the supposed origin of his white sister.

This youth, though little gifted in an intellectual sense, had those honest and kindly instincts, which though rare amongst the Indians, are yet to be found at times in every race and color to honour our common nature.

Though low of stature he possessed great agility, was an adroit and untiring hunter, but like the rest of his timid tribe, feeling no vocation for the war path except when necessity impelled.

His years, however, were yet but few, and the chase more appropriately sorted with them.

Accompanied by this stripling, armed with his bow and arrows, I made several excursions in the mountains, and found frequent occasion for admiring his dexterity as well in finding as in striking game, though a "coup de grace" from my own rifle was often required to effect its final capture.

Conscious of the protection afforded by this weapon, which like "Friday," he regarded with especial awe, he ventured in my company far beyond the usual limits of his tribe, and became by degrees so much attached, that I began to conceive hopes of being able to induce him to attend us on our further



journey, when his talents for woodcraft might be turned to such valuable account.

Eventually the matter was broken to him through the medium of Kosata, but the inveterate shyness of his nature foiled our views till the time arrived for her departure, when torn in twain by conflicting impulses, he confessed at last which was the mightiest, by reluctantly consenting to attend the steps and fortunes of his foster sister.

This is, however, anticipating. Ere employing her influence with her satellite, it was in the first place necessary to make a convert of herself, and this, strange as it may seem, cost me far the most trouble of the two.

Now she had returned to her early home, flushed with the holiday feeling it inspired, and lifted up by the loving service, almost amounting to adoration, of her wild liegemen, she evinced a strong disposition to abide with them; and it was not until after many urgent solicitations and debates that I finally pre-

vailed on her to quit her beloved Ark-la for England.

Whilst engaged in these discussions, we would seat ourselves on the rocky ridge that girt our vale, commanding outwards the wide-spread tract of mountains I have before described for an immense distance (probably not less than a hundred miles) over which our eyes would wander as we talked, whilst some exultant rill fresh from its tellurian cradle, dashed down the giddy steeps hard by, and kept up a running accompaniment to our discourse.

To the various arguments I used she would reply in some such manner as the following: "Felipe," she would say, "you tell me England fine country—you love Eng-land, it your country—Kosata live here, love Ark-la. You say me be happy in Eng-land, me think me happy here; you say me be great squaw in Eng-land, me great squaw now here; see, Felipe," pointing to the stream that ran by us, "see that water, how it play, how it sing,

how it shine—so,” she continued, throwing back a handful she had taken of it into its channel, “when sun rise it far away in prairie—big river then—no jump—no sing—no shine—big river—no more; Kosata think she that water, Felipe, when she go away from Ark-la.”

“But here,” I would return, “you have danger dogging you on every side—live constantly exposed to be tomahawked—devoured by grizzly bears—starved to death in winter—blown from the rocks by tempests—there are none of these dangers now to fear in England.”

“So, Felipe,” she would rejoin after a pause, and with a sigh, “and there my father dwell, you say, and now in my dreams I hear my mother’s voice, and it say to me evermore, Kosata, come to England; but how me leave Shagachla? How me leave Kosato? It break their hearts—break mine.”

She would then ponder for the rest of the day on these and the other arguments made

use of; the ideas I endeavoured to impress would take more and more hold on her imagination; the desire of novelty (so powerful an impulse in female nature) would become awakened, and at length, to my great gratification, she ended by yielding to the course proposed, acknowledging it as that apparently marked out by destiny.

Accordingly, so soon as she had recovered from her lameness, after devoting a final day to a solemn leavetaking with the strange, yet kindly beings, who the unwitting instruments of providence, had reared her to fulfil its secret ends—a ceremony which to an unhardened heart, had many scenes of even painfully touching interest—we at length set forth, accompanied for the day by five of the faithful natives (besides Kosato) on our long and perilous return of more than two thousand miles—directing our course towards a pass considerably to the south of all our former journeyings, which we had reason to hope would take us clear of the dangerous and

detested tribe that had so harassed us, whilst offering a favorable starting point for our transit over the prairies.

The sunset of the first day saw us through the Wind river mountains (which in spite of my regard for my wild cousins I fervently hoped I should never see again) without misadventure or alarm, and dismissing on the morrow our trusty Arklans, we continued on our way under the guidance of Kosato, my *protégée's* feet being doubly moccassined as an additional security against her falling lame, and thus stealing along with the gait of conspirators and wariness of wounded deer, we achieved a second day's march of some five-and-twenty miles in safety.

The country had by this become milder in its aspect, and under a hill of moderate height, clothed to the summit with sombre pinewood, we took up our position, and prepared our camp for the night.

Having gathered some wood for our fire we were upon the point of kindling it, when the

Shoshonee held up his hand as a sign of caution, and Kosata almost at the same instant declared she perceived the smell of smoke. I had determined at the outset to sacrifice every minor consideration to the paramount one of safety, and as it had become too dark to continue our march we pushed on a little higher up the hill side, and passed the night without fire, supping on dried elk meat.

On the morrow, at earliest dawn I shouldered my rifle, and leaving Kosata under charge of her foster brother, took my way in the direction the suspicious odor had appeared to come. Creeping cautiously along, I soon reached the top of the eminence, and then got a view of a pleasant valley at the other side, from which I perceived with alarm a column of smoke rising above the thick-lying mists of morning.

Descending into the valley, with the view of making a closer reconnaissance, I all at once, by a sudden side look, became aware of a figure, posted on a ledge of rock, some hun-

dred paces on my flank, apparently in the act of taking aim at me. In order to make my espial more securely, I had esconced myself behind a large boulder, and the better to effect my purpose was taking off my cap, at the very moment I caught sight of this alarming apparition.

Bettering my position behind my bulwark, I followed my awkward neighbour's example, and levelled my rifle at him in my turn, over the top of the stone. No sooner was this done than my adversary quitted his post as quick as lightning, and cutting some ludicrous capers as he did so, disappeared in the adjoining bush.

Some minutes had elapsed after these mysterious movements, and I was still peering anxiously at the spot where I had last seen him, when I was startled by a heavy hand being laid upon my shoulder, a hard, weather-beaten visage confronting my own, and a voice exclaiming in deep, well-remembered tones:—

"Whip me for a nigger, squire, if I didn't take you for a grizzly;" the words being wound up by a low, characteristic "roulade" of laughter.

"Bryce Jannock, by all that's providential!"

"Aye, here he stands, and a massy it is that he does so; that dose o' blue pill you was markin' off for him, wouldn't ha' lengthened his days in the land, Master Philip."

"What, was that you, then, cutting those capers among the bushes?" asked I, laughing in my turn.

"Aye, and time too, I reckon, when you was squintin' so cruelly over your shootin'-ir'n."

"Why I was but following your own lead, Bryce."

"Aye, but I tuk ye, I tell ye, for a grizzly; wi' that heathenish beard, and Isabelly head-piece, bobbing and blinking over yon bit o' rock, blest if Ephraim himself wouldn't ha' sworn to you for own brother."



And the honest fellow regaled himself with another guttural chuckle at the circumstance.

"It's lucky though, you doffed the pelt in time, for I was nigh as a toucher scaling Truegroove on it, and it would ha' been a pity to sp'ile two beavers in a twelvemonth."

"Or waste a second lesson on close shaving," interjected I reproachfully.

"Soon as I see your smooth pow, I larfed like to bust; but when you tuk to your we'pon so danderly, it's time, thinks I, for this child to 'cache.'"

"Was turning that suite of summersets what you call 'cashing,' Bryce? well, it's better than paying off in lead and powder anyhow."

"Why I tripped, d'ye see," rejoined he, partaking, though more dryly in my merriment, "as I was a coming down, agin a darned beechroot, which so'thing sp'iled the iligance of the performance."

"But added mightily to its impressiveness, I could scarcely lay on for laughing; well

you are a real godsend to me now, Bryce; let us go to the camp and have breakfast, and then you shall tell me how it has fared with yourself, Robin, and the rest of us, since we were scattered that foul night by the Blackfeet."

The loud report of a gun was now heard up the valley which I thought sounded like that of a smooth bore.

"Aye," said Bryce, confirming my conjecture, "you've hit it, and so I'll be bound too has Peg; what you know the v'ice of your old 'double' again. I was watching for the buck comin' down here when I spied you playin' b'ar behind the boulder, but as the critter'll be now turned into venison, it's little use our waitin' any longer."

"Have you heard any news of the piccanniny?" asked the hunter with an earnest air, as we proceeded together towards my camp, "neither the Delawares nor me can hear tell of any white gal in these parts; it's possible they may have carried her down

South or across the mountains, which'll lengthen out our trail not a little; but what tho,' it's only layin' in some more shoe leather, and thinkin' we're on a long moose-hunt; with patience and parseverance we'll lay the two ends together yet—so which way are we to turn our noses next, Squire?"

"For home, Bryce, and that without delay."

"For hum!" cried he in undisguised astonishment. "What and leave the young fa'n among the Philistines!"

The course of Jannock's comments was cut short by his catching sight of our little Shoshonee.

"Hullo!" exclaimed he, "what breed o' nigger's yon? Well if he don't look like a 'poor devil;' where on 'arth did ye pick him up? but bless my life is'nt that a gal I see settin' yonder? Ludamighty, squire, ye're queerly sorted; who would ha' thought now o' yon brown bread going down with an Englisher!"

Kosata sprang up at my signal and came towards us, the hunter eyeing her closely as she did so.

"It's a girl, sure enough, and one too I think you're not wholly unacquainted with."

"Dead beat, Squire, dead beat," said Jan-nock after taking a long look at her; "tidy cretur enough for a Redskin, but don't make her out no how."

"Nevertheless, you don't see her now for the first time, Bryce; look at her again, man, and see if you can't scour your memory."

As he gazed, his eyes began gradually to enlarge, and at length turning from the smiling subject of his observation to myself, he exclaimed with a half enquiring, half conjecturing look, "why she's as brown as my rifle butt, it can't be —— it ain't, sure—ly— you don't mean to say now it's——"

"Yes, Bryce, you need have no doubt about the matter, for there before you stands the young fawn."

In an instant she was clasped in the arms

of the exulting woodsman, and a hearty smack on either cheek gave token of his unfeigned joy at a meeting so utterly unhopèd for.

Whilst sharing our breakfast by the side of the fire we had at length lighted, Jannock gave me the recital of his adventures from the time we separated.

When the Blackfeet rushed in upon our camp he had seized his rifle and plunged into the neighbouring bush, where under the friendly shade of night he lingered awhile to watch how matters might proceed. The two Delawares, also, as before mentioned, had no less promptly sought cover, and saved themselves; but poor Robin, less practised in backwoods life, was assailed by two of the savages ere prepared either to fight or fly. Bryce declared he had seen him actually down, and on the point of being scalped, when a timely shot from himself released him from the more pressing of his foes; that he had then been grappled by the other, and falling with him over the bank continued the strug-

gle in the water till another shot from one of the Delawares relieved him once more of his assailant, when taking advantage of the respite he had dashed over the stream, up the opposite bank, and for the time, as far as Bryce could judge, escaped.

That was the last that had been seen of him, for our enemies galled by the close fire they had received and aware of the smallness of our party, scoured the protecting cover and put the hardy trio to speedy flight.

Extricating themselves with care from the dangerous locality, and more familiar with the mountains than myself, the latter had then pushed on to the rendezvous at the Sweetwater, where they had spent some weeks in the vain expectation of being joined by their two comrades, and greatly puzzled to determine what course they should take next.

Whilst in this state of perplexity they got intelligence of a strong detachment of trappers being about to proceed across the moun-

tains into the Green river valley, and to this band, under the command of a celebrated partizan, the three hunters attached themselves, with the intention of re-entering the region of our disaster, and obtaining what information they could about us. The party had already been a week on the march when I fell in with my stout henchman as above related, in the higher part of the Sweetwater valley.

As devoted as ever to the cause he readily agreed to rejoin me, and set out immediately after breakfast to wind up his concerns with his leader, and bring back our valuable natives.

Having joined the brigade in the quality of free trapper, the duration of whose allegiance is perfectly optional, there existed no obstacle to the new arrangement, and it was scarcely yet noon when my eyes were gladdened by the sight of our three trusty auxiliaries marching into my camp.

I felt, I may say, like 'man new made on

the occasion, and my mind was relieved at once of a vast amount of anxiety that had hitherto weighed upon it.

Ere turning our steps homewards, it was, however, necessary to determine with greater certainty the fate of our missing comrade, Hood, an object we fortunately achieved in a manner altogether unexpected.

Among those who had joined the trading force on their march were two trappers, who had been pursuing their vocation in the wilder recesses of the mountains. One of these men had been a great crony of Jannock's while attached to the same command, and on the evening of the day we are recording came over to our camp for the purpose of paying him a farewell visit. In the course of conversation the circumstance of our surprise by the Blackfeet was mentioned, and various conjectures made as to poor Robin's probable fate.

The opinion of the new comer was unfavorable to the supposition of his safety, and in



support of his view he related to us the following incident:—Whilst he and his partner were one evening (not long before) engaged in laying their traps in the secluded valley which was the seat of their operations, they observed, staggering down the mountain side, a figure which their practised vision at once recognized to be that of a white man, in an evidently disabled state. On their presenting themselves to him somewhat suddenly, he had scarcely strength to raise his piece in self-defence, and on finding they were friends, to utter a few incoherent words in explanation of his condition.

His features were covered with blood from a severe scalp wound he had received, and so attenuated, as well as his entire frame, by starvation as scarcely to present a human appearance. From his statement it appeared the party he belonged to had been attacked by Indians several days before, whom he had narrowly escaped from, and whilst wandering in the mountains, he knew not whither, had

been reduced to his present extremity by famine. They took him with them to their hut, supplied him with food, and on their return from their trapping expedition brought him on to the rendezvous (which being a favorite station of the trappers, happened to be that also of their own people), where he was left, still suffering from his injuries.

He was understood by our informant to be a new hand inexperienced in mountain life, and over young to encounter its hardships, and it was these reasons that induced the old trapper to augur so unfavorably for our own missing comrade.

On comparing the dates of the two occurrences, Jannock and I thought they corresponded sufficiently to warrant the conclusion that the famished fugitive could be no other than our ill-starred Robin himself, who had unluckily reached the rendezvous the very day after his comrades had quitted it.

There was now therefore nothing further to be done than proceed thither, ascertain the

fact, and if still alive take him up, which we might do the more readily, as the place lay in the line of our intended route.

To this piece of good fortune was added another, viz., our engaging the worthy hunter who had so essentially served us by his information, to accompany us on our journey to the settlements. He was a free trapper of the name of Wolfe, a weather-beaten, half-bandit looking subject, but well trained in his business, and promising to make a useful acquisition to our force.

By these happy and unlooked for additions to it, we now made up a party of six, for the protection of our rescued heroine; and the next morning pursued our way eastwards, in those light and cheerful spirits so potential in alleviating toil and abridging space.

On arriving at the rendezvous we found it thronged with the disbanded members of numerous trapping bands, who, as the fur bearing animals were beginning to cast their coats, enjoyed a temporary respite from their

toils, for which they were now recompensing themselves by plunging into every species of excess that the arrival of the store caravans gave means for indulging in.

Not wishing to introduce Kosata to this scene of licence we halted some distance from the spot, and leaving Jannock and the rest of our men in charge of her, I proceeded thither with Wolfe only, when we at once got tidings of Robin, and shortly afterwards had the satisfaction of meeting him in person, now much recovered, and, indeed, both ready and willing (having had eno' for the time of backwood's life), to accompany us on our return.

Ere setting forth, however, on what was likely to be a journey of several months, supplies had to be laid in, means of transport provided, and additional recruits engaged.

For these purposes I accordingly got a bill cashed by the clerk in charge of the post, and with its proceeds purchased the necessary number of horses to mount ourselves, as well as for baggage and reliefs. An active and

well broken mare was procured for Kosata, as well as a small buffalo skin tent, to shelter her from inclemencies of the weather.

I deemed it advisable also to enlist here three additional hands, in order that whatever might be the requirements of the party, our *protégée* might have the constant protection of an adequate guard.

Jannock, whom I commissioned to select them, picked out for me three of the best men in the encampment, all of them well mounted, and though their services were engaged at rather a high figure, we found no reason subsequently to repent the arrangement.

## CHAPTER XII.

ALL being prepared we at length set our faces determinately homewards, taking leave of our roistering trapper friends at noon of the 15th July, and shaping our course along the banks of our old familiar friend—the Sweetwater.

As the reader may be already surfeited with the details of wilderness travel, and our return journey proved comparatively devoid of adventure, I will abstain from inflicting on him the daily record of our proceedings, and note down only the few incidents that occurred to vary their monotony.

☞ Journeying in easy stages, it was not until the middle of August we entered the region of

the Black Hills—the scene of our last wintering, and which cost us again, in getting thro' them, several days of tedious and toilsome travel. It was, consequently, with no little joy and satisfaction we at length extricated ourselves from its passes, so rife with every sort of danger, and shortly afterwards reached Laramies Fork, to regale our eyes once more on verdant pastures and a tranquil stream.

In the more broken country beyond we fell in with the buffalo, and used our best exertions to renew our nearly finished stock of provisions.

It was pitiful at times to see the havock made by our hunters among the herds, numbers being killed for the sake of their tongues alone, and entire carcasses left on the plain for the benefit of the wolves and vultures.

In the first week in September we arrived at the forks of the Platte or Nebraska, and crossing the lower arm, entered upon the great rolling prairie.

All this time we had been singularly exempt from either alarm or molestation by the Indians, which great contrast to the circumstances of our advance I attributed to the superior strength of the party, and the vigilant look out I took care should be maintained by them. Yet though destined to escape annoyance in this quarter, it was otherwise with respect to evils scarce less serious, arising from our own improvidence. With a party consisting almost wholly of hunters, we were continually on the verge of starvation.

The buffaloes seemed to have abandoned the country through which we passed, and we could get no game.

After travelling over it for several weeks on daily diminishing rations, we at last found our wallets empty, and the men, who in spite of all I could do, had been as recklessly wasteful of their provender whilst plentiful, as they were now dejected at its failure, began to talk in a gloomy tone of killing one of the baggage animals.



It was on the evening of the 23rd September, as the cavalcade was filing slowly along the banks of the river, Jannock, Kosata, and myself at its head, we met the hunters, returning bootlessly and sullenly from a large 'cast' they had made upon the prairie, on the issue of which hung the fate of our plumpest sumpter horse. Their hunt had been unproductive, and to avoid positive starvation, orders were now given for the slaughter of a two-year-old colt, whose unhappy fate it was, having been but lightly loaded on the journey, to be in somewhat better case than its fellows.

In the mean time we took up our night's quarters by the river side, on a sort of cape, which left us exposed only on one side to any possible attack from the prairie. At its apex, or safer end, Kosata's tent was pitched, with the turbid Nebraska (here upwards of a mile in width) for her next neighbour and natural guardian.

The orange glow of evening—the evening

of an Indian summer—was reflected on its waters, and mantled the adjacent waste in that mellow light which transformed its savage aspect for the moment into that of an Elysian field.

There are some impassive spirits to be found whom the daily wonderwork of nature, her glorious displays of the solemn, the lovely and the wild, seem never in anywise to affect; others again there are on whom they never pall, awakening rather their best affections, and stimulating their loftiest thoughts.

Something of this sort was my own, such I believed too was Kosata's; and when I beheld her after her long day's ride, regardless of hunger and fatigue, pensively seated on the river brink and looking at the parting luminary with the same abstracted air as on the occasion when I first fell in with her, I could not refrain from placing myself at her side and asking *en plaisantant* to be made the partner of her meditations.

“You are looking,” I said “at the sunset,

dear Kosata, as you were when I first saw you on the Wind River, and thought you," added I taking her hand "the loveliest genie that ever had its dwelling in the desert."

Kosata looked down with maiden bashfulness, but I could see her eyes brighten beneath their lashes at the compliment.

"Why was it, my brother, I knew not you were then near me? why did the river flow between us?"

"Ah, why? methinks it should not have done so; how nearly it had parted us for ever. If fate should still ordain this parting, my Kosata, be assured your image will still abide with me, as a beauteous star of past happy though troubled times; but why art thou so sad, my sister?"

"Do I seem sad, my brother?"

"Yes, you are peopling that sunset sky with forms of sorrow; the memories perhaps of your faithful Arklans, or those earlier and dearer friends you had half forgotten; is it not so?"

"All gone, now, Felipe, all but you. See you that flower?" she said, pointing to a gentianella that was floating before us down the stream, "me think that flower Kosata; buffalo tore it from river bank—"

"Just as you were torn, you are thinking, from your home."

"—cast into Nebraska with him hoof—"

"Even as thou wast too rudely cast upon the stream of life."

"—and now it floating away—"

"I trust to some happier nook where it will again touch, take root, and flourish, like yourself."

"No tell, Felipe; Great Spirit know all.

Here then was the secret of her pensiveness. She had been musing, as was not unnatural, on her outcast unsettled lot, and felt despondent as she gaged the future with the ominous dividing rod of the past.

"The Great Spirit watches over you both, Kosata; over the wild flower on the water, and that I have reclaimed from the desert.

Cheerfully then let us confide in Him, my Penserosa, nor doubt that, after guiding us through so many dangers, He will bring us in safety to our haven—”

“ Now, squire, look alive—here’s your hoss a comin’ ready to run for the squire’s plate.”

Such was the profane challenge, that, uttered in the voice of Jannock, broke in upon our sublimated communing.

He had brought us a platter of meat from the camp fire, and having spread a buffalo robe on the ground for Kosata, with many encomiums on his contribution, invited us to try it for ourselves.

After carving us our several portions he paused awhile himself, and I could see a covert smile upon his face as he watched us fall to work with the keen appetite caused by prolonged abstinence.

The provant, it must be said, was unexceptionable, and ere a quarter of an hour had passed, the piece of baggage horse (about six pounds weight) had vanished like a vision

from the trencher, leaving not so much as a drop of gravy behind.

It was as I began to loosen my belt after my hearty feed that the hunter's ill-suppressed hilarity broke forth in a full unstinted peal of laughter.

"Aye, let it out, let it out, squire; another hole yet—there's some more a' comin'—'taint such bad stuff arter all, it seems, that hoss beef; who would ha' thought now, o' people eatin' their critters arter ridin' 'em, (he was here harping on some arguments I had used in previous discussions on the subject) makin' 'em travel arter they're dead—well, never mind, it's all down hill now, and a short stage at that (ha! ha! ha!) hold hard, Bryce, hold hard, old hoss," said he at last, holding his sides, and bringing himself up with difficulty.

"Lud me, squire," continued he, taking due time to recover himself, "d'ye remember that time we was a sarchin' amng the Blue-nose charcoal for somebody (filling up his

meaning by inclining his head towards Kōsata), and we picked up some 'coon bones, which you thought was—what they wasn't, and while you was sippin' squash gruel to drown down care, I said you'd want stiffer stuff nor that if you'd ever to hunt her up hereaway, and maybe might find hoss or dog goin' down your throat some day, whereupon you said it 'ud have to find the road for itself; d'ye mind that, Master Philip?" asked the worthy Bryce, giving me a friendly poke in the ribs; "this hoss doos, this here old hoss, ha! ha! ha! ha!"

I was wholly at a loss to account for this burst of jocularities on the part of Jannock, usually so imperturbable and grave; he could not have been drinking, as we possessed no liquor, neither would it have much moved him if he had, so I was fain to set it down to lightheadedness, produced by an unusual fasting spell.

I beg to observe, Bryce," returned I with a gravity I intended should convey rebuke,

“that my scruples had reference to dog only, and by no means extended to horse, which I always considered a much more—”

I here found myself at a loss for the precise word wanted.

“More what, squire?”

“Eatable an—”

“Aye, eatable’s the word, and no mistake, if that trencher speak truth.”

“An animal.”

“And didn’t I tell you, for as green as you was then, you might come to it all some day? Well, and ain’t you come to it now? and ain’t it gone down? and ain’t it good? and ain’t you ready for some more to go down? and don’t you think if we could only get it, you could find a snug corner for a tit bit of two-year-old dog mutton? and—”

Jannock was overstraining his advantage, and provoked resistance.

“No,” I returned, “Bryce, were I to make my belly the grave of the faithful and intelligent partner of my fortunes, I should look



upon myself as no better than a cannibal ; between the canine race and the equine, I draw a very wide distinction."

"You may draw what distinctions you please, squire, but if I had been one of the barkers when you was a pitching into that six-pounder as is gone, I would ha' trusted my four legs a good deal sooner than your wide distinctions. But, heigh me! ain't it just a wonderment to think we're a windin up the very trail we was then a daffin' about, and nosed out the poor straylin' so cleverly? though it's Providence arter all as has played the game for us. God bless her! say I," added the honest fellow, as he rose to remove our dinner things, "for a young fa'n, and (with a sly wink to enforce his rustic pun) 'a little dear' to boot."

Returning to us presently, he laid himself down, and got out his pipe.

"I see," said he as he did so, "Pegtop sloping this way; we'll just ask him now whether two-year-old dog mutton ain't as fla-

voursome as hoss beef, or filly veal; he has stowed away all sorts of creturs in his time, old and young, four-legged, two-legged, and no-legged, from a grizzly to a rattlesnake, and if ever there's a resurrection of the beasts, he'll better deserve the name of Noah's Ark, I'm thinkin', than Pegtop."

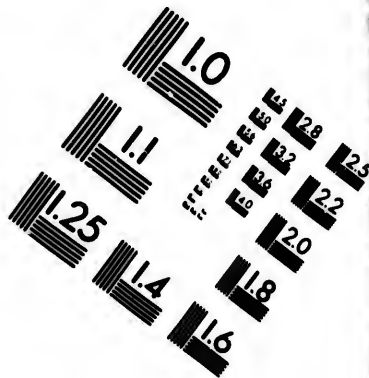
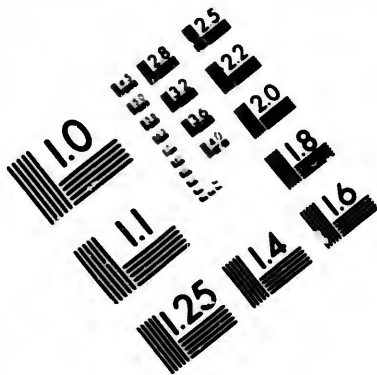
Bryce and the Indian then conferred together for a short space, seemingly with some earnestness. When they had done, the former instead of pursuing our previous theme (of which *en parenthèse*, I had got heartily tired) asked me rather absently for some tobacco, on getting which he lighted his pipe, and sat silently smoking, with his eyes fixed on a faint light that had become visible in the darkening distance.

The beautiful glow of the sky had passed away, and the shadows and mists of night were now settling all around.

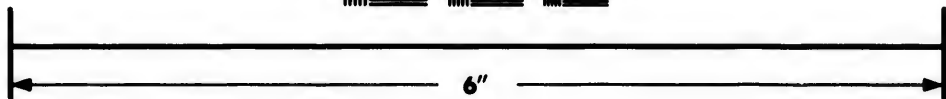
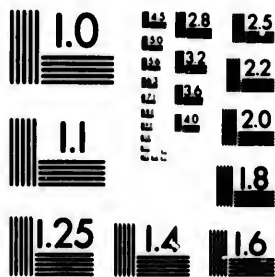
Kosata at length arose, and retired to her tent.

This little movement aroused Bryce from





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his musing fit, and pointing to the distant glow on the sky line, he asked me what I imagined it to be.

“I should conceive it,” I replied, “to be the first streaks of the moonrise.”

“Well, and I s'pose most of our chaps yonder as is coddlin' so comfortable in their blankets, would be pretty much of the same opinion. May be they wouldn't snore quite so loud if they knowed that glimmer came from the campfire of two or three hundred Pawnee warriors. I didn't believe it when Peg told me, but I've been watchin' it myself this half-hour, and I reckon he ain't said nothin' but the truth. So with the river on one side, and these varmints on the other, we're no better, as I may say, than atween the devil and the deep sea all this while.”

This was rather startling intelligence, (for in this return journey, with a charge of such moment on my hands, I felt sensitively alive to every thing that might concern its safety), and as I wrapped myself in my blanket for

the night, the Pawnee watchfires took precedence in my thoughts alike, of floating gentianellas, horse beef, and dog mutton.

The following day we shaped our course cautiously along the river bank, the party keeping carefully together with the exception of two scouts we had thrown out on our right flank and in front.

Nothing occurred to cause alarm till evening, when as we were on the point of halting for the night, our advanced patrol rode hurriedly up with the intelligence that a party of Indians had sighted him, and were then coming rapidly down upon us.

The river being luckily close at hand, we collected our little company upon the bank, with Kosata and the horses between it and us, and prepared to receive the enemy with due attentions.

They soon appeared in sight—a band of about twenty—all painted and armed for war, galloping towards us with the yells and gesticulations of so many devils.

Our hunters pronounced them to be Pawnees, and not wishing to shed blood unnecessarily, and have them dogging our trail for weeks to come, I directed Jannock, who knew something of their language, to advance and warn them to approach no nearer. Seeing our steady front and knowing the fatal superiority of our arms, they halted just in time to save their ranks from being thinned to half their number, and their leader coming forward, Bryce entered into a parley with him, the result of which we were somewhat anxiously awaiting, (covering our spokesman the while with our pieces) when another war cry reached our ears from the other side of the stream, which was no sooner heard by our sprightly visitors, than wheeling abruptly round on their tracks, they departed in the same whirlwind fashion they had come.

The force on the other side of the Platte proved to be their inveterate enemies, the Sioux, and as, though broad, the water was perfectly fordable, we had every prospect of



being the unwilling witnesses, if not indeed still more unwilling parties to a pitched battle.

To avoid being compromised by this state of things, we resolved on making an instantaneous retreat whilst the belligerents were too much occupied with each other to lay any plans for intercepting us.

Favored by the fast increasing darkness, we therefore doubled on the track of the morning for a space of some miles, and then made a flank movement to the South, which, though the additional labour greatly distressed our cattle, effected the object we had in view of getting a safe offing from our troublesome neighbours.

Some few weeks subsequently we learnt a bloody battle had been fought the following day, on which both sides had left upon the field a number of their choicest warriors.

This was the last danger that might be called peculiar to it, encountered on our long, prairie march, though occasional suffering was

yet to be experienced from want of water and shortness of provisions.

Two horses more had to be sacrificed to our necessities ere we reached, on the 24th October, Fort Osage, the first frontier post of the States, after a full month's journey from the battle field on the Nebraska.

Here we indulged ourselves with three day's rest, during which I paid and discharged the two Delawares who had done us such valuable service, as well as all our white hunters, except Jannock, whom I had prevailed on to accompany me to England; Robin (whose will and engagement went together) and Wolfe, who intended visiting, after many years' absence, his relations "down east;" the whole of the *congediés* well contented with their treatment.

The reduced party then proceeded by easy stages to New York, where we arrived in health and safety about the end of the ensuing November.

Thus was my long and painful land pilgrimage of nearly four thousand miles happily completed. On the day after our arrival I took Kosata to church, where we returned our grateful thanks to the Almighty for having brought us to its end in safety, after aiding us so signally throughout.

Deeming a short respite, necessary after so long-continued fatigues, we remained a week in the transatlantic metropolis, which was made useful in initiating my fair ward in the usages of civilised life, providing her with its various requirements, and practising her in her half-forgotten English. Then with light hearts we entered on the last stage of our travels, embarking the first week of December in one of the fine packet ships for Liverpool, where, after a three weeks' prosperous voyage, the Young Fawn and myself again touched our native land, the former, fourteen years after her first departure from it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HERE we were then in England again, breathing its familiar breezes, within a step of the threshold of home.

It was natural we should feel elated, that our hearts should swell with joy and hope—joy that our labours were now ended, and hope which already grasped their prize.

Taking post horses the day after our landing we set out for the town of ———, where our friends whom we had advertised of our arrival, were anxiously waiting to receive us.

On our chaise drawing up at Mr. Dalham's

door, we found it thronged with the gratulant faces of his family, who, though quite ignorant of the true quality of their fair visitor, were ready to receive us both with a welcome of the warmest kind.

Mrs. Dalham (her apprehension quickened perhaps by circumstances that might have come within her cognizance as her lord's moiety), at once discovered her young ladyship's resemblance to her mother, with whom she had been well acquainted, and by the meaning glance she gave her husband, and marked *empressement* of her services, convinced me she had penetrated our secret; whilst the younger members of the family, swiftly taken by the winning manners and whimsical parlance of the fair stranger, knew no bounds to the interest and endearments they displayed towards her.

My little Susan I had the happiness of finding in excellent health, and wonderfully advanced since we parted nineteen months before, in growth and intelligence.

She soon became a great favourite with our heroine, and was never so delighted as when (imitating the native naiads of the Wind River), she employed the Christmas nosegays in decking her hair with flowers, and listening to the mutilated English that fell from her smiling lips.

Happy (as our borrowed hours may be on earth), was the evening that celebrated the young heiress' advent among her true and steadfast friends, but it being highly important under the circumstances that time should be taken by the forelock, we limited our rejoicings to this little space, and on the morrow took our way betimes to the Vicarage, where Mr. Felton, who had been, as opportunity served, kept *au courant* of our proceedings, received as with the exultation natural to his upright and somewhat enthusiastic character.

Here we took into our confidence the old nurse, France Jeffray, who was almost beside herself with joy on being introduced to

her long lost foster child, and now, as heretofore, proved of signal utility in effecting an object highly necessary to the success of our main design, viz., by means of dress and otherwise, to render her resemblance to her deceased parent so complete as to produce an infallible impression, even at first sight; our said design being to bring about an interview between the two principals in the drama, and leave the issue to be decided (as it alone satisfactorily could be), by the agency of their own feelings.

The old woman was allowed but the remainder of the day to accomplish her loving labour (which her recollections of her former mistress, as well as the possession of some of her disused wearing apparel, well qualified her for doing), and to judge from the remarks of some of its older members, when she presented herself to the breakfast party next morning, her efforts had succeeded to a miracle.

Such were the preparations, and such the

time resolved on for achieving our final "coup."

A pony, now grey with age, which had once been Lady Laura's favorite palfrey, was procured thro' Mr. Felton's means from the Leighton Arms, in whose pastures it had long enjoyed a dignified retirement, and on this, duly groomed and caprisoned, was seated, about eleven o'clock, our beautiful but somewhat anxious heroine, attired in a green riding habit with wide gipsy hat and plume, and looking, according to the astonished Mrs. Marton's unbiassed testimony, "for all the world like poor Leddy Lowry as was, come to life again."

Pondering our emprize I then took her rein, and followed by Jannock, who had expressed a wish to attend us, we shaped our course at a leisurely pace towards the park.

It was one of those black, chill, semi-frosty mornings so peculiar to our trying winters, the air penetrating through the thickest clothing, and producing a sensation of searching



cold such as I had never felt, even at many degrees below zero, in America.

The dull iron colored sky shewed no tokens of the sun, whose position was mere matter of speculation.

On the brown herbage of the park the dews were still standing as they fell, neither frozen nor evaporated, and with the penalty in view serving us effectual notice against trespassing.

Over it the north east wind swept with lugubrious sound, and filled with a world of moans the ancient oaks, now denuded of all their foliage, save where some feebler boughs snapped by a summer storm still bore its withered wealth, and as the blast rushed through it broke on the mournful concert with a freezy rustle.

Numbed by the bitter cold, the deer were seen huddled together under the lee of their wooded haunts. The cattle still couchant in their lairs, or standing stupidly beside them waited for the sun getting out ere they found heart to feed. Even in the bustling rookery

but few of its denizens were visible, and these, foot-frozen to their airy roosts, looked down in silence on the scene as though half besotted with their misery.

All the inferior creation, bird and brute alike, seemed to share in the chilling "tristesse" of the hour, but man, inspired by his intelligence, was abroad and active, and the ringing sound of the axe broke pleasantly on the ear as we passed along.

A party of woodcutters had beset a stalwart oak which had already cost them several days of toil, and were now engaged, with coats thrown off and sleeves turned up, in dealing the last strokes for its destruction.

On the side of an eminence hard by, crested by a stone tablet forced from the perpendicular and somewhat defaced by time, sat in pensive mood our old acquaintance Blayfield, his double barrel crossed upon his knees, and his eyes resting on the shrunken form of poor old Norman, who in the somnolency of advanced age lay on the grass beside him. The animal

raised its nose into the air as we approached. and then getting with difficulty upon his legs feebly wagged his tail by way of welcome.

“The old dog’s time seems drawing to a close, my friend,” said I, as I went up to the old man, leaving my companions behind, “has he long been in this failing state?”

“Ever syne last winter ; a got blind about Christmas, and an ugly, ill-tempered b—h of a cow druv’ her horn into him i’ the spring, which has made him lame as well ; the very deer come nibbling about him now, and the bucks will give him a sly poke at times when he rambles too near their cover ; hey me ! I should like to ha’ seen them at that game in days I could tell o’ ; but as they say, every dog mun ha’ his day, and they might say every human likewise.”

“Time tells on us all, my friend—spares neither man nor beast, but I trust his hand has been laid less heavily on your worthy old master, Lord Leighton.”

"Nay, t'maister mun ha' his share o't as well as t'rest on us, but I see he's taking the air this morning; if ye'll but bide a blink where y'are, you'll be able to judge for yer-sel." (A figure wrapped in a cloak was seen in the distance slowly coming towards us from the direction of the castle.) "You're the gen'leman, I'm thinking, as brought us back the old hound last summer?"

"He seems to think me an old friend, at any rate," I answered, as the old creature drew near, and snuffed at my boots complacently.

"I thought I knowed your favour — ah, welladay! you might as well ha' brought us back his mistress too, while you were about it. Heigho!" he continued, half speaking to himself, "I begin to think Mother Brackley's lines winna co' true after all, and the old dog there will go his ways without bringing us any nearer to our wishes."

"Where was your critter raised, fri'nd?"

inquired Bryce Jannock, as he made his appearance rather suddenly from behind the oak tree.

“Where was he raised?” replied the other testily, after taking a leisurely look at the new comer, “why where *sud* he be raised but here in Leighton? I raised him myself, we call it rearin’ here; my name’s Joe Blayfield.”

“Well, frind, I ain’t nothin’ to say agin it; wherever he was raised, it’s plain to be seen he’s nigh goin’ under now, and if these critters has their happy huntin’ grounds, as the Injyns don’t stick to tell on, why this may be as good a startin’ point as any other; but talkin’ o’ raisin’, it’s a clean wonderment to me now how yon fine old feller as I’ve known tire down a full grown moose—you’ll have no mooses here, belike stranger—could ha’ come by his wind in this piddlin’ bit o’ pastur’.”

“Piddlin’ bit o’ pastur’!” repeated Blayfield, in high dudgeon at the term, “Leighton Park’s three miles long by good two,

wide, which, I take it, is a bigger pastur' than ever *you've* grazed in afore, my chap."

Low and deep, but long and uncontrolled was the backwoodsman's laughter at this unlucky speech, reeking, as it would seem to him, with such unconscionable 'greenness;' recovering himself, however, with gradual effort, and re-addressing the now still more indignant keeper—

"I meant no offence, friend—none whatsoever—but your idees is like your clear-ins, so'thin too green and shortcut for this child, though very nat'ral I dar'say to a Britisher. Why, man, the pastur's I've ranged over for the better part o' my days is as many miles big as yourn is yerds; its fences is four oceans, its woods you might travel in for weeks together, and its fishponds is almighty licks as would float a fust rate man o' war in 'em; but as I said afore, I mean no offence; I was only a thinkin' how in natur' it could be, that in a clearin' no bigger than this'n,—if you prefer the term

you're welcome to it, we won't thicken up about a breath o' wind—I say it's just a wonderment to me that a critter with the grit that critter had could ha' got it in a clearin' like this'n, where, as far as I can see, there ain't neither moose, b'ar, nor buffalo."

"Got it! why it got it from its blood, man; from its blood and its breed to be sure; it's a blood hanimal is yon, and that brings wind and bottom, as everybody knows who can tell a dog's head from its tail; now if you was to take a cur—whether four-legged or two-legged, it don't matter — to them almighty fine pastur's you brag on, d'ye think you'd change its natur, or mend its manners by giving it four oceans to lick or big fishponds either? Now to't' sort, a cur it would go there, and for all its lickins, a cur it would come back—the same beggarly, scurvy, ill-conditioned ——"

"Take breath, frind, take breath," returned Bryce, with grave *sang froid*, "and don't load

it on over hard, or maybe you'll bust your barr'l, and that makes ugly neighbours."

Wishing to lay the breeze that seemed springing up between the two woodsmen, I inquired of Blayfield what might be the prophetic lines he had alluded to.

"They're all down here, Sir," he replied, recovering his composure with a strong effort and leading me to the mouldering stone that topped the eminence, muttering, however, as he did so, "that chap's a forrenner, I take it, or he'd never be running down old England i' that way. Mother Brackley was a wise woman as ever lived here, three hundred year agone, and foretelled things as was to come; folks ea'd her a witch, and burnt her for one in a spot hard by yon alders, which they call the witch's hole to this day; but her sayings was kept in mind by the old wives of the place, and there was one o' them about our Leighton, which a queer old lord as lived here a hundred and fifty year back got carved on yon-



der stone, where it's to be read still. I'm no great scollard myself, but they tell me it consarns our heiress as ought to be, that is (expressing himself more cautiously), as *sud* ha' been, if things had fa'n out as they *sud* ha' fa'n."

Kneeling down by the old tablet I easily deciphered its inscription, which (probably by the old woodsman's care) had been kept clear of Time's Indian rubber—moss. It was in old English characters, and ran thus :

When Normann dies on Normann's mounde,  
Ye heire of Leighton shall bee founde.

"Ha' ye made it out, sir?" inquired the keeper, as I got up from my task, "it's summat about Norman, ain't it?"

I recited the lines for his information.

"Aye, well, you must know, in times by-gone, when the first of the old family (they're all o' Norman breed, mind ye) comed here, they had heavy hands, I've heerd, o' their own, and were rayther too fond o' layin' them

on the bodies and goods o' their poor neighbours, till at last they could stand it no longer; so one fine mornin' they riz up, killed all the forrenners they could come at, both lords and jacks, and buried the dead bodies, it is said, in this very spot, which has gone by the name of Norman's mound ever syne. Now some folks says the prophecy must be fulfilled by some o' the same stock giving up the ghost here, while other some, and Joe Blayfield's one on 'em, thinks it will stand ekelly good if this old dog here takes their place, for he's Norman as well as them both in name and natur', the breed having come over with the family, and therefore quite as like to clear the riddle for us, and help the wise woman to her meanin'. The idee struck me of a suddenty about five year agone, and I tells my mind to Gammer Green, who says there's more in it than folk think for, so syne then I've brought the old creter here nigh every day, to do his best for us; but now he's so near his end it grieves me sore to think——"

The keeper's speech was interrupted by a low howl from the subject of his praise, and turning together towards the spot, we beheld our old and faithful follower stretched on the ground in the last spasms of expiring life.

"There! that's the last tune we shall ever have from his pipes: there lies old Norman, dead on Norman's mound; dy'e think now, sir, mother Brackley knowed o' this three hundred years agone?"

"I have little doubt of it," returned I abstractedly, as I mused on a sudden idea that occurred to me.

"Ah, well-a-day! now half her wise sayin's been fulfilled it grips the very heart o' me to think how clean agin all likelihood it is anything should come fro' the rest on't."

I here called to the young heiress who had remained at the other side of the oak, hidden by it from view, and turning again to the repining keeper asked:—

"But why should not the rest of it come true Joe? the necromantic art was much

studied in days of yore, and wise women knew more than we do; Mrs. Brackley has been put to death no doubt, but her spell may yet be in operation. Let me see again (going to the stone) what does that last line say,

“The heire of Leighton shall be founde.”

“Now this seems to be very express, it strikes me it would almost be a sin to doubt it, we see, ourselves, she has furnished us with the dead dog, why should she not as easily provide us with a living heiress?”

“O, sir,” replied he with an apologetic smile, as though he suspected I was playing upon him “you know how matters stand wi’ us—”

“Nevertheless, such is my faith in Mrs. Brackley’s veracity, that if you’ve no particular objection, I’ll try a little bit of conjuring on my own part, and put the old lady on her mettle.”

The keeper retreated a little way down the hillock, then stopped, held his breath, and

awaited in some trepidation the result of my glamour.

Our heroine on her pony in compliance with my secret signal, now advanced, and halted half way up the opposite slope, while, waving my walking stick three times round my head, I improvised the following exorcism :—

“O thou who on this fatal mound  
Hast done to death our hapless hound,  
By those dread spells that mortals fear  
I charge thee now to make appear,  
Before Joe Blayfield—waiting for her,  
His truant mistress Lady Laura,  
Appear ! appear !”

The invoked now came forward.

As slowly before the old man's eyes, arose, apparently from out of the earth, the likeness of his long lost lady, he recoiled aghast at the sight, his legs tottered underneath him, and his whole bearing seemed to shew he had got under the fire of Mother Brackley's witchcraft a good deal sooner than he had bargained for ; but when his riveted gaze had more fully

quoted the smiling face of the apparition, fear, doubt, and every other sensation were lost in that of eager, unbounded joy. Stepping up to the side of her palfrey, he seized the fair hand that guided it, and carried it with idolatrous unction to his lips.

While thus indulging his emotion in the belief that, in its object, unchanged by the fifteen years that had passed by, he beheld his old and long mourned mistress, accosting her in accordance with the impression, my sense of the pathetic and sublime was on the point of giving way to that of the ludicrous, on Jan-nock remarking: "Massy, me! if he ain't a takin' the fa'n for the doe, squire," when a loud warning cry from the carriage road of "Take care, sir, the tree's falling—take care, young lady!" recalled our attention to our position.

The choppers had been plying their task unremittingly whilst we were engaged in our interesting conference, and had so far cloven through the oak trunk that a sudden

gust of wind which sprang up sufficed to overcome the passive resistance of what remained, and as we happened to be posted on the lee side, gave it a determined inclination towards us. Warned of our jeopardy by the friendly voice, I instantly grasped the pony's rein, and endeavoured to draw it away from the line of danger, but, held by the unaccountable perverseness that often seizes these animals on such occasions, it resisted all my efforts, and backed still further towards the point of peril. Amidst the shouts, shrieks and exclamations of all around the branching top of the tree came crashing down, bringing us all three, man, horse, and rider—beneath it to the ground.

## CHAPTER XIV.

BEYOND a sharp stripe over the face, from one of the terminal twigs, I arose myself unhurt; the luckless pony, which had come in contact with a more massive bough, appeared to be killed outright; and poor Kosata I beheld stretched on the ground beside it, bereft of sense and motion. Not far from the scene of accident gushed the little mineral spring, mentioned in the earlier part of this story, and as soon as I observed the hapless maiden's state, thither I sped for some of its contents to resuscitate her.

On returning to the spot where I had left





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her, I found she had passed into the charge of the individual who had given us the friendly but ineffectual warning from the road, and who now, his cloak and hat thrown by, was gazing upon the prostrate form he supported, with looks in which astonishment, alarm, and distress were rapidly and painfully alternating.

“My God, how like! her very image! the pulse beat yet! O for water!” were the exclamations that escaped from him.

Having presented my hat filled with the needful fluid, he sprinkled some of it upon her face, which presently began to shew signs of animation, and as, after careful examination, no outward hurt could be discovered, we came to the conclusion that the shock of the fall was the chief injury she had sustained, thence drawing strong hopes of her recovery.

Lord Leighton (for such, as the reader will have inferred, was the personage last presented to him), having taken the control of matters, so soon as a satisfactory process of revival had

set in, ordered means of transport to be brought with all haste from the Castle, whilst, on my own part, I despatched a messenger to the Vicarage, with an instant summons for the old nurse, France Jeffray.

Unspeakably shocked at the accident which had thus threatened to defeat all my hopes and labours on the very eve of their fulfilment, I took my place among the bearers with a complication of feelings which it was impossible any of those around me could participate—save only the grey and timebent grand-sire, who, at the other side of the litter, with his eyes ever bent upon its burden, guided the sad cortége to its destination.

Blayfield's discovery, or rather misconception, had, meantime blown abroad through the neighbourhood like wild-fire, and clusters of eager faces from that of grey hair eld to infancy itself, presented themselves at every step to get a passing glance at their returned heiress.

The mansion was speedily reached; and

entering the halls of her father's in hapless guise, the interesting outcast was laid on a couch, that had been hastily prepared for her in one of the lower chambers.

Whilst myself anxiously awaiting the arrival of the old nurse, as well as a physician, who had been also sent for, Lord Leighton knelt down by her bedside, and, his arm resting on her pillow, his eye fastened on her countenance, gave way to a strength of emotion, which stoical and strong as was his nature, seemed to stir it to its inmost depths. Perhaps expression might be found in the words of our great dramatist.

“O thy mother!”

---

“I am a very foolish, fond old man,  
‘Three score and upward.”

---

“You must bear with me;  
Pray you now forget and forgive.”

---

“Have I caught thee?  
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,  
And fire us hence like foxes.”

Desisting at length from its indulgence, and turning to me, as though for the first time conscious of my presence, while a slight start betrayed his recognition, he exclaimed :—

“ Ah that portrait! how can I doubt it now? where have you brought her from?”

Ere I could well answer, he continued: “ I ought to apologize for my abruptness, but I beg you will inform me as briefly as may be (for time is measured to an old man) whom you believe that lady to be, and where she has come from?”

Summoned thus suddenly to my part, and swayed by the remains of former prudential policy, I felt a momentary embarrassment in answering, perceiving which, he continued appealingly: “ Sir, trifle not with a father’s feelings, but tell me all you know of my dear child; she has come, has she not, from America?”

Judging the time had arrived when a plain story would be the best, I replied :—

“She has come from the American wilderness, where I found her dwelling among a tribe of savages.”

“Savages!”

He was silent for a time, as if lost in amazement, then asked:—

“In the name of heaven, how came she there?”

“The tale, my lord, is long and would distress you; we will reserve it for another time; I may say, however, she was carried there by kidnappers, suborned by a near relation in whose path she was an obstacle.”

“Kidnappers! ha, what, a plot? Is Cyrus concerned in this?”

I gave no answer, save so far as my looks conveyed assent.

After pausing awhile, therefore, as though to master in his own mind the bearings of the hideous crime I had revealed to him, he proceeded: “And you—”

“In pursuance of a solemn vow to that

effect, I made it my task to seek her out; it was a duty I had long pledged myself to, by her father's sick-bed, and over her mother's grave, and sincerely do I rejoice that, though late, it has been fulfilled."

"Sir, the God of the oppressed has wrought with you, and will reward you, but of that, anon—that mother was—"

"The portrait you have seen informs you—Lady Ardcapell—at one time, Lady Laura Farleton—your daughter, I believe?"

The old man gave me a look, that long clung to my remembrance, then dropped upon his knees, and after offering up a brief prayer of thanksgiving to the Almighty, clasped his restored, and now reviving grand-child, in the long deferred embrace of paternal love.

My task was done.

Leaving the two relatives to the hallowed interchange of their feelings, I quitted the room under the over-powering pressure of my own, and repairing to the vicarage, relieved



my breast by communicating to the worthy clergyman the events of the few momentous hours that had passed since we had parted.

After cheering ourselves with mutual felicitations, I requested his advice as to the expediency of resorting to law for the further security of our *protégée*. On this point he observed with his usual good sense, that as our chief object had been effected, he thought there was now, considering the age of the young lady—the proofs we possessed of her identity, and the already widely known fact of her return—little further danger to be apprehended on the part of the delinquent cousin. That as his interest was but prospective, it would, as far as ourselves were concerned, be sufficient to place in Lord Leighton's hands an authenticated record from the first, of the events and circumstances that so deeply compromised his nephew, and so leave him to take what steps, and dictate what terms he might think proper; the which, however rigorous they might be, there was

little doubt the latter, coerced by proof in hand, the dread of his misdeeds being published, as well as of the direct vengeance of the law, would at once see the necessity of submitting to. "Still," said he, "there are casualties to be provided against, such as Lord Leighton's death, which would render it only a prudent measure to put in form and deposit in neutral keeping the evidence we already possess, and what we may yet procure to meet any fresh manœuvre on the part of the crafty antagonist.

This I accordingly resolved on making my care and occupation for the winter.

The next morning, as I was wending my way to the Castle for the purpose of making enquiry as to the young heiress's convalescence, I was agreeably surprised by meeting her, apparently but little the worse—thanks to her Indian training—for her accident, taking the air on horseback, and while waiting the arrival of her grandfather, who, she told me had promised to attend her, looking

with gleeful interest on the ancient domain—all new and strange to her—she had been so providentially restored to.

I say I was pleased to find her so unexpectedly recovered from her accident; but there was a strong and bitter alloy in my pleasurable feelings, notwithstanding; I could not disguise from myself that the time had now arrived when the long and delightful intercourse we had hitherto held, and which by constant participation of interest, hardship, and danger, had grown almost into a habit of life, was at length, of necessity to terminate.

I had, in fact, under the feeling that impels one to cut short what threatens to occasion pain, made arrangements for proceeding northwards that very day, and as I walked by the side of her palfrey, I took occasion to state to her, that as our plans had now been happily accomplished, and she enjoyed the protection of her natural guardian, it was needful I should resign the pleasing office I had hitherto held of her squire and guard,

and content myself with offering my best wishes and prayers for her future happiness.

The communication produced an evidently damping effect upon her spirits, and turning her pony back, she accompanied me, silent and downcast to the mansion.

There she dismounted, and leaning on my arm, led me pensively along to the library. Seizing my hand as soon as we had entered, and looking on me with tender earnestness—

“Felipe,” she said, “me no let you part in dis way ; remember what I said in Ark-la, and do not make me grieve for having left it.”

“It afflicts me much, Kosata—I mean, dear Lady Laura—to leave you, but I do not see how I can well avoid the pain, my dwelling-place being so far from here.”

“Me no let you say dat, neither,” replied she, promptly sealing my lips with her little hand, “dis be your dwelling-place—you stay here and live with me—call me Kosata still ; see, Felipe,” she said going to the window,

and pointing coaxingly to the oak groves in the park, "see, big wood, Kosata put on moccassin again, make track there, you and me, kill deer, boil kettle, laugh at Blackfeet, have fine times ; any Blackfeet hereby, Felipe ?"

"Alas, no," I replied, between a smile and a sigh (I began almost to wish there had been), "we have only a shabby tribe to represent them, who go by the name of Blacklegs, scattered more or less over the land, who are, however, scarcely less dangerous. It is one of these who has already caused you so much suffering, and it is possible may yet work you further injury, unless—"

"Oh, then you stay and guard your sister still, live many happy days here with Kosata."

Our interesting *tête-à-tête* was here interrupted by the entrance of the Earl, who kindly and courteously enforced his sweet grandchild's proposal.

It would be useless to weary the reader by detailing the reasons which induced me to decline the friendly offer it would have

pleased me so greatly to accept. I was old enough to see its danger, old enough to feel that whilst the thought of any union was vain, from difference in age and station, my heart might be yet younger than my years, her own forestalled, and that absence was for the interest of both, and I stood firm, though it cost me no small effort in doing so.

I felt it, indeed, almost a relief when the noise of the postchaise drawing up at the front door warned us to conclude our interview.

The Earl went out, and pressing the maiden's hand to my lips in silence, for I was afraid to trust them with further speech, I followed him to the door, but was presently recalled by a low summons from the gentle girl, whom I found in tears, wreathing abstractedly into a sort of knot, a long tress of her glossy hair she had just severed.

"Felipe, dear brother," she murmured in broken accents, as she put it into my hands, "you go—you no forget me—me pray the Great Spirit for you; take this—it, my hair

—when you see it you think of me—of the Far Pines—of the Wind River—of Arkla—you think Kosata with you evermore.”

“Fear not for that, Kosata; I shall never forget my genie of the Wind River, however time and distance may divide us.”

“But you come here again when green leaves come, and help her to make Leighton, Arkla; say yes, Felipe.”

I promised, and with one last, long embrace heartened by secret sympathy, and hallowed by a thousand sweet recollections we breathed our mutual farewell.

To thee, also, O reader, our pilgrimage being at length ended, must I now pronounce the same.

“Farewell———

Ye who have traced the pilgrim to the scene  
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell  
A thought which once was his—if on ye swell  
A single recollection, not in vain  
He wore his sandal shoon, and scallop shell.”

THE END.

