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THEY EMBARK IN HAWKEYE'S CANOE





DEERSLAYER AND HIS DYING ENEMY.



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THE  
LEATHERSTOCKING  
TALES

FROM COOPER

EVERY CHILD CAN READ

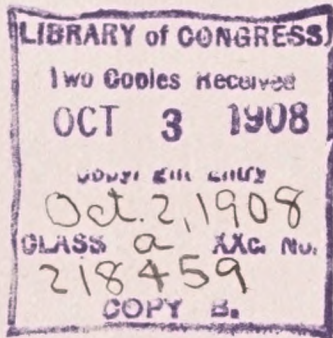
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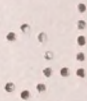


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## INTRODUCTION

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**T**HE Leatherstocking Tales have been more widely read than any other stories by an American author. They have given enjoyment to three generations of people, fathers, sons and grandsons, not only in America, but wherever the English language is read; they have given to the civilized world its first real knowledge of the life and traits of the American Indian; and they have drawn a picture of an age that has forever passed away, and a land that is now very different from that in which the scenes of these stories were laid.

A need has been felt by many readers of such a re-writing of these famous stories as would enable them to be understood by any boy of twelve. With this in view, we have told the substance of each story in simple words, endeavoring as far as possible to keep the peculiar style of the author, which has not been an easy task.

The boy who at twelve reads these stories, and becomes familiar with them will at fifteen or sixteen enjoy them all the more because of his early acquaintance with their general plan.



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# THE DEERSLAYER

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## A STORY OF HUNTERS AND INDIANS

**M**ANY years ago, when these United States were colonies of England, there lived on the shores of Otsego Lake, some sixty miles west of the Hudson River, a trapper and hunter whose name was Tom Hutter.

I might say he lived in the lake instead of on its shores; for his house was built on piles in the lake and, as it was entirely surrounded by water, and hard to get at, the hunters and soldiers thereabouts called it "Muskrat Castle." Besides the castle, Tom Hutter had also a floating house—or rather a house built in a scow—which could be pushed or rowed or towed to any part of the lake he desired, according as he wished to be near his traps or hidden from sight in the thick tree growth along the shores. This house-boat was generally called the "Ark."

Tom Hutter had two daughters; one was twenty and beautiful; the other was sixteen and "not just right in her head." Tom was very fond of his daughters, and very watchful for their safety in this land of Indians and dangers.

Into this beautiful region in which lies Lake Otsego, and in which lived Tom Hutter and his daughters, Judith and Hetty, there came, one fine

June day, two hunters. One was about twenty-six, handsome, stalwart, careless, reckless, and unscrupulous. His name was Harry March, nicknamed, because of his heedlessness and quickness, "Hurry." The other was a brown and sinewy young fellow of twenty-one; his name was Nathaniel, or "Natty," Bumpo. He had been brought up among the Delaware Indians, and was called by them, because of his skill as a hunter, "Deerslayer." He was strong, gentle, true-hearted, fearless, and cool, and as honest as the day is long.

There were rumors of war between the French of Canada and the English of the colonies; this meant that the Indians would take sides either with the French or the English. The government of the colonies paid money for Indian scalps, for every scalp was a proof that an Indian had been killed; and, as the French Indians, or Iroquois, were known to be camping about the lake, Hurry and Tom Hutter determined to steal out by night, surprise the Iroquois, and make some money by the sale of their scalps. The Deerslayer would not agree to this; he was too noble to take part in such mean business; he did not object to fighting Indians in war, but he was opposed to stealing on sleeping Indians and murdering them for gain; for women and children, as well as warriors, were counted fair game by the scalp-hunters. So, that night, Hurry and Tom started out on their expedition, while Deerslayer, though he accompanied them, refused to join in their "business." Instead,

he held the canoe away from the shore, to be ready to help the men should they get into trouble—which they did speedily.

For, just as they were at their horrid work, they were surprised, overpowered, and captured by the Indians, and Deerslayer, when he tried to help them, found he was but one against a host.

So he acted upon Tom Hutter's hint to get away at once and defend his daughters in the ark, as he could do the prisoners no good.

At once he paddled off toward the ark, having first taken away the Indian canoes so that these could not be used to approach the scow, and hurried to the daughters of the trapper with the news of the disaster that had fallen upon their father.

Deerslayer then commenced a brief but clear account of all that happened during the night, in no manner concealing what had befallen his two companions, or his own opinion of what might prove to be the result. The girls listened with the closest attention, but, to the surprise of Deerslayer, Judith seemed the most distressed, Hetty listening eagerly, but appearing to brood over the facts in melancholy silence rather than showing any outward signs of feeling. The agitation of Judith, the young man thought was due to the interest she felt in Hurry quite as much as to her love of her father, while Hetty's apparent indifference was ascribed to that mental darkness which, in a measure clouded her mind, and which possibly kept her from foreseeing all the results which might

come. Little was said, however, by either, Judith and her sister busying themselves in making ready for the morning meal. The meal was nearly ended before a syllable was uttered; then, however, Judith spoke in the quick and hurried manner in which feeling breaks through self-control after self-control has become more painful than even the showing of fear.

“You have been fighting the savage, Deer-slayer, singly and by yourself,” she said. “In your wish to take care of us—of Hetty—of me, perhaps, you’ve fought the enemy bravely, with no eye to encourage your deeds or to witness your fall had it pleased heaven to suffer you to perish!”

“I’ve fought, Judith; yes I *have* fought the enemy, and that, too, for the first time in my life. These things must be, and they bring with ’em a mixed feelin’ of sorrow and triumph. Human natur’ is a fightin’ natur’, I suppose, as all nations kill in battle, and we must be true to our rights and gifts. What has yet been done is no great matter; but should Chingachgook come to the rock this evening, as is agreed atween us, and I get him off it unbeknown to the savages, then look for something like warfare.”

“Who is this Chingachgook? from what place does he come, and *why* does he come *here*.”

“Chingachgook is a Mohican by blood, living with the Delawares by usage, as is the case with most of his tribe, which has long been broken up by the increase of our white people. He is of the family of the great chiefs; Uncas, his father

having been the considerablest warrior and adviser of his people. Well, this war having commenced in 'a'nest, the Delaware and I fixed an app'ntment to meet this evening at sunset at the big rock at the foot of this very lake, intending to come out on our first warlike expedition ag'in the Mingos. But, Judith, do you know the ar'nd on which your father and Hurry went ag'in the savages?"

"I do, and a cruel errand it was! But what will you have? Men will be men, and some even that boast of their gold and silver, and can carry the king's commission in their pockets, are guilty of equal cruelty." Judith's eyes again flashed, but by a desperate struggle she resumed her calmness of manner.

"We must try—Chingachgook and I—we must try to see what we can do to get Hurry and your father free; for the Mingos will no doubt hover about this lake some days, in order to make the most of their success."

"You think this Delaware can be depended on, Deerslayer?" demanded the girl, thoughtfully.

"As much as I can myself. You say you do not suspect *me*, Judith?"

"*You!*" taking his hand again, and pressing it between her own with a warmth that might have awakened the vanity of one less simple-minded and more disposed to dwell on his own good qualities. "I would as soon suspect a brother! I have known you but a day, Deerslayer, but it has awakened the confidence of a year. Your

name, however, is not unknown to me; for the officers of the garrisons frequently speak of the lessons you have given them in hunting, and all proclaim your honesty. Your friend Chingachgook, as you call him.—What is the English of his Indian name?”

“ ‘Big Sarpent,’ so called for his wisdom and cunning. Uncas is his ra'al name, all his family being called Uncas, until they get a title which has been 'arned by deeds.”

“If he has all this wisdom, we may expect a useful friend in him, unless his own business in this part of the country should prevent him from serving us.”

“I see no great harm in telling you his ar'nd, a'ter all; and, as you may find means to help us, I will let you and Hetty into the whole matter, trusting that you'll keep the secret as if it was your own. You must know that Chingachgook is a handsome Injin, and that there is a chief that has a daughter called Wah-ta!-Wah, which in the English tongue means Hist-oh!-Hist, the rarest gal among the Delawares. Well, Chingachgook, among others, took a fancy to Wah-ta!-Wah and Wah-ta!-Wah took a fancy to him. But a sartain Briarthorn, as we call him in English, took it most to heart, and we mistrust him of having a hand in all that followed. Hist-oh!-Hist went with her father and mother two moons ago to fish for salmon on the western streams, and while thus busy the gal vanished. For several weeks we could get no tidings of her; but here, ten days

since, a runner that came through the Delaware country, brought us a message, by which we l'arn that Hist was stolen from her people—we think, but do not know it, by Briarthorn's tricks—and that she was now with the inimy, who had adopted her and wanted her to marry a young Mingo. The message said that the party intended to hunt and forage through this region for a month or two afore it went back into the Canadas, and that if we could contrive to get on a scent in this quarter, something might turn up that would lead to our getting the maiden off."

"And how does that concern *you*, Deerslayer?" demanded Judith, a little anxiously.

"It consarns me as all things that touches a fri'nd consarns a fri'nd. I'm here as Chingachgook's aid and helper; and if we can get the young maiden he likes back ag'in, it will give me almost as much pleasure as if I had got back my own sweetheart."

"And where, then, is *your* sweetheart, Deerslayer?"

"She's in the forest, Judith, hanging from the boughs of the trees,—in a soft rain—in the dew on the open grass—the clouds that float about in the blue heavens—the birds that sing in the woods—the sweet springs where I slake my thirst—and in all the other glorious gifts that come from God's providence!"

"You mean that as yet you've never loved a woman, but love best your haunts and your own manner of life?"

“That’s it—that’s just it. I am white—have a white heart, and can’t, in reason, love a red-skinned maiden, who must have a redskin heart and feelin’s. No, no; I’m sound enough in them partic’lars, and hope to remain so—at least till this war is over. I find my time too much taken up with Chingachgook’s affair to wish to have one of my own on my hands afore that is settled.”

Deerslayer kept his appointment and met his friend, the Mohican, at the place appointed. Then they went back to the ark for a consultation with Judith, but while there Hetty slipped away from them, and, paddling off in a canoe, started on an effort to save her father from the Iroquois. Judith and Deerslayer were greatly disturbed over this, but the night was dark, and Hetty had so completely escaped them that they could not pursue her. They found the canoe, however, where she had left it.

Judith occupied a solitary bed that night, bedewing the pillow with her tears, as she thought of the innocent and hitherto neglected creature who had been her companion from childhood. Deerslayer and the Delaware took their rest in the ark, where we shall leave them enjoying the deep sleep of the honest, the healthful, and fearless, to return to the girl in the midst of the forest.

Hetty made a bed of leaves in the forest, and next morning walked straight to the Indian encampment.

While making her way slowly through the bushes, the girl suddenly found her steps arrested



by a human hand, that was laid lightly on her shoulder.

“Where go?” said a soft female voice, speaking hurriedly and in concern. “Indian—red man—savage—wicked warrior—that-a-way.”

This unexpected greeting did not alarm the girl. It took her a little by surprise, it is true, but she was in a *mesur e* prepared for such a meeting; and the creature who stopped her was as little likely to excite terror as any who ever appeared in the guise of an Indian. It was a girl not much older than herself, whose smile was as sunny as Judith’s in her brightest moments, whose voice was melody itself.

She was dressed in a calico mantle that entirely covered all the upper part of her person, while a short petticoat of blue cloth edged with gold lace, that fell no lower than her knees, leggings of the same, and moccasins of deerskin, completed her clothing. Her hair fell in long, dark braids down her shoulders and back, and was parted above a low, smooth forehead in a way to soften the expression of eyes that were full of archness and natural feeling. Her face was oval, with delicate features; the teeth were even and white; while the mouth expressed a melancholy tenderness. Her voice was soft as the sighing of the night air, and had obtained for her the name of Wah-ta!-Wah; which, rendered into English, means Hist-oh!-Hist.

In a word, this was the beloved of Chingachgook, who, having succeeded in lulling their sus-

pitions, was permitted to wander around the encampment of her captors.

“Where go?” repeated Wah-ta!-Wah, returning the smile of Hetty, in her own gentle, winning manner; “*wicked* warrior that-a-way—*good* warrior far off.”

“What’s your name?” asked Hetty, with the simplicity of a child.

“Wah-ta!-Wah. I no Mingo—good Delaware—Yengeese\* friend. Mingo cruel, and love scalp for blood—Delaware love him for honor. Come here, where no eyes.”

Wah-ta!-Wah now led her companion toward the lake, descending the bank so as to place its overhanging trees and bushes between them and any probable observers; nor did she stop until they were both seated, side by side, on a fallen log, one end of which actually lay buried in the water.

“*Why* you come for?” the young Indian eagerly inquired; “*where* you come from?”

Hetty told her tale in her own simple and truth-loving manner. She explained the situation of her father, and stated her desire to serve him, and, if possible, to obtain his release.

“Why your father come to Mingo camp in night?” asked the Indian girl, with a directness, which, if not borrowed from the other, partook largely of its sincerity. “He know it war time, and he no boy—he no want beard—no want to be told Iroquois carry tomahawk, and knife, and

\*“Yengeese” is the word “English” as spoken by Indians. Another word of the same meaning was “Yankees.”

rifle. Why he come night time, seize *me* by hair, and try to scalp Delaware girl?"

"You!" said Hetty, almost sickening with horror; "did he seize *you*—did he try to scalp *you*."

"Why no? Delaware scalp sell for much as Mingo scalp. Governor no tell difference. Wicked t'ing for paleface to scalp. No his gifts, as the good Deerslayer always tell me."

"And do *you* know the Deerslayer?" said Hetty, coloring with delight and surprise, forgetting her regrets at the moment in this new feeling. "I know him, too. He is now in the ark, with Judith and a Delaware who is called the Big Serpent. A bold and handsome warrior is this Serpent, too!"

Spite of the rich, deep color that nature had bestowed on the Indian beauty, the telltale blood deepened on her cheeks, until the blush gave new brightness and intelligence to her jet-black eyes. Raising a finger in an attitude of warning, she dropped her voice, already so soft and sweet, nearly to a whisper, as she went on in her words.

"Chingachgook!" returned the Delaware girl, sighing out the harsh name in sounds so softly guttural as to cause it to reach the ear in melody. "His father, Uncas—great chief of the Mohicans. *You* know Serpent?"

"He joined us last evening, and was in the ark with me for two or three hours before I left it, Hist." Hetty could not pronounce the Indian name of her new friend, but having heard Deer-

slayer speak of her in this familiar way, she used it.

"*You* good," whispered the young Indian; "you good, I know; it's so long since Hist have a friend—a sister—anybody to speak her heart to! You Hist friend; do n't I say trut'?"

"I never had a friend," answered Hetty, returning the warm embrace with unfeigned earnestness; "I've a sister, but no friend. Judith loves me, and I love Judith; but that's natural, and as we are taught in the Bible; but I *should* like to have a *friend*. I'll be your friend with all my heart.

"Deerslayer and Chingachgook great friend, and no the same color; Hist and—what your name, pretty paleface?"

"I am called Hetty, though when they spell the name in the Bible, they always spell it Esther," and after this, at the suggestion of Hist, the girls arose and openly approached the camp.

"May be Chingachgook get off Hurry and fader, as well as Hist, if let him have his way," whispered Wah-ta!-Wah to her companion, in a confiding, flattering way, just as they got near enough to the encampment to hear the voices of several women who seemed to be at work in the usual toils of their class. "T'ink of dat, Hetty, and put two, twenty finger on mouth. No get friends free without Serpent to do it."

As the two girls came near the encampment, Hetty uttered a slight exclamation on catching sight of her father. He was seated on the ground with his back to a tree, and Hurry stood near him,

indolently whittling a twig. Apparently they were as much at liberty as any of the others in or about the camp; and one unaccustomed to Indian usages would have mistaken them for visitors instead of supposing them to be captives. Hetty merely drew near and stood at her father's side without speaking. The old man showed neither alarm nor surprise at her sudden appearance. In these particulars he had caught the calm manner of the Indians, well knowing that there was no more certain mode of securing their respect than by imitating their self-command. Nor did the savages themselves betray the least sign of surprise at this sudden appearance of a stranger among them. Still, a few warriors gathered, and it was evident by the manner in which they glanced at Hetty as they talked together that they were speaking of her, and of her unlooked-for appearance.

Hutter was inwardly much moved by the conduct of Hetty, though he showed so much indifference of manner. He recollected her gentle appeal to him before he left the ark, and misfortune rendered that of weight which might have been forgotten if he had succeeded. Then he knew the simple, single-hearted fidelity of his child, and understood why she had come, and the total disregard of self that reigned in all her acts.

"This is not well, Hetty," he said, thinking for the moment of the harm that might come to the girl herself more than any other evil. "These are

fierce Iroquois, and are as little apt to forget an injury as a favor."

"Tell me, father," returned the girl, looking furtively about her, as if fearful of being overheard, "did God let you do the cruel errand on which you came? I want much to know this, that I may speak to the Indians plainly if He did not. How was it, father? neither you nor Hurry seems to have anything that looks like scalps."

"If that will set your mind at peace, child, I can answer you, no. I had caught the young creatur' who came here with you, but her screeches soon brought down upon me a troop of the wild-cats that was too much for any single Christian to withstand.."

"Thank you for that, father! Now I can speak boldly to the Iroquois. I hope Hurry, too, has not been able to harm any of the Indians?"

"Why, as to that matter, Hetty," returned her father "you've put it pretty much in the natyve character of the truth. Hurry has not been *able*, and that is the long and short of it.

So, with Hist as companion and interpreter, the simple-minded Hetty, bent on doing good, went among the Indians with her Bible, and talked her simple religion, and spoke the Golden Rule, to these red men of the forest.

The Indians could not see why they should use the Golden Rule toward their white prisoners, who certainly had not used it toward the Indian. But they did not interfere with Hetty or Hist, and when the Indian girl, leaving Hetty in the camp,

went to talk to Tom Hutter and Hurry of buying their freedom, the Indians listened to Hetty's reading from the Bible, and finally, putting her on a raft, towed her to a point opposite the castle, and then had an Indian boy row her across.

When she was across, and Deerslayer had heard her story, the hunter was not ready to believe all she told him of the peaceable feelings of the Iroquois. He questioned the Indian boy, and learned that it was the intention of his tribe to take their prisoners with them back to their home lodges for torture or for death.

Now, Deerslayer, who, with Judith, had been hunting through an old sea-chest of Tom Hutter's, proposed to the Indian boy that he go back to camp and offer as ransom for the two white prisoners two fine ivory elephants, belonging to a splendid set of chessmen, which the searchers had discovered in the old trunk.

The Indian boy was sent back to the Iroquois camp with the proposition of ransom.

After thinking carefully and placing the whole matter fairly before them, the two young beginners in the art of forest warfare settled down into the opinion that the ark offered the only available means of safety. This decision was no sooner come to than it was given to Judith. The girl had no serious objection to make, and all four set about the measures necessary to carrying out the plan.

The reader will readily understand that Floating Tom's worldly goods were of no great amount. A couple of beds, some clothing, the arms and

ammunition, a few articles for cooking, with the mysterious but half-examined chest, formed the principal items. These were all soon removed, the ark having been hauled on the eastern side of the building, so that the transfer could be made without being seen from the shore. It was thought unnecessary to disturb the heavier and coarser articles of furniture, as they were not needed in the ark, and were of but little value in themselves. As great caution was necessary in removing the different objects, most of which were passed out of a window with a view to hide what was going on, it needed two or three hours before the work was finished. By the end of that time a raft made its appearance, moving from the shore.

Deerslayer immediately took up the spy-glass, by the aid of which he saw that two warriors were on it, though they appeared to be unarmed. The raft moved very slowly; and this was one of the great advantages of the scow in any future meeting between them; the movements of the scow being comparatively swift and light. As there was time to make preparation to receive the two dangerous visitors, everything was ready for them long before they had got near enough to be hailed. The Serpent and the girls retired into the building, where the former stood near the door, well provided with rifles, while Judith watched the meeting without, through a loop. As for Deerslayer, he had brought a stool to the edge of the platform, at the point toward which the raft was advancing, and taken his seat, with his rifle leaning carelessly between his legs.



When the heavy-moving craft was within fifty feet of him, Deerslayer hailed the Hurons, directing them to cease rowing, it not being his purpose to permit them to land. Obedience, of course, was necessary, and the two grim-looking warriors instantly quitted their seats, though the raft continued slowly to approach, until it had driven in much nearer to the platform.

“Are ye chiefs?” demanded Deerslayer, with dignity. “Are ye chiefs?—or have the Mingos sent me warriors without names on such an ar’nd? If so, the sooner ye go back, the sooner the one will be likely to come that a warrior can talk with.”

“Hugh!” exclaimed the elder of the two on the raft, rolling his glowing eyes over the different objects that were visible in and about the castle, with a keenness that showed how little escaped him. “My brother is very proud, but Rivenoak” (we use the literal translation of the term, writing as we do in English) “is a name to make a Delaware turn pale.”

“That’s true, or it’s a lie, Rivenoak, as it may be; but I am not likely to turn pale, seeing that I was born pale. What’s your ar’nd?”

“My young paleface warrior—he has got a name—how do the chiefs call him?”

Deerslayer hesitated a moment, and a gleam of pride and human weakness came over him. He smiled, muttered between his teeth, and then, looking up proudly, he said:

“Mingo, like all who are young and actyve, I’ve been known by different names at different

times. One of your warriors, whose spirit started for the happy grounds of your people as lately as yesterday morning, thought I deserved to be known by the name of Hawkeye; and this because my sight happened to be quicker than his own, when it got to be life or death atween us."

The two Iroquois spoke to each other in low terms, and both drew near the end of the raft that was closest to the platform.

"My brother, Hawkeye, has sent a message to the Hurons," resumed Rivenoak, "and it has made their hearts very glad. They hear he has images of beasts with two tails! Will he show them to his friends?"

"Inimies would be truer," returned Deerslayer; "but sound isn't sense, and does little harm. Here is one of the images; I toss it to you under faith of treaties. If it's not returned, the rifle will settle the p'int atween us."

The Iroquois seemed to agree in the conditions, and Deerslayer arose and prepared to toss one of the elephants to the raft, both parties using all the care that was necessary to prevent its loss. The little piece of ivory was soon successfully passed over from one hand to the other. For a few minutes the old warriors apparently lost all thought of their situation in the intense gaze they gave to material so fine, work so highly wrought and an animal so extraordinary. Nor did these children of the forest mistake the little castle on the back of the elephant for a part of the animal. They were familiar with horses and oxen, and had

seen towers in the Canadas, and found nothing surprising in creatures of burden. Still, they supposed the carving meant to represent that the animal they saw was of a strength sufficient to carry a fort on its back; a circumstance that in no degree lessened their wonder.

“Has my paleface brother any more such beasts?” at last the senior of the Iroquois asked, as if making a request.

“There’s more where them came from, Mingo,” was the answer; “one is enough, however, to buy off fifty scalps.”

“Why should Rivenoak and his brother leave any cloud between them?” the Indian said. “They are both wise, both brave, and both generous; they ought to part friends. One beast shall be the price of one prisoner.”

“And, Mingo,” answered the Deerslayer, determined to clinch the bargain if possible by a little extra liberality, “you’ll see that a paleface knows how to pay a full price when he trades with an open heart and an open hand. Keep the beast you have. Show it to your chiefs. When you bring us our fri’nds two more shall be added to it—and”—hesitating a moment in doubt of the wisdom of so great a gift, then deciding in its favor—“and, if we see them afore the sun sets, we may find a fourth to make up an even number.”

This settled the matter. Every gleam of discontent vanished from the dark countenance of the Iroquois, and he smiled as graciously, if not as sweetly as Judith Hutter herself. The piece

already in his hand was again examined, and a word of pleasure showed how much he was pleased with this unexpected end of the affair.

After repeating the terms of agreement, and professing to understand them, the two Indians finally took their departure, moving slowly toward the shore.

The bargain was carried out. Before night Hurry and Tom Hutter were returned to the castle, being brought, bound, across the lake upon the raft, guarded by two of the Mingos. The former prisoners were to climb from the raft to the castle, and the Iroquois were richer by four ivory chessmen. But that very evening Deerslayer found before the castle the Iroquois "declaration of war"—a sort of little fagot, composed of a dozen sticks bound tightly together with a deer-skin thong. March seized it eagerly, and holding it close to a blazing knot of pine that lay on the hearth, and which gave out all the light there was in the room, ascertained that the ends of the several sticks had been dipped in blood.

But for all that, Chingachgook, the Serpent, and his friend, Deerslayer, resolved to go upon the business that had brought them there,—the rescue of Hist, the Indian girl, from the Iroquois.

That night the two comrades set out upon their perilous venture. They succeeded, but as the Serpent leaped into the canoe with Hist in his arms, Deerslayer was not so fortunate, for he was taken prisoner by the Indians just as he was pushing out the canoe.

To quit the lake and lead their new captive to the fire the Indians needed only another minute.

When Deerslayer reached the fire he found himself surrounded by no less than eight grim savages, among whom was his old acquaintance Rivenoak. As soon as the latter caught a glimpse of the captive's countenance, he spoke apart to his companions, and a low but general exclamation of pleasure and surprise escaped them.

The arms of Deerslayer were not tied, and he was left the free use of his hands, his knife having been first removed. The only plan that was taken to secure his person was an untiring watchfulness, and a strong rope of bark that passed from ankle to ankle, not so much to prevent his walking as to place an obstacle in the way of his attempting to escape by any sudden leap. Even this extra provision against flight was not made until the captive had been brought to the light and his character ascertained. It was, in fact, a compliment to his daring, and he felt proud of the honor.

Then there followed the usual scene when Indians capture a brave prisoner. First, the squaws tried to anger him by insults, taunts, and gibes; but Deerslayer did not notice them. Next, Rivenoak, the chief, tried by flattery and words of praise, and then by threats and promises of all the torture that Indian skill could bring upon him, to prevail on the prisoner to betray his friends in the ark and become a brother to the Iroquois. But none of these things moved Deerslayer.

“Hawkeye is right,” the Iroquios at length began; “my paleface brother is right; he is no Indian to forget his Manitou and his color. The Hurons know that they have a great warrior for their prisoner, and they will treat him as one. If he is to be tortured, his torments shall be such as no common man can bear; if he is to be treated as a friend, it will be the friendship of chiefs.”

As the Huron uttered these words of high regard his eye keenly glanced at the countenance of his listener, in order to discover how he stood the compliment. Acquainted with the Indian notions of what constituted respect, in matters connected with the treatment of captives, Deer-slayer felt his blood chill at the announcement, even while he maintained an aspect so steeled that his quick-sighted enemy could discover in it no signs of weakness.

“God has put me in your hands, Huron,” the captive at length answered, “and I suppose you will act your will on me. I shall not boast of what I can do under torment, for I’ve never been tried, and no man can say till he has been; but I’ll do my best, not to disgrace the people among whom I got my training. We’re all created with more or less weakness, and I’m afeared it’s a paleface’s to give in under great bodily torment, when a red-skin will sing his songs and boast of his deeds in the very teeth of his foes!”

“We shall see. Hawkeye has a good countenance, and he is tough—but why should he be tormented when the Hurons love him? He is not





HURRY STRUGGLES WITH THE INDIANS.



born their enemy; and the death of one warrior will not cast a cloud between them forever.”

“So much the better, Huron; so much the better. Still I don't wish to owe anything to a mistake about each other's meaning. It is so much the better that you bear no malice; and yet it is ontrue that there is no hate, lawful hate, I mean, atween us. So far as I have redskin feelin's at all, I've Delaware feelin's; and I leave you to judge for yourself how far they are likely to be fri'ndly to the Mingos.”

Finding that nothing could be done with Deerslayer, and resolved to attack the ark, recover Hist, and overcome Tom Hutter and Hurry, Rivenoak and his braves set out that night to carry out their plans.

In the surprise and fight that followed, Hurry, after a fierce struggle, was captured, and Tom Hutter was scalped and killed, but Chingachgook and Hist, with Judith and Hetty, escaped and drifted off in the ark.

Hurry, by shrewd management, flung himself into the lake, and, escaping from his captors, joined the girls on the ark.

They buried Tom Hutter in the lake, and then Hurry agreed to go to the nearest fort and seek help from the soldiers, leaving Serpent and Hist to protect the girls in the ark.

So hurry left them, and soon after Judith and Hetty entered a canoe, and, paddling as near as possible to the spot where Hutter had found his watery grave, were earnestly discussing their

future, when a canoe came paddling up the lake and steadily advanced toward the ark. One man was alone in the canoe. It was Deerslayer.

His approach was so calm and leisurely, however, as to fill the watchers with wonder, since a man who had just escaped from enemies, by either craft or violence, would not be apt to move with the steadiness and deliberation with which his paddle swept the water. By this time the day was fairly departing, and objects were already seen dimly under the shores.

“Welcome—welcome, Deerslayer!” exclaimed Judith, as the canoe approached; “we have had a melancholy—a frightful day, but your return is, at least, one misfortune the less. Have the Hurons become more humane and let you go, or have you escaped from the wretches by your own courage and skill?”

“Neither, Judith—neither one nor t’other.” Then he explained that he had been released for one day only, on a promise to return to captivity.

That night in the ark Deerslayer told his friends why he had been sent back on parole.

It seemed the Iroquois supposed that Chingachgook was the only defender left on the ark. So they sent by Deerslayer a belt of wampum to the Serpent, offering him his life and freedom if he would send Hist back to their camp and go, himself, back to his own tribe.

When he had delivered this message, Deerslayer smiled at the Serpent. “Come, Chingachgook,” he said, “let us hear *your* mind on this matter—are

you inclined to strike across the hills toward your village, to give up Hist to a Huron?"

The young chief arose, that his answer might be given with due distinctness and dignity. He stretched an arm before him, with a calm energy that aided in giving emphasis to his expressions.

"Wampum should be sent for wampum," he said; "a message must be answered by a message. Hear what the Great Serpent of the Delawares has to say to the pretended wolves from the great lakes, that are howling through our woods. They are no wolves; they are dogs that have come to get their tails and ears cropped by the hands of the Delawares. They are good at stealing young women; bad at keeping them. Chingachgook takes his own where he finds it; he asks leave of no cur from the Canadas."

"That's a grand dispatch, as the officers call them things!" cried Deerslayer; "'twill set all the Huron blood in motion. And now, Judith, it's your turn to speak, for them miscreants will expect an answer from you. The next message is to you. They say the Muskrat, as they call your father, has dove to the bottom of the lake; that he will never come up again, and that his young will soon be in want of wigwams, if not of food. The Huron huts, they think, are better than the huts of York; they wish you to come and try them. Your color is white, they own, but they think young women who've lived so long in the woods, would lose their way in the clearin's. A great warrior among them has lately lost his wife,

and he would be glad to put the Wild Rose (that's you, Judith) on her bench at his fireside. As for the Feeble-Mind, for so they call Hetty, she will always be honored and taken care of by red warriors. Your father's goods, they think, ought to go to enrich the tribe; but your own property, which is to include everything of a female nature, will go, like that of all wives, into the wigwam of the husband."

"And do *you* bring such a message to *me*?" exclaimed Judith. "Am I a girl to be an Indian's slave?"

"If you wish my honest thoughts on this p'int, Judith, I shall answer that I don't think you'll willingly ever become any man's slave, redskin or white. You're not to think hard, how's'ever, of my bringing the message, as near as I could, in the very words in which it was given to me. Them was the conditions on which I got my furlough, and a bargain is a bargain, though it is made with a vagabond."

"Tell me, first—tell *us*, first, Deerslayer," said Judith, repeating the words merely to change the emphasis, "what effect will our answers have on *your* fate? If you are to suffer in our place it would have been better had we all been more careful as to the language we use. What, then, are likely to be the consequences to yourself?"

"Lord, Judith, you might as well ask me which way the wind will blow next week, or what will be the age of the next deer that will be shot! I can only say that their faces look a little dark upon me;

but it doesn't thunder every time a black cloud rises, nor does every puff of wind blow up rain. That's a question, therefore, much more easily put than answered."

"But you can not mean to give yourself up again to those brutal savages, Deerslayer!" she said. "Why! 't would be the act of a madman."

"There's them that thinks it madness to keep their words, and there's them that don't," said Deerslayer. "I'm one of the last. No redskin breathing shall have it in his power to say that a Mingo minds his word more than a man of white blood and white gifts, in anything that consarns me. I'm out on a furlough, and if I've strength and reason, I'll go in on a furlough afore noon to-morrow!"

And so it turned out. By Deerslayer's own advice the answers he took back to the Iroquois were both haughty and contemptuous.

Before he left Deerslayer talked long and earnestly with Judith, advising her what to do and how to act in the event of an Indian attack, and to try to hold out until relief came from the fort, to which Hurry had gone.

He went through her father's effects with her and discovered that neither Judith nor Hetty was the daughter of Tom Hutter, but that their father was an officer of the British army from whom Tom had taken them in childhood. Then, with words of farewell, he left them.

"Farewell, Deerslayer," said Judith; may God bless and protect you as your honest heart deserves

blessing and protection, and as I must think He will."

The next instant she darted into the hut and was seen no more; though she spoke to Hist from a window to inform her that their friend expected her appearance.

The farewells were said to Hetty and to Hist. Then he held out his hand to the Serpent.

"There's my hand, Delaware," he said; "you know it's that of a fri'nd, and will shake it as such, though it never has done you one-half the good its owner wishes it had."

The Indian took the offered hand and returned its pressure warmly. Then falling back on his calmness of manner, he drew up in reserve, and prepared to part from his friend with dignity. Deerslayer, however, was more natural.

"God bless you! Sarpent—God bless you!" cried the hunter, as the canoe left the side of the platform. "Your Manitou and my God only know when and where we shall meet ag'in; I shall count it a great blessing, and a full reward for any little good I may have done on 'arth, if we shall be permitted to know each other, and to travel together, hereafter, as we have so long done in these pleasant woods afore us."

Chingachgook waved his hand. Drawing the light blanket he wore over his head, he slowly withdrew into the ark in order to indulge his sorrow and his musings alone. Deerslayer was gone. It was nearly noon when Deerslayer returned to the camp of the Iroquois.

Rivenoak and another great warrior of the tribe called the Panther, sat side by side, awaiting the approach of their prisoner, as Deerslayer put his moccasined foot on the strand; nor did either move or utter a syllable until the young man had advanced into the center of the area, and proclaimed his presence with his voice. This was done firmly, though in the simple manner that marked the character of the individual.

“Here I am, Mingos,” he said, in the dialect of the Delawares, a language that most present understood; “here I am, and there is the sun. One is not more true to the laws of natur’ than the other has proved true to his word. I am your prisoner; do with me what you please. My business with man and ’arth is settled; nothing remains now but to meet the white man’s God, accordin’ to a white man’s duties and gifts.”

A murmur of approval escaped even the women at this address, and for an instant there was a strong and pretty general desire to adopt into the tribe one who owned so brave a spirit. Still there were some who differed from this wish, among the principal of whom might be classed the Panther and his sister, le Sumach, so called from the number of her children, who was the widow of the Wolf, now known to have fallen by the hand of the captive. Not so with Rivenoak. This chief arose, stretched his arm before him, in a gesture of courtesy, and paid his compliments with an ease and dignity that a prince might have envied.

“Paleface, you are honest,” said the Huron

orator. "My people are happy in having captured a man and not a skulking fox. We now know you; we shall treat you like a brave. If you have slain one of our warriors, and helped to kill others, you have a life of your own ready to give away in return. It is a pleasure to make such a prisoner; should my warriors say that the death of the Wolf ought not to be forgotten, and that he can not travel toward the land of spirits alone, that his enemy must be sent to overtake him, they will remember that he fell by the hand of a brave, and send you after him with such signs of friendship as shall not make him ashamed to keep your company. I have spoken; you know what I have said."

"True enough, Mingo, all true as the gospel," returned the simple-minded hunter; "you *have* spoken, and I *do* know not only what you have *said*, but, what is still more important, what you *mean*. Nevertheless, here I am, ready to receive judgment from your council, if, indeed, the matter was not determined among you afore I got back."

"Killer of the Deer," continued Rivenoak, "my aged men have listened to wise words; they are ready to speak. One of our best lodges has lately been emptied by the death of its master; it will be a long time before his son can grow big enough to sit in his place. There is his widow! she will want venison to feed her children, for her sons are yet like the young of the robin before they quit the nests. By your hand has this great calamity befallen her. Here is the Sumach; she is alone in



her wigwam, with children crying around her for food; yonder is a rifle; it is loaded and ready to be fired. Take the gun; go forth and shoot a deer; bring the venison and lay it before the widow of the Wolf; feed her children; call yourself her husband. After which your heart will no longer be Delaware but Huron; Sumach's ears will not hear the cries of her children; my people will count the proper number of warriors."

"I feared this, Rivenoak," answered Deerslayer, when the other had ceased speaking; "yes, I did dread that it would come to this. However, the truth is soon told. Mingo, I'm white, and Christian-born; 'twould ill become me to take a wife, under redskin forms, from among heathen. I may never marry; most likely Providence, in putting me up here in the woods, has intended I should live single, and without a lodge of my own: but should such a thing come to pass, none but a woman of my own color and gifts shall darken the door of my wigwam. As for getting a Mingo heart, as well might you expect to see gray hairs on a boy, or the blackberry growing on the pine. No, no, Huron; my gifts are white, so far as wives are concerned; it is Delaware in all things touchin' Injins."

These words were scarcely out of the mouth of Deerslayer before a common murmur betrayed the dissatisfaction with which they had been heard. But all the other tokens of disappointment and discontent were thrown into the background by the fierce anger of the Panther. The animal from

which he got his name does not glare on his intended prey with more frightful ferocity than his eyes gleamed on the captive; nor was his arm backward in seconding the fierce hatred that almost consumed his breast.

“Dog of the palefaces!” he exclaimed, in Iroquois, “go yell among the curs of your own evil hunting-grounds!”

The denunciation was accompanied by an appropriate action. Even while speaking, his arm was lifted and the tomahawk hurled. Luckily the loud tones of the speaker had drawn the eye of Deerslayer toward him, else would that moment have probably closed his career. So great was the dexterity with which this dangerous weapon was thrown, and so deadly the intent, that it would have riven the skull of the prisoner, had he not stretched forth an arm and caught the handle in one of its turns, with a readiness quite as remarkable as the skill with which the missile had been hurled. The force was so great, notwithstanding, that when Deerslayer's arm was arrested his hand was raised above and behind his own head, and in the very attitude necessary to return the attack. It is not certain whether the fact of finding himself unexpectedly in this threatening posture and armed, tempted the young man to retaliate, or whether sudden anger overcame his forbearance and prudence. His eye kindled, however, and a small red spot appeared on each cheek, while he cast all his energy into the effort of his arm and threw back the weapon at his

assailant. The unexpectedness of this blow aided in its success, the Panther neither raising an arm nor bending his head to avoid it. The keen little ax struck the victim in a straight line with the nose, directly between the eyes, literally braining him on the spot.

Sallying forward, as the serpent darts at its enemy even while receiving its own death-wound, this man of powerful frame fell his length into the open area formed by the circle, quivering in death. A common rush to his relief left the captive, for a single instant, quite without the crowd, and, willing to make one desperate effort for life, he bounded off with the activity of a deer. There was but a breathless instant, when the whole band, old and young, women and children, abandoning the lifeless body of the Panther where it lay, raised the yell of alarm, and followed in pursuit.

Sudden as had been the event which induced Deerslayer to make this desperate trial of speed, his mind was not wholly unprepared for the fearful moment. In the course of the past hour he had thought well on the chances of such an effort, and had shrewdly calculated all the details of success and failure. At the first leap, therefore, his body was completely under the direction of a mind that turned all its efforts to the best account, and prevented everything like hesitation or indecision at the important instant of the start. To this alone was he indebted for the first great advantage—that of getting through the line of sentinels unharmed. Deerslayer ran toward the lake, which was

hidden by bushes, and, as the sentinels were a little without the commencement of this thicket before the alarm was clearly communicated to them, the fugitive had gained its cover. To run among the bushes, however, was out of the question, and Deerslayer held his way for some forty or fifty yards, in the water which was barely knee deep, offering as great an obstacle to the speed of his pursuers as it did to his own. As soon as a favorable spot presented, he darted through the line of bushes, and ran into the open woods.

Deerslayer had a desperate project in view. Abandoning all thoughts of escape by the woods, and artfully concealing himself until his pursuers had passed, he turned and made the best of his way toward the canoe. He knew where it lay; could it be reached, he had only to run the gantlet of a few rifles, and success would be certain.

As Deerslayer approached the point, several women and children were passed, but, though the former endeavored to cast dried branches between his legs, the terror inspired by his bold revenge on the Panther was so great that none dared come near enough seriously to molest him. He went by all triumphantly, and reached the fringe of bushes. Plunging through these, our hero found himself once more in the lake and within fifty feet of the canoe. Here he ceased to run, for he well understood that his breath was now all-important to him. He even stooped, as he advanced, and cooled his parched mouth, by scooping up water in his hand to drink. Still the moments pressed,

and he soon stood at the side of the canoe. The first glance told him that the paddles had been removed! This was a sore disappointment after all his efforts, and, for a single moment, he thought of turning and of facing his foes by walking with dignity into the center of the camp again. But an infernal yell, such as the American savage alone can raise, proclaimed the quick approach of the nearest of his pursuers, and the eager longing for life triumphed. Preparing himself duly, and giving a right direction to its bows, he ran off into the water, bearing the canoe before him, threw all his strength and skill into a last effort, and cast himself forward so as to fall into the bottom of the light craft, scarcely hindering its way. Here he remained on his back, both to regain his breath and to cover his body from the deadly rifle.

Perhaps the situation of Deerslayer had not been more critical at any time that day than it was at this minute. It certainly had not been one-half as tantalizing. He lay perfectly quiet for two or three minutes, trusting to the single sense of hearing, confident that the noise in the lake would reach his ears did any one venture to approach by swimming. Once or twice he fancied that the water was stirred by the cautious movement of an arm, and then he perceived it was the wash of the water on the pebbles of the strand. By this time the canoe had drifted so far as to render nothing visible to Deerslayer, as he lay on his back, except the blue void of space, and a few of those brighter rays that proceed from the brightness of the sun,

marking its nearness. It was not possible to endure this uncertainty long. The young man well knew that the profound stillness foreboded evil, the savages never being so silent as when about to strike a blow,—resembling the stealthy foot of a panther before he takes his leap. He took out a knife, and was about to cut a hole through the bark in order to get a view of the shore, when he paused from a dread of being seen in the operation, which would direct the enemy where to aim their bullets. At this instant a rifle *was* fired, and the ball pierced both sides of the canoe, within eighteen inches of the spot where his head lay. This was close, but our hero was not appalled. He lay still half a minute longer, and then he saw the summit of an oak coming slowly within his narrow horizon.

Deerslayer now felt the urgent necessity of resorting to some plan to get further from his foes, and, if possible, to inform his friends of his situation.

Before quitting the shore, and as soon as he perceived that the paddles were gone, Deerslayer had thrown a bit of dead branch into the canoe, and this was within reach of his arm. Removing the cap he wore, he put it on the end of his stick, and just let it appear over the edge of the canoe, as far as possible from his own person. This trick was scarcely tried before the young man had proof of how much he had failed to understand the shrewdness of his enemies. In contempt of a plan so shallow and commonplace, a bullet was fired directly through another part of the canoe, which

actually grazed his skin. He dropped the cap, and instantly raised it immediately over his head as a safeguard.

Deerslayer lay perfectly still a few minutes longer, his eye at the bullet-hole, however, and much did he rejoice at seeing that he was drifting gradually further and further from the shore.

Some additional ten minutes may have passed in this silent manner on both sides, when Deerslayer thought he heard a slight noise, like a low rubbing against the bottom of his canoe. He opened his eyes of course, in expectation of seeing the face or arm of an Indian rising from the water, and found that a canopy of leaves was impending directly over his head. Starting to his feet, the first object that met his eye was Rivenoak, who had so far aided the slow progress of the boat as to draw it on the point, the grating on the strand being the sound that had first given our hero the alarm.

“Come,” said the Huron, with a quiet gesture of authority to order his prisoner to land; “my young friend has sailed about till he is tired; he will forget how to run again, unless he uses his legs.”

“You’ve the best of it, Huron,” returned Deerslayer, stepping steadily from the canoe, and following his leader to the open area of the point; “Providence has helped you in an unexpected manner. I’m your prisoner ag’in and I hope you’ll allow that I’m as good at breaking jail as I am at keeping furloughs.”

“My young friend is a moose!” exclaimed the Huron. “His legs are very long; they have given my young men trouble. But he is not a fish; he can not find his way in the lake. We did not shoot him; fish are taken in nets, and not killed by bullets. When he turns moose again he will be treated like a moose.”

“Ay, have your talk, Rivenoak, make the most of your advantage. 'Tis your right, I suppose, and I know it is your gift. On that p'int there'll be no words atween us; for all men must and ought to follow their gifts. I'm your captve; work your will on me.”

When the whole band was arrayed once more around the captive, a grave silence, so much the more threatening from its profound quiet, filled the place. Deerslayer perceived that the women and boys had been preparing splinters of the fat pine roots, which he well knew were to be stuck into his flesh and set in flames, while two or three of the young men held the thongs of bark with which he was to be bound. The smoke of a distant fire announced that the burning brands were in preparation, and several of the elder warriors passed their fingers over the edges of their tomahawks, as if to prove their keenness and temper. Even the knives seemed loosened in their sheaths, impatient for the bloody and merciless work to begin.

“Killer of the Deer,” recommenced Rivenoak, certainly without any signs of sympathy or pity in his manner, though with calmness and dignity;



“Killer of the Deer, it is time that my people knew their minds. My people must go back and see to their own business. There will be joy in the lodges when they hear our whoop from the forest. It will be a sorrowful whoop; when it is understood, grief will come after it. There will be one scalp-whoop, but there will be only one. We have the fur of the Muskrat; his body is among the fishes. Deerslayer must say whether another scalp shall be on our pole. Two lodges are empty; a scalp, living or dead, is wanted at each door.”

“Then take 'em dead, Huron,” firmly, but altogether without boasting, returned the captive. “My hour is come, I do suppose; and what must be, must. If you are bent on the tortur', I'll do my indivours to bear up ag'in it, though no man can say how far his natur' will stand pain until he's been tried.”

Rivenoak saw that his warriors were anxious to begin the torture, and, accordingly, gave the signal to proceed.

No sooner did the young men understand that they were at liberty to commence than some of the boldest and most forward among them sprang into the arena, tomahawk in hand. Here they prepared to throw that dangerous weapon, the object being to strike the tree as near as possible to the victim's head without absolutely hitting him. This was so hazardous an experiment that none but those who were known to be exceedingly expert with the weapon were allowed to enter the lists at all, lest an early death might interfere with

the expected pleasure. In the truest hands it was seldom that the captive escaped injury in these trials; and it often happened that death followed, even when the blow was not intended.

It would seem, however, that all who now entered what we shall call the lists, were more disposed to show their own skill than to resent the deaths of their comrades. The young men were eager, instead of being fierce, and Rivenoak thought he still saw signs of being able to save the life of the captive when the vanity of the young men had been gratified; always admitting that it was not sacrificed to the delicate experiments that were about to be made.

The first youth who presented himself for the trial was called the Raven, having as yet had no opportunity of obtaining a more warlike name. He was remarkable for high pretensions rather than for skill or exploits, and those who knew his character thought the captive in imminent danger when he took his stand and poised the tomahawk. Deerslayer got an inkling of this warrior's want of reputation by the warnings given to him by the seniors; who, indeed, would have objected to his appearing in the field at all but for an influence derived from his father, an aged warrior of great merit, who was then in the lodges of the tribe. Still, our hero maintained an appearance of self-possession. He had made up his mind that his hour was come, and it would have been a mercy instead of a calamity to fall by the unsteadiness of the first hand that was raised against him.

After a suitable number of flourishes and gesticulations that promised much more than he could perform, the Raven let the tomahawk quit his hand. The weapon whirled through the air with the usual evolutions, cut a chip from the sapling to which the prisoner was bound, within a few inches of his cheek, and stuck in a large oak that grew several yards behind him. This was decidedly a bad effort, and a common sneer proclaimed as much, to the great disgust of the young man. On the other hand, there was a general but suppressed murmur of admiration at the steadiness with which the captive stood the trial. The head was the only part he could move, and this had been purposely left free that the tormentors might have the amusement, and the tormented endure the shame of dodging, and otherwise attempting to avoid the blows. Deerslayer disappointed these hopes by a command of nerve that rendered his whole body as immovable as the tree to which he was bound. He did not even shut his eyes; the firmest and oldest warrior of the red men never having more disdainfully denied himself this advantage under similar circumstances.

The Raven had no sooner made his unsuccessful and boyish effort than he was succeeded by the Moose, a middle-aged warrior who was particularly skilful in the use of the tomahawk, and from whose attempt the spectators confidently looked for enjoyment. He took his stand quietly, but with an air of confidence, poised his little ax, but a single instant, advanced a foot with a quick motion,

and threw. Deerslayer saw the keen instrument whirling toward him, and believed all was over; still, he was not touched. The tomahawk had actually bound the head of the captive to the tree by carrying before it some of his hair; having buried itself deep beneath the soft bark. A general yell expressed the delight of the spectators, and the Moose felt his heart soften a little toward the prisoner, whose steadiness of nerve alone enabled him to give this proof of his great skill.

The Moose was succeeded by the Bounding Boy, who came leaping into the circle like a hound or a goat at play. The Bounding Boy skipped about in front of the captive, threatening him with his tomahawk, now on one side and now on the other, and then again in front, in the vain hope of being able to extort some sign of fear by this parade of danger.

The same nervous excitability which rendered him so active in his person made it difficult to hold in. The aim was uncertain, and the weapon glanced near the cheek of the captive, slightly cutting the shoulder in its movement. This was the first instance in which any other object than that of terrifying the prisoner and of displaying skill had been manifest; and the Bounding Boy was immediately led from the arena, and was warmly rebuked for his foolish haste, which had come so near defeating all the hopes of the band.

To this irritable person succeeded several other young warriors, who not only hurled the toma-

hawk, but who cast the knife—a far more dangerous experiment—with reckless carelessness; yet they always showed a skill that prevented any injury to the captive. Several times Deerslayer was grazed, but in no instance did he receive what might be termed a wound. The unflinching firmness with which he faced his foes, more especially in the sort of rally with which this trial ended, excited a profound respect in the spectators; and when the chiefs announced that the prisoner had well withstood the trials of the knife and the tomahawk, there was scarcely a single individual in the band who really felt any hostility toward him.

Rivenoak now told his people that the paleface had proved himself to be a man. He might live with the Delawares, but he had not been made woman with that tribe. He wished to know whether it was the desire of the Hurons to proceed any further. Even the gentlest of the females, however, had received too much satisfaction in the late trials to forego their expectations of a gratifying exhibition; and there was but one voice in the request to proceed. Rivenoak therefore called four or five of the best marksman to him and bid them put the captive to the proof of the rifle, while at the same time, he cautioned them touching the necessity of their maintaining their own credit by the closest attention to the manner of exhibiting their skill.

When Deerslayer saw the chosen warriors step into the circle with their arms prepared for service, he felt some such relief as the miserable sufferer

who has long endured the agonies of disease feels at the certain coming of death.

He now fully expected the end of his career, and experienced a sort of melancholy pleasure in the idea that he was to fall by a weapon as much beloved as the rifle.

The warriors took their places and prepared to exhibit their skill, as there was a double object in view—that of putting the constancy of the captive to the proof, and that of showing how steady were the hands of the marksmen under circumstances of excitement. The distance was small, and, in one sense, safe. But in shortening the distance taken by the tormentors, the trial to the nerves of the captive was increased. The face of Deerslayer, indeed, was just removed sufficiently from the ends of the guns to escape the effects of the flash, and his steady eye was enabled to look directly into their muzzles, as it might be, in anticipation of the fatal messenger that was to issue from each. The cunning Hurons well knew this fact; and scarce one leveled his piece without first causing it to point as near as possible at the forehead of the prisoner, in the hope that his courage would fail him, and that the band would enjoy the triumph of seeing a victim quail under their ingenious cruelty. Nevertheless, each of the competitors was still careful not to injure; the disgrace of striking prematurely being second only to that of failing altogether in attaining the object.

Shot after shot was made, all the bullets coming

in close proximity to the Deerslayer's head without touching it.

Rivenoak perceived that the moment was critical, and, still retaining his hope of adopting so noted a hunter into his tribe, the shrewd old chief interposed. Moving into the center of the irritated group he addressed them with his usual wily logic and skilful manner.

"I see how it is," he said. "We have bound the Deerslayer too tight; the thongs keep his limbs from shaking, and his eyes from shutting. Loosen him; let us see what his own body is really made of."

But even as they loosed the bands that bound their captive, there came an extraordinary interruption.

A young Indian came bounding through the Huron ranks, leaping into the very center of the circle, in a way to denote the utmost confidence, or a boldness bordering on foolhardiness. The movements of the stranger were so rapid, and his war-dress, which scarcely left him more clothing than an ancient statue, had so little distinguishing about it, that, at the first moment, it was impossible to ascertain whether he were friend or foe.

Three leaps carried this warrior to the side of Deerslayer, whose withes were cut in the twinkling of an eye, with a quickness and precision that left the prisoner perfect master of his limbs. Not till this was effected did the stranger bestow a glance on any other object; then he turned and showed the astonished Hurons the noble brow, fine person

and eagle eye of a young warrior, in the paint and panoply of a Delaware. He held a rifle in each hand, the butts of both resting on the earth, while from one dangled its proper pouch and horn. This was Killdeer, Deerslayer's own gun, which, even as he looked boldly and in defiance on the crowd around him, he suffered to fall back into the hands of its proper owner.

The presence of two armed men, though it was in their midst, startled the Hurons. Their rifles were scattered about against the different trees, and their only weapons were their knives and tomahawks. Still they had too much self-possession to betray fear. It was little likely that so small a force would assail so strong a band; and each man expected some extraordinary proposition to follow so decisive a step. The stranger did not seem disposed to disappoint them; he prepared to speak.

"Hurons," he said, "this earth is very big. The great lakes are big, too; there is room beyond them for the Iroquois; there is room for the Delawares on this side. I am Chingachgook, the son of Uncas; the kinsman of Tamenund; that paleface is my friend. My heart was heavy when I missed him; I followed him to your camp to see that no harm happened to him. All the Delaware girls are waiting for Hist; they wonder that she stays away so long. Come, let us say farewell, and go on our path."

"Hurons, this is your mortal enemy, the Great Serpent of them you hate!" cried Briarthorn, the



chief who had claimed Hist as his captive and bride. "If he escape, blood will be in your moccasin prints from this to the Canadas."

As the last words were uttered, the traitor cast his knife at the naked breast of the Delaware. A quick movement of the arm turned aside the blow, the dangerous weapon burying its point in a pine. At the next instant a similar weapon glanced from the hand of the Serpent and quivered in his enemy's heart. A minute had scarcely passed from the moment in which Chingachgook bounded into the circle and that in which Briarthorn fell, like a log, dead in his tracks. The rapidity of events prevented the Hurons from acting; but this terrible stroke permitted no further delay. A common exclamation followed, and the whole party was in motion.

At this instant a sound unusual to the woods was heard, and every Huron, male and female, paused to listen, with ears erect and faces filled with expectation. The sound was regular and heavy, as if the earth were struck with beetles. Objects became visible among the trees of the background, and a body of troops was seen advancing with measured tread. They came upon the charge, the scarlet of the king's livery shining among the bright green foliage of the forest.

The scene that followed is not easily described. It was one in which wild confusion, despair, and frenzied efforts were so blended as to destroy the unity and distinctness of the action. A general yell burst from the enclosed Hurons; it was suc-

ceeded by the hearty cheers of England. Still, not a musket or rifle was fired, though that steady, measured tramp continued, and the bayonet was seen gleaming in advance of a line that counted nearly sixty men.

The Hurons were taken at a fearful disadvantage. On three sides was the water, while their formidable and trained foes cut them off from flight on the fourth. Each warrior rushed for his arms, and then all on the point, man, woman, and child, eagerly sought the covers.

Deerslayer watched his opportunity, and finding two of his recent tormentors in a range, his rifle first broke the silence of the terrific scene. The bullet brought down both at one discharge. This drew a general fire from the Hurons, and the rifle and war-cry of the Serpent were heard in the clamor. Still the trained men returned no answering volley, the whoop and piece of Hurry alone being heard on their side, if we except the short, prompt word of authority, and that heavy, measured, and threatening tread. Presently, however, the shrieks, groans, and cries that usually accompany the use of the bayonet, followed. That terrible and deadly weapon was glutted in vengeance. The scene that succeeded was one of those of which so many have taken place in our own times, in which neither age nor sex is spared in the lot of a savage warfare.

So was Deerslayer rescued and succor came to the girls in the ark. Soon after Hetty sickened and died; Judith left the lake and the woods, and

went to England to seek a home among her own people.

As for Deerslayer, he for a time was irresolute as to his course; but in the end he determined to join the Serpent and Hist and return to the land of the Delawares. That night the three "camped" on the head-waters of their own river, and the succeeding evening they entered the village of the tribe—Chingachgook and his beloved in triumph, their companion honored and admired.

The war that then had its rise was stirring and bloody. The Delaware chief rose among his people, until his name was never mentioned without eulogiums, while another Uncas, the last of his race, was added to the long line of warriors who bore that famous name. As for the Deerslayer, under the name of Hawkeye, he made his fame spread far and near, until the crack of his rifle became as terrible to the ears of the Mingos as the thunders of the Manitou. His services were soon required by the officers of the crown, and he especially attached himself in the field to one in particular, with whose after-life he had a close and important connection. You who would like to know more about this scout and hunter should read the story of "The Last of the Mohicans."

# THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

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## A TALE OF INDIAN ADVENTURE.

**A**WAY off in the woods, in the heart of the New York forests, there rode, one beautiful summer day, many years ago, before the Revolution, while the American Colonies were still under the rule of Great Britain, a party of four people—men and women.

They were looking about them in anxiety and trouble, and well they might, for these four travelers and their Indian guide were lost in the woods.

Two of the party were sisters. Their names were Cora and Alice Munro. Their father was a colonel in the British army, who lived with his soldiers in a fort near Lake George, in New York. They were in care of a fine young soldier, who was their father's chief officer. His name was Duncan Heyward. With them was a half-foolish—what boys call "luney"—singing master, who did not know a gun from a fishing pole, and had joined the young officer through fear of trouble. For it was in troublesome times that these people were traveling through the woods. The English people who lived in New York, and the French people who lived in Canada, were at war, and the Indians were helping one side or the other. The Indians,

you know, used to fight in the woods, behind trees and among the bushes, where no one could see them; so whoever traveled in the great dark woods that then covered the land was in constant danger from hostile Indians.

There was an Indian with this party, but he was standing beside a tree, silent and sulky. He said he had lost the path to the Fort.

Just as they had come along the deer path they were traveling, out into an open space in the woods, they saw a hunter and two Indians.

The hunter was a white man. He was such a sure shot with his trusty rifle that men called him "Hawkeye." His real name was Natty Bumppo. His rifle, of which he was very proud, he called "Killdeer," because it was so sure; but the Indians who knew him and were afraid of him, called him, because of this terrible gun, "The Long Carbine"—the carbine is a kind of gun, you know.

"What, you are lost?" he said, in answer to Duncan's explanation. "Lost in the woods with an Indian for a guide? Whoever heard of such a thing?"

He took a look at the Indian guide. The white man and the red man stood face to face, but neither spoke. Then the hunter went back to Duncan.

"He's a Mingo," he said, "and I wouldn't trust him. He'll get you into trouble. You'd better let me shoot him."

"No, no," answered Duncan; "that would not be right. I'll talk with him."

So he went forward to talk with the guide, while Hawkeye joined his two Indian companions.

They were splendid looking red men—a father and his son. The father's name was Chingachgook; the son's name was Uncas. They belonged to a tribe called Mohicans. The Indian guide whom Hawkeye suspected belonged to a tribe called Hurons, and was known as the "Sly Fox."

While Hawkeye talked with Uncas and his father, Duncan told the Fox that he had found some one who could show them the way to the Fort.

"A white man? Then I will go away," said the Fox.

But Duncan did not wish him to, for if this Indian were a bad one, as Hawkeye said, he could at once bring other Indians upon the party and kill them. So Duncan tried to keep him, and when the Indian would not promise to go quietly with him, he tried to seize him. But the Fox, with a sudden move, pulled away from him, and darted into the forest.

Quick as he ran away, the two Indians, Uncas and his father, darted after him, and a ball from Hawkeye's rifle followed him. The Fox was too swift for them, however, though by the blood on the sumach leaves Hawkeye knew that he had hit him.

Hawkeye told Duncan that as long as the Fox was at liberty they were in danger, and they must get away as fast as they could.

Duncan then asked the hunter to help him, and the sisters who were in his care, so that they could



A SHOT MADE THE BODY FALL.





get to the Fort, and, after talking to the two Mohicans, Hawkeye said he would do so, but first they must get to a safe hiding-place out of the way of Sly Fox and his band; for the hunter was sure that the Fox had meant to lead the party into danger.

So, telling them to be very quiet, Hawkeye led the travelers to his secret hiding-place. He took them to the river bank, where he tied the horses to the trees, drew a canoe of bark from a place of hiding, and then paddled them to a cavern behind a great fall of water into which he guided the canoe very skilfully. There, he told them, they would be safe and sound.

But when the morning came and the hunter made ready to go on the journey, alas! the Fox and his savages had tracked them to their hiding-place by means of the horses and tried to get at them in their cave.

But the hunter and his Indian friends, the Mohicans, fought long and bravely against the Huron foemen, and kept them away from the river and the rocky cavern, killing many and wounding many. But at last their powder gave out, and they could no longer hold the savages off.

They would not desert the two girls, and prepared to stay and die for them under the Huron attack. But Cora, the elder of the sisters, said it was not right to do this, and they must save their own lives, even if she and her sister were captured by the Indians.

Duncan, of course, would not leave the sisters,

and the poor music teacher had been hurt by an Indian bullet. So, at last, Hawkeye, and the two Indians, one by one, left them.

But as the hunter dropped into the water to swim to the further shore he said to Cora, "Trust to me. If the Indians take you off, break off a piece of twig now and then as you go. Someone will follow you."

So they left them, and soon after the Huron Fox and his band, with yells of joy, broke into the cavern and carried the four travelers away captive.

The Hurons were very angry to know that their especial enemies, Hawkeye, Uncas, and his father, had escaped them, for they greatly wished to capture these three.

They prepared, however, to carry their other captives away; but Duncan tried hard to get the Fox to set them free and conduct them to Cora's father at the Fort. He offered the Huron great rewards if he would do this.

The Fox, however, would promise nothing, and the Indians led their captives away. At last they rested on a small hill, and there the Fox told Duncan he must talk alone with "the dark hair." This was Cora, the elder sister. She listened to the Fox. He told her how the white men had ill-treated him, how even her own father, who commanded at the Fort, had done so, and that now he would have his revenge. But he promised, after Cora had pleaded with him, to send her sister Alice and Duncan without harm to her father if she would do one thing.

“And what is that?” asked Cora.

“Let the daughter of the English chief follow me to the tribe of the Hurons and live in my wigwam forever,” said the Fox.

“Be the cruel Huron’s wife? Never.” So Cora thought; and when she knew that the revengeful Fox wished to do this only to make her father suffer and be sad, she called him a monster and defied him.

The Fox left her without a word. But he joined his companions at once, and made a speech that so stirred them up against their captives that they seized them and prepared the fire to burn and torture them.

The Fox tried to work on Cora’s feelings by telling her how her sister would suffer. But when Cora told Alice and Duncan what the bad Huron demanded as the price of their safety, they both said they had rather die all together.

“Then die!” shouted the Fox, and flung his tomahawk at Alice, just missing her fair head. This made Duncan so angry that with a mighty strain he snapped his bonds, and threw himself upon another Indian who had his tomahawk up ready to kill. But as they fell together to the ground, the Indian on top, and Duncan certain that he was about to be slain, bang! came the crack of a rifle, and the Indian fell dead by his side.

Duncan sprang to his feet. The Hurons knew not what to make of this sudden attack. Then there came a shout from the thicket, and the Hurons broke out into a howl.

“The Long Carbine!” they cried.

Sure enough, it was Hawkeye.

In an instant he and his two friends, Chingachgook and Uncas, were among the captives, cutting them loose.

But the Fox acted quickly. He gave a loud war-whoop and rushed straight at Chingachgook. Then Hawkeye and his friends began a fierce fight.

“Kill the Mingos!” he cried, and, raising Killdeer as a club, he struck right and left among the Hurons.

As they fought, a big Huron, springing at Cora, seized her by her long hair, bent her head, and flourished his dreadful scalping knife, but with a bound the young Mohican, Uncas, sprang against him, and buried his knife in the Huron’s heart.

At the same time Chingachgook, who was fighting with the Fox, bore him to the ground in triumph.

“Well done! Victory for the Mohican,” cried Hawkeye.

But just as he was on the point of finishing the Fox by a blow of his rifle, the sly Fox rolled from under him, and, tumbling over the cliff, sprang to his feet and ran like the wind.

“He’s a lying varlet,” said Hawkeye, “but ’tis like him.”

But the sisters thankfully exclaimed, “We are saved; we are saved.”

Then Hawkeye told them how he and his Mohican friends, after swimming away from the cave, had furnished themselves with more powder

for their guns, and had then quietly followed the Hurons until, at just the right moment, they were able to rush in and set them free.

So they went on cautiously through the forest. There was danger all about them. Once they just escaped another band of Indians; once they almost ran into the arms of their French enemies; and when they reached Fort Edward, which Cora's father commanded, they found the Fort all surrounded by an army of French and Indians. At last, after many dangers, they entered the Fort in safety.

Duncan had now the satisfaction of restoring the girls to their gray-haired father, the commander of the Fort, who folded his daughter in his arms, and while tears of joy and contentment poured down his cheeks, cried:

“O Lord, I thank thee! Now let danger come as it will.”

The danger came soon enough. Although safe in the Fort, still the siege roared all about it, and help did not come.

Colonel Munro now sent Hawkeye with a message to the general of the British army not far away, begging him to send help at once, or they could not save the Fort from the French. But Hawkeye was captured by French soldiers, the letter he was bringing back in reply was taken from him, and he was sent back into the Fort, and the Colonel saw there was no way but to ask the French to take the Fort and let the English soldiers go in peace.

Montcalm, the French commander, promised Munro that if he gave up the Fort his men should keep their guns and their flag, and march out of the Fort free men.

There was nothing else to be done but accept these generous terms. No help would come to them from the British army. So Colonel Munro thanked General Montcalm for his kindness.

The next day Munro and his garrison sadly gave up the Fort they had defended so bravely. The Frenchmen marched in; the Englishmen marched out, and with them went Cora and Alice, with the women and children, the sick and the wounded.

But while the column was moving from the Fort and toward the forest, a stealthy Indian went gliding about among the red allies of the Frenchmen. It was the Sly Fox, the Huron.

Suddenly he gave the fatal and fearful war whoop, and at the signal the swarming Indians with one leap were upon the fugitives. The terrible tomahawk fell in its deadly blow and two thousand howling savages pursued their horrid work of murder, while no Frenchman stopped them. The word of Montcalm was broken.

Colonel Munro rushed to the French camp to tell Montcalm what he thought of him, and bid him stop the murder.

But as he went, the wicked Fox sprang among the fugitives, and, seizing the fainting Alice, ran to the forest, followed by Cora, who told him to give up her sister. So he took both the girls away captive. But the simple-minded music teacher

followed on, resolved to help the poor girls if he could.

The Indian put the sisters on one of their own ponies, while he, upon the other, led their pony along by the bridle-rein, the singer, still following on behind upon a stray horse which had got away in the tumult.

So, although the two girls were saved from the dreadful murder of the English prisoners by the Indians, over one thousand in all being slain, they were in the power of this cruel and revengeful Huron chieftain, the Fox, who would keep them captive to carry out some dark plan of his own.

A day or two after the capture of the Fort and the murder of its brave defenders, five men came from the forest and searched the ground all around the ruined Fort.

They were Hawkeye, and his two Indian friends, the Mohicans, Colonel Munro, the father of the captured girls, and their friend, young Duncan Heyward. In the retreat from the Fort and the terrible time that followed, both the soldiers had been with their men, and had left the two girls in care of the poor singing teacher.

After the dreadful day was over they were afraid that the girls had been killed, and were now hunting among the victims, fearing that they might find them, and yet anxious to know what had happened to them.

They found that the two girls were captives, and in the power of the Huron Fox.

Early the next morning they started on the path

which Hawkeye had decided upon. They paddled along the shores and the islands of beautiful Lake George in a canoe, watching carefully. Suddenly they came upon a Huron camp-fire and two canoes. Another and then another canoe appeared.

The trackers would not give up and go back. They decided to push on and run the "gantlet," as the Indians call it.

They paddled, and turned, and dodged, and twisted, not firing a shot while they were out of the reach of the Hurons, although Hawkeye's trusty rifle, Killdeer, could have reached the enemy.

The pursuing Hurons soon knew whom they were chasing. "The Big Serpent!" "The Long Carbine!" "The Bounding Elk!" they shouted, giving the names by which they knew Chingachgook, Hawkeye, and Uncas.

For reply Hawkeye simply shook Killdeer at his pursuers in mockery, and the canoe darted on amid another shower of Huron bullets.

Nearer and nearer came the Hurons; a bullet struck the paddle in the hands of Hawkeye.

"That will do," said the scout. "Now we'll answer. Major Heyward, if you will take the paddle, I will let Killdeer do the talking."

With that he passed his paddle to Duncan, and with quick aim knocked over the Huron who was in the bow of the leading canoe. The Hurons stopped a moment, and the Mohicans spun ahead.

They left their pursuers far behind, and, getting



into the widest part of the lake, paddled almost to its northern end in safety.

With eyes on the ground and the bushes, they studied out the trail; for scouts, and trappers, and Indians can read the leaves and twigs and grass as you would the pages of a book.

So, step by step, they followed the trail that Uncas had found, until at last Hawkeye stopped and began to look around.

“I scent the Hurons,” he said. “They are near here somewhere.”

Dividing the party, he sent them in different directions to find the Indian encampment.

As Duncan followed on the path that Hawkeye had given him, suddenly he came upon a curious figure. It was stained and befeathered like an Indian, and yet didn't seem to be one. Duncan was still wondering whether to signal his companions, when Hawkeye stepped beside him. As soon as he saw the figure he aimed his rifle; then he put it down.

“It is not a Huron, nor any of the Canada tribes,” he said, “but he is dressed as if he had been plundering a white man—the rascal.”

Then he drew toward the strange figure, either to kill or capture it. He lifted his hand as if to strike. Then Duncan, who was anxiously watching the hunter, saw him shake with silent laughter.

The strange Indian was the poor, half-foolish singing-master.

He told them that the girls were well, though they were no longer together; they were kept

safely, but securely, by their Indian captors—Cora in the lodge of a tribe in the mountains, and Alice in the village of the Hurons, about two miles away.

“Ah,” said Heyward, “how lonely my poor Alice must be, separated from her dear sister.”

“She is,” said the singing-master, “but I have tried to cheer her up with song.”

“Song! Why, can the poor girl sing here, a captive among these blood-thirsty savages?” asked Heyward.

The singing-master, whose name, it should be said, was David Gamut, told the young man that, of course, Alice was sad, and that she cried more than she smiled; but he said that she sometimes would sing hymns with him, and even the Indians were surprised at the beauty of their songs.

“But do they let you go about like this?” asked Heyward.

“They do,” David replied. “I suppose my music does them so much good that they love to hear my voice, and let me come and go as I please.”

Hawkeye smiled, and looking at Heyward nodded toward David and tapped his own forehead with his fingers.

By this he meant that David Gamut was not just right in his head, and that the Indians, who never harm a crazy man or one who is half-witted, did not stop David in his coming and going.

Then Heyward and Hawkeye got David to tell them the whole story of his and the sisters' captivity, and what the Fox had done to throw pursuers off the track and get his captives to a place of safety.

David told them of the tribe with whom Cora had been placed. He did not think they were Hurons, but he knew that they were somewhat friendly with the Fox's tribe, which had encamped so near them.

The two Mohicans and Hawkeye listened carefully to David's story.

"What is the totem of these people?" asked the scout.

"I don't know what their totem is. But I have seen strange images painted about, which they seem to take pride in—one especially, a foul and horrid beast."

"A serpent?" asked Hawkeye, quickly.

"No; but another low and creeping thing," David answered; "a tortoise."

"Ugh!" broke out both the Mohicans, while Hawkeye nodded thoughtfully.

Then the two Indians talked together earnestly in their own language, and Chingachgook, opening his mantle, showed, worked upon his breast in blue, the figure of a tortoise.

At last Hawkeye spoke. He told Colonel Munro and Heyward that the totem of the Indians was the mark of certain families of redskins, and that those with the same mark were brothers, pledged to help each other, even though they belonged to different tribes. The sagamore, Chingachgook, he told them, was of the Delaware blood, though of the Mohican tribe, and was the great chief of the Tortoise family, or totem.

"Those with whom the lady, Cora, is placed, are some of those of the Tortoise clan," he added.

“Perhaps we may work upon them and set the girl free; perhaps not. But we can try, though the way is a hard and dangerous one. For, you see, there has been a long quarrel between even these brothers of the Tortoise clan, and the tomahawks of the Delaware are against those of the Mohican.”

They talked long of what they might do to rescue the sisters. Heyward even declared himself ready to rush into the Indian camp and carry Alice away by force. But Hawkeye showed him how foolish and impossible this was, and said that it was much the best way to have David go back as if nothing had happened, though he could let the girls know that help was near. Then, when the rescuers made a signal like the cry of the bird called the whip-poor-will, David was to come into the woods.

But here Heyward broke in. He, too, would go with David, he declared. “Fix me up to look like a fool or a mad fellow, and I will go. I will do everything I can to save my dear Alice.”

Hawkeye tried to stop him, but it was no use. The young man was determined to go.

“Fix me up,” he said; “disguise me, paint me, make me anything you choose, but go I will. David says the Indians are of different tribes; you say they may be of different clans. Cora is with the new people. Alice is with the Hurons. You may work as you please to release Cora; I will go myself into the Huron camp and rescue Alice, or die.”

When Hawkeye saw how brave and determined young Heyward was, he did not try to hold him

back any longer, but, instead, did what he could to help him.

“The sagamore,” he said, pointing to Chingachgook, “has as many paints as a picture-man. He can use them, too. Sit down on this log. He can make a fool or a crazy fellow of you so well that you will not know yourself.”

So Heyward sat down, and Chingachgook set to work to disguise him by painting. This he did so well that when he was through Heyward's face looked like that of some simple traveling juggler rather than that of a soldier of the king. His uniform he had already exchanged for a suit of buckskin.

When all was ready, Heyward bade Colonel Munro an affectionate good-by, and promised to rescue his dear youngest daughter or die in the attempt.

Hawkeye then led Heyward aside and told him how to act. He said that he should leave Colonel Munro and Chingachgook together while he and Uncas tried to get at Cora among the Hurons.

“And now,” he said, taking the young soldier by the hand, “good-by and God bless you. You have pluck and spirit, a stout heart and a true one. Be careful. You will need to be as sharp as a needle if you are to get the best of a Mingo. You are good and true, but to get the better of a Mingo you may have to do things that a white man and a soldier would not think of doing.”

Then Heyward and David left him, and the scout, looking after the brave young man in open

admiration, slowly shook his head, and then, turning, disappeared with his companions in the forest.

After walking about half an hour, David and Heyward came suddenly upon a lot of Indian boys. When the boys saw the newcomers they disappeared with a yell, but their cry brought some of the older Indians from their lodges, and Duncan Heyward had to put on the air of his make-believe character.

He followed David into the lodge. It was the council-house of the tribe, and was built of bark and branches. Within were many old men and warriors, and a flaring torch cast its red glare upon the faces and figures of this savage throng, who sat about silently as David and Heyward entered and seated themselves upon the pile of brush that each man brought for himself from a great pile in the lodge. They sat long in silence; but at last one of the older warriors spoke, and to him Heyward explained that he was a doctor—what the Indians call a medicine-man—sent by the French governor to his red brothers, the Hurons of the Great Lakes, far to the westward of that place, to see if any were sick and needed healing.

“But why are you painted?” the chief asked. “We have heard that our white brothers boast that their faces are pale.”

This was a sharp question, but Heyward was quick with an answer.

“When an Indian chief comes among his white fathers,” the young man replied, with steady and

quiet voice, "he lays aside his buffalo robe to wear the shirt that is given him. My red brothers have given me paint and I wear it."

This was a ready and sensible answer, and the Indians gave the gesture and grunt of pleasure. Heyward thought his way would now be easy, when suddenly a long, high, shrill war-whoop startled all the lodge and sent all the warriors flocking through the door. Outside the encampment was alive, men, women, and children, old as well as young, making a great hullabaloo, as if welcoming with pleasure some unexpected event. Heyward went out with David to see what it was all about.

It was the return of a war party, and with them came a prisoner. The squaws and boys gathered about him and began to taunt and plague him with insulting words, trying to make him angry. But he never said a word.

And as he stood there, unconcerned and haughty, caring nothing for the words and laughter and insults of his tormentors, leaning carelessly and quietly against the safety post, his face was suddenly turned toward a strong and blazing light, and then Heyward recognized the captive. It was Uncas, the Mohican.

As he looked upon the young Indian in surprise and amazement, wondering how he came to be a prisoner in the power of the Hurons, a warrior came forward, and, driving back the yelling women and children, took Uncas by the arm and led him into the council-lodge.

There all the chiefs and warriors followed; Heyward entered also, and no one stopped him.

In the midst of his captors Uncas still stood calm and collected. Even his Huron foemen admired his courage.

“Delaware,” said one of the principal chiefs, addressing Uncas, “though of a nation of women, you have shown yourself a man. I would give you food, but he who eats with a Huron is his friend. You are our foe. Rest here in peace until the morning. Then you die.”

“Seven nights and as many days have I fasted on the trail of the Huron,” said Uncas. “I can travel the path of death without waiting to eat.”

“Two of my young men are in pursuit of your companion,” said the chief; “when they return, then will our wise men say to you, live or die.”

“Your young men will never get back,” said Uncas. “Twice has your prisoner heard a gun that he knows. A Huron has no ears to hear that sound.”

Heyward knew who Uncas meant—he had heard the gun of Hawkeye.

“If your tribe are so skilful, why are you, one of the bravest, here?”

“I was trapped by a flying coward, not taken like a man, in open fight,” said Uncas. “Even the cunning beaver may be caught, if he falls into the snare.”

The torches died out; the throng of warriors departed; but Heyward was able to get near Uncas and to hear him say:



“The Hurons are dogs. The Gray Head” (by which he meant Colonel Munro) “and the sagamore are safe. Go! We are strangers. I have said enough.”

Heyward would have heard more, but Uncas quietly forced him out of danger, and he slowly left the lodge and mingled with the dusky forms without. But still, as the lights would flicker up, he could see within the lodge the upright figure of the Mohican, Uncas.

Heyward wandered among the lodges, trying to find some sign or trace of the lost Alice, while, at the same time, he worried about the fate of Uncas.

Straying from hut to hut, only to meet with fresh disappointments, he walked around the whole Indian village, and so came back again to the council-lodge, where the warriors were again assembled, smoking the pipe of council.

Hoping to find David, the singing-master, Heyward entered the council-lodge; but the “non-composer,”\* as Hawkeye called the poor David, was not there. Uncas still stood under guard, like some firm statue rather than a living man.

Suddenly the doorway of the lodge was darkened by the form of a tall and powerful warrior. He entered, and, as he seated himself upon the same brush heap with Heyward, the young soldier felt his heart drop with horror. The newcomer was his bitter enemy, the Sly-Fox.

\*This is Hawkeye’s way of using the expression “*non-compos mentis*,” a Latin term for a person of feeble mind.

Pipes were relighted, and for ten minutes no word was spoken. All smoked in silence.

Then one of the chiefs told of the capture of the Mohican, or the Delaware, as the Hurons called him, and pointed at the silent Uncas.

The Fox looked at the young Mohican. As their eyes met, the form of Uncas dilated; his nostrils opened like those of a tiger at bay; but still he stood unmoved. But, upon the face of the Fox, came a look of fierce joy; he gave a great breath of satisfaction, and with that came the words:

“The Elk; it is the Bounding Elk.”

As the Hurons recognized the name of their bitterest enemy, and knew that Uncas was in their power, they started to their feet, and repeated his name in surprise; outside, the women and children hearing the name, echoed it with a shrill howl of joy.

Uncas enjoyed his victory, but made no sign beyond the quiet smile of scorn. But the Fox had seen that smile, and, raising his arm, shook it at the captive until its silver ornaments rattled in his excitement.

“Mohican, you die!” he cried. Then to the other Indians he said:

“Go! Take him where there is silence. Let us see if a Delaware can sleep at night, and in the morning die.”

The warriors on guard led their prisoner away, but as he passed from the lodge the eye of Uncas caught that of Heyward, and in it the young soldier read, “Hope.”

The Fox, too, left the lodge. The other warriors fell to smoking once more, and after a half-hour or so the chief arose, and, beckoning to the supposed physician, passed out into the evening, followed by Heyward.

They turned aside from the Indian encampment and walked toward the mountain. A winding path led through the low brushwood, while the bonfires, made by the Indian boys at play, lighted up the scene in fitful flashes.

One of these streams of light fell across their path, and, lighting up the whole face of the mountain, disclosed a dark and mysterious-looking object in the path before them.

As they paused, it arose. The large, black ball began to sway to and fro before them, and at length Heyward discovered, from its actions and its growls, that it was a bear; but not a bear bent on their destruction. It appeared more like a tamed animal—the pet or companion of some Indian conjuror or medicine man, as was often the case.

The Huron saw this, and proceeded; but Heyward was not used to such monsters, and he passed the beast in some uncertainty. When, however, they had pushed past the bear, the monster rose, and swung along in the path behind them.

Heyward was uneasy at this, but just then his Indian conductor pushed aside a door of bark, and the young soldier, following, entered a cavern in the bosom of the mountain.

The bear was right on their heels, and came into the cavern behind them. They were now in a

straight and long gallery in a chasm of the rocks where retreat would bring them right against the big bear. It was not a pleasant situation, but Heyward made the best of it, and kept as closely as possible to his conductor. The bear growled at his heels, and once or twice pressed against him, as if to push him out of the den.

Soon a glimmer of light appeared before them, and they entered a large cavity in the rock, which had been divided by stone, sticks, and bark into numerous rooms.

Into one of these the Huron led young Heyward, and there he found a sick woman, surrounded by squaws, and in the center of them his friend David.

He saw at once that the woman was too sick to live. But while he wondered what he could do to carry out his make-believe part of a doctor, David was before him. The half-witted singing-master, believing that music could cure everything, began singing a hymn. The Indians, who never interfere with the actions of a crazy man, did not stop him, and Heyward was glad of the chance to think out what he should do.

But as the last sound of the song died away, the young soldier was surprised at hearing the strains repeated, he almost thought sung, behind him. Turning, he saw crouched near him in a corner of the cabin, and swinging restlessly from side to side, the shaggy monster of the bear that had followed him into the cave.

At the sound, David stopped in surprise. He looked at the bear; he looked at Heyward; and

then, saying, "She expects you and is near you," he rushed from the cavern.

After David had gone, Heyward sat surprised and puzzled, while the bear still moved restlessly to and fro.

But the Huron chief, who had brought the young soldier to the sick-room, sent the squaws out of the apartment, and, pointing at the sick girl, said, "Now let my brother show his power."

Heyward was puzzled, and yet knew that he must do something without delay if he was to play the doctor as he had intended. Just what he would have done, he could not say; but the bear, as if to interrupt him, kept growling and moving more savagely than ever.

The Huron chief looked at the beast.

"The cunning spirits are jealous," he said. "I go, brother; deal justly by this sick one. Peace," he added, beckoning to the restless bear; "I go."

He left the cavern, and Heyward was alone in that wild and desolate place with a dying woman and a dangerous bear. But when the Indian was far away and all was still, suddenly the bear's actions changed. Instead of growling angrily and moving restlessly about, his whole shaggy body shook violently, as if some odd thoughts were disturbing him. He stood erect; the huge claws pawed clumsily about his head; then the huge head itself fell back, and out of the skin appeared the honest, sturdy, silently laughing countenance of Hawkeye, the scout.

Heyward was speechless with surprise.

"Hist!" said the scout. "Be quiet. Any sound will bring the varlets back."

"What does this mean?" whispered the soldier.

"Where is Uncas?" asked Hawkeye.

"A captive," Heyward answered. "He dies in the morning."

"I feared so," the scout said sadly. "We fell in with the war party and he was taken. He was too hot on the trail and fell into the trap. I followed after, and had a scrimmage or two with the Hurons until I came almost into their camp. Then, what should I do but happen upon one of their medicine-men, dressing up in this bearskin to go through some of his mummeries. I straightened him out with a rap on the head, left him with a gag in his mouth, and, crawling into the skin, played the bear so as to get in near to Uncas and to you. Where is the lady?"

"I do not know," answered Heyward, disconsolately. "I have searched every lodge, but have found no trace of her."

"You heard what the singing man said," remarked Hawkeye. "'She expects you, and is nigh you,' he said."

"Yes; but I thought he meant this sick woman, whom I can do nothing for," Heyward answered.

"No, no; the simpleton meant more, I know," said Hawkeye. "See, here are walls. Walls are for a bear to climb. There may be honey hid in those rocks."

So, laughing at his own joke, the scout, still in the bearskin, climbed to the top of the rocky wall;

but no sooner was he up than he slipped down again.

"She is here," he whispered. "By that door you will find her. I would have spoken to her, but I was afraid a monster like me would disturb her."

Heyward speedily cleared the paint from his face in order not to alarm Alice by his appearance, and hurried along the passage shown him by Hawkeye. The scout, left alone, searched about to see what provisions the Hurons had that he could draw upon, if needed; for this cavern was one of their storehouses.

Heyward followed the passage and finally found Alice in an apartment full of the things which the Indians had brought from the captured Fort. She was hoping to see him, for David had told her he was near.

Alice was overjoyed to see Duncan Heyward once more. She felt sure that he would soon, somehow, get her out of that terrible place. They talked long and earnestly together, but just as Heyward was telling Alice how much he thought of her and what he would do for her, he felt a tap on his shoulder, and, looking up, saw the mocking face of the Fox looking down at them.

He laughed wickedly as Heyward looked about for some weapon to attack him and found none.

"The palefaces trap the cunning beavers," said the Huron, "but the redskin knows how to take the paleface."

"Huron, do your worst!" cried Heyward, never

thinking what that worst might mean—a death at the stake for both the captives. “I despise you.”

“Will the white man say that at the stake?” the Fox said.

“Here, to your face, or before all your tribe,” cried the soldier.

“The Sly Fox is a great chief,” returned the Indian. “He will go and bring his young men, to let them see whether a paleface can laugh at torture.”

He turned to go, when right in his path rose the figure of a great bear. Hawkeye was on his trail.

As the bear, standing upon its legs, beat the air with its paws, the Huron motioned it aside impatiently.

“Fool!” he said, “go play with children and squaws. Leave men to their wisdom.”

But, as he tried to pass the bear, the beast thrust out its paws and caught the Indian in a grasp stronger than any “bear’s hug” could be.

Heyward let go of Alice, whom he had caught to save her from the wrath of the Indian, and watched the struggle breathlessly. But when he saw the Huron’s arms pinned to his side by the strength of the powerful muscles of the scout, he caught up a buckskin thong and wound it all about the legs, arms, and feet of the Fox, until their enemy was securely bound in twenty folds of the thong. Then Hawkeye released his hold on the Indian and Heyward threw him to the ground. Then the scout put a gag in the Indian’s mouth, so



that he could not call for help, and then told Heyward to take Alice quickly and follow him out into the woods.

Heyward did as he was told, and, with Alice in his arms, passed out of the apartment. They looked in at the sick Indian woman. She still lay in the same quiet condition. As they came near the door of the cavern they heard voices outside. It was the friends of the sick woman waiting until the medicine-man should tell them to come in.

"You talk, Major," said the scout. "Tell 'em we have shut up the evil spirit in the cave, and are taking the sick woman to the woods for strengthening herbs and roots. Be shrewd and cunning."

Then the scout became the bear once more, and they came into the air.

Then Hawkeye and Heyward, carrying the silent Alice, passed into the woods.

When Alice had recovered, and the three had walked far from the Indian village, Hawkeye told them what to do.

"We can not escape this way," he said. "The Hurons will be on our trail before we have gone a dozen miles. Your only hope is the village of the other people, where this lady's sister is held. If they are true Delawares, you will be safe from the Hurons. Follow this brook, and climb the hill, and you will see their camp-fires. Go, now, and Heaven be with you!"

"But you?" cried Heyward. "What shall you do?"

"Uncas is with the Hurons," the scout replied.

“The last of the high blood of the Mohicans is in their power. I must go to him. If he dies, I will die in his defense.”

They begged him not to go, but it was useless; he was determined.

“I taught the boy how to use the rifle,” he said. “I have fought by his side in many a bloody scrimmage, and so long as I could hear the crack of his piece in one ear and that of his father, the sagamore, in the other, I knew no enemy was on my back. Winters and summers, nights and days, have we roved the wilderness together, eating of the same dish, one sleeping while the other watched, and I tell you Uncas shall not be carried to torture without my being at hand.”

Then he turned and walked back toward the Huron lodges, while Heyward and Alice, after mournfully watching his departure, went forward on their way to the village of the Delawares.

Slowly and thoughtfully Hawkeye walked back to the Huron encampment. There he found David Gamut in his lodge, and made himself known, greatly to the surprise of the singing-master, for Hawkeye still wore his bearskin.

“Where is Uncas?” demanded Hawkeye, thrusting his head out of the bearskin.

“A captive, and doomed to death,” replied David, sadly.

“Can you lead me to him?” asked Hawkeye.

“I can; but what good will it do you or him?” inquired David.

But Hawkeye told him to go ahead; and, cov-

ering his head again with the bearskin, followed David from his hut.

As they walked, Hawkeye learned from David that, because of his supposed foolishness, the singing-master was allowed to visit Uncas whenever he desired. He had also talked and sung with one of the Mohican's guards, and, as an Indian likes such attention, the Huron guard let the crazy singing-master do about as he pleased. When Hawkeye had found all this out, he carefully laid his plans so as to use David to help out the scheme he had thought out for the help of Uncas.

As the two approached the lodge in which Uncas, the Mohican, was kept prisoner, Hawkeye did not try to hide from the Indians. He knew that they supposed the figure in the bearskin to be one of their wise conjurors or medicine-men, and that they thought he and the foolish singing-master were to take part in some mysterious actions with the captive.

The Indians drew aside from the lodge door, and David and Hawkeye entered.

In a distant corner of the silent and gloomy room they saw Uncas, lying down and bound hand and foot. Hawkeye told David to stay by the door and keep out the curious Hurons, while he, wrapped in the bearskin, approached the Mohican.

The young Indian did not even look up at the disguised scout. He supposed that the Hurons had sent the animal in to annoy or frighten him, and he would not betray the least sign or movement of interest.

Then the supposed bear began to growl and dance, and as he did so Uncas saw that there was something not just right in the actions of the brute. But he looked all the more contemptuously and scornfully upon the false bear, and, leaning against the wall, shut his eyes as if he wished not to see so disagreeable and foolish a sight.

At that instant there came from David the signal arranged by Hawkeye—the low hissing of a snake.

Uncas rose to his feet as soon as he heard the sound. He bent his head and looked cautiously around until once more he gazed upon the shaggy hide of the bear. As he did so, out of the bear's mouth came the same hissing sound as of the snake.

Then Uncas said low but deeply:

“Hawkeye!”

As he spoke David came toward him.

“Cut his bands,” said Hawkeye.

The singing-master did as he was told, and Uncas, relieved of his bonds, stood erect and free. At the same moment Hawkeye dropped from him the bearskin.

“Put on the skin, Uncas,” he said, “you can play the bear as well as I.”

Uncas silently slipped into the skin, while Hawkeye, turning to the singing-master, said:

“Now, friend David, you won't mind an exchange of garments. Take my hunting-cap and shirt; give me your blanket and hat. Let me have your book and spectacles, too. If ever we meet again, you shall have them back.”

The singing-master made the exchange without objection, and Hawkeye appeared in David's clothes and glasses.

"When the Hurons find you here in place of Uncas," said Hawkeye, "though they will at first be angry, they will remember that you are a non-computer, and will not harm you. But if you wish to take the chances with us, do so. Which will you do—make the rush, or stay quietly here?"

"I will stay," replied David. "The young Delaware has battled bravely for me. This and more will I brave for him."

"Spoken like a man, and a brave one, friend David," said Hawkeye. "Lie still, keep silent; but when you must speak, break out at once in singing. That will tell the Indians what and who you are. Farewell, and God bless you. You are a good and brave man," and shaking the singing-master warmly by the hand, he left the lodge with Uncas dressed as the bear.

Hawkeye drew himself up to look like the singing-master, and, keeping time with his hand, began to sing one of David's hymns. As he drew near the Indians he sang louder and more vigorously, but the Hurons stopped him.

"Is the Delaware dog afraid?" asked an Indian. "Will the Hurons hear his groans and whines?"

The bear growled so savagely that the Indian dropped his hold on the scout and eyed the brute, uncertain whether it were bear or man. Hawkeye burst out into a new and louder song, and the Indians, remembering that the singer was a crazy

man, drew back and let both him and his companion pass.

Slowly and calmly Uncas and Hawkeye passed through the encampment. They saw the Indians cautiously approach the hut where the supposed Uncas lay; but no one entered yet, for fear of the spell put on the captive, and at last, through the darkness, the two got clear of the village.

Then they began to run toward the forest. As they did so, they heard a long, loud cry from the lodge in which Uncas had been confined.

Uncas dropped his bearskin.

Another chorus of cries came to their ears.

Hawkeye rushed on, and presently drew from the bushes two rifles, with powder- and shot-bags.

"Here is your weapon, Uncas," he said, "and here is Killdeer. Now let them follow if they dare."

And throwing their rifles to a low trail, like hunters ready for a shot, they dashed forward, and were soon deep in the darkness of the forest.

As for David, when the Hurons discovered that it was he, instead of Uncas, in the lodge, he expected, from their cry of surprise and rage, that they would surely kill him. But, remembering Hawkeye's advice, he broke out into song, and, as fitting his own death, chose a funeral hymn.

The Indians, hearing this, remembered that poor David was not all right in his head, and, leaving him alone, they rushed into the air to arouse the village and track the fugitives. It was not long before they found the Fox gagged and bound.

“An evil spirit has been among us,” said one of the Hurons, “and the Delaware has blinded our eyes.”

“An evil spirit?” cried the Fox. “Yes, evil. It is he who has taken so many Huron scalps. It is he who bound the arms of the Fox.”

“Who is it?” asked several voices.

“It is the dog who carries the heart and cunning of a Huron under a pale skin—the Long Carbine!”

At the sound of the feared and hated Indian name of Hawkeye, the scout, every warrior sprang to his feet, and when it was understood that this daring foeman had been not only in their encampment but within their grasp, all the Hurons were frantic with rage. But, with the usual restraint of the red man, they speedily became quiet again, and returned with the Fox to the council-lodge. Here he told the assembled warriors how they had been insulted, and disgraced by these “dogs of pale-faces.”

At once all were bent on revenge; a long consultation followed; and before daylight, next morning, the Huron Fox, and twenty picked warriors, armed with rifles but without their hideous war-paint, left the encampment, and in Indian file—that is, one by one—walked along the trail that led to the village of the Tortoises, where Cora had been sent, and where Heyward and Alice had fled for refuge. These Tortoises were a half-tribe of the Delawares, which, in years before, had separated from the body of the nation, and, migrating far to the North, had lived in enmity

with their former brethren, and generally in sympathy with the Hurons. They were, however, rather quiet in the present contest, and were treated by the Hurons with great consideration in the hope of winning their active help.

There was excitement in the lodges of the Delawares, for among them had come both guests and captives. These were housed in a large lodge in the center of the village, and already the chiefs were in consultation as to how they should be treated.

Among the Indians there was a great respect for hospitality. A guest in a camp or village was sacred. He could not be harmed even by an enemy, nor be troubled in any way. If an Indian said "You are welcome," the person so welcomed became a guest whose safety was the Indian's care, and whom he would let no one molest or take away.

Hawkeye knew this, and when he sent Heyward and Alice there, when he went there himself, although they presented themselves as prisoners, they also claimed the rights of hospitality, because they had gone into the Delaware village of their own accord and not as captured prisoners. So they felt safe.

As for Cora, she had been taken as a prisoner to the Delawares by the Huron Fox. They had promised to keep her safely, but she must be given up to the Fox whenever he came or sent for her.

The Huron knew this, but his revenge was not satisfied with one victim; he desired to strike all



who were against him, and it was with some plan of this sort in his mind that he sought the Delaware village.

He reached it during the consultation of the chiefs. He entered it without war-paint, as a friend asking hospitality; and, though the Delawares feared and disliked him, they could not act against one who had accepted the hospitality of their tribe.

The Delawares welcomed the Huron with courtesy, and, after a breakfast had been offered him, the Fox asked the Delawares if his prisoner, Cora, had given them any trouble.

"She is welcome," they replied.

"If she gives any trouble to my brothers," said the Fox, "let her be sent to my squaws. The path between the Huron and the Delaware is open."

But the only reply was, "She is welcome."

"I have brought gifts to my brother," said the Fox. "His nation would not go on the war-path, because they did not think it well: but their friends have remembered where they live."

When he had thus announced his liberal intention, the crafty chief arose and gravely spread his presents before the dazzled eyes of his hosts. They consisted principally of trinkets of little value, plundered from the slaughtered women of the captured Fort. In the division of the baubles the cunning Huron discovered no less art than in their selection. While he bestowed those of greater value on the two most distinguished

warriors, he gave to those of less note compliments as well as presents, and so won all to him.

The Delawares became less cautious and cold, after the gifts and words of the Fox had flattered them, and their chief said to their visitor:

“My brother is a wise chief. He is welcome.”

“The Hurons love their friends, the Delawares,” said the Sly Fox, “and why should they not? The redskins should be friends, and use their eyes, together, to watch the white men. Has not my brother scented spies in the woods?”

The Delaware chief, whose Indian name meant “The Hard Heart,” forgot the sternness that gave him the name. He grew friendly.

“There have been strange moccasins about my camp,” he said. “They have been tracked into my lodges.”

“Did not my brother beat out the dogs?” asked the Fox, who now knew that those he sought were there.

“It would not do,” answered Hard Heart. “The stranger is always welcome to the Delaware.”

“Yes, the stranger is,” said the Fox, “but not the spy.”

“The English have sent out their scouts,” said the Fox. “They have been in my wigwams, but they found there no one to say welcome. Then they fled to the Delawares—‘For,’ say they, ‘the Delawares are our friends; their minds are turned from their French father.’”

The Delawares felt this word. For in the war between France and England they had taken no

side, although their villages were, some of them, in the French country of Canada. But they would not admit that they had deserted the French.

“Let my father look in my face,” said Hard Heart; “he will see no change. It is true, my young men did not go out on the war-path; they had dreams for not doing so. But they love and venerate the great French chief.”

“Will he think so when he hears that his greatest enemy is fed in the camp of his children? when he is told a bloody Englishman smokes at your fire? that the paleface who has slain so many of his friends goes in and out among the Delawares? Go! My great French father is not a fool!”

“Where is the Englishman that the Delawares fear?” returned the other. “Who has slain my young men? Who is the mortal enemy of my Great Father?”

“The Long Carbine!”

The Delaware warriors started at the well-known name of Hawkeye, the scout, betraying by their amazement that they now learned for the first time that one so dangerous to the Indian allies of France was within their power.

“What does my brother mean?” demanded Hard Heart, in a tone that, by its wonder, far exceeded the usual calm, self-controlled manner of his race.

“A Huron never lies,” returned the Fox coldly, leaning his head against the side of the lodge and drawing his slight robe across his tawny breast. “Let the Delawares count their prisoners; they

will find one whose skin is neither red nor pale.”

A long and thoughtful pause succeeded. The chief consulted apart with his companions, and messengers were dispatched to collect certain others of the most distinguished men of the tribe.

The council of the Delawares was short. It was followed by a general assemblage of the whole tribe. The warriors began to collect in front of the encampment, and there the Fox went also, to see what would be done.

In a half-hour all the tribe, including even the women and children, were in the place of meeting. The morning sun, just climbing above the mountain tops, lighted up the scene. Fully a thousand Indians of the Delaware nation were now in assembly.

But so important a gathering only the oldest and most experienced chieftain could control. No one moved. All seemed to be waiting for one particular person to preside, and the looks of the whole throng seemed fixed upon a particular lodge, that was protected from the weather more carefully than any other.

Suddenly the door of this lodge parted, and every man, woman, and child rose from the ground and stood waiting.

Three old men came from the lodge; but one was very, very old. His form seemed bent with the weight of a hundred years and more. His dark, wrinkled countenance was in singular contrast with the long, white locks which floated on

his shoulders, long, thick, and massive, as if it had been generations since his hair had been cut.

The dress of this patriarch was rich and imposing, though strictly after the simple fashions of the tribe. His robe was of the finest skins, from which the fur had been taken in order to admit of a figured representation of various deeds in arms done in former years. His bosom was loaded with medals, some in massive silver, and one or two even in gold, gifts of various Christian rulers during the long period of his life. So soon as the first hum of excitement and pleasure which the sudden appearance of this venerated individual created had a little subsided, the name of "Tamenund" was whispered from mouth to mouth. The Huron, Fox, had often heard the fame of this wise and just Delaware—a reputation that even proceeded so far as to bestow on him the rare gift of holding secret communion with the Great Spirit, and which has since brought over his name, with some slight alteration, to the white possessors of his ancient territory, under the name of "Tammany," the saint and sachem of the New York Indians.

The Huron chief therefore, stepped eagerly out a little from the throng, to a spot whence he might catch a nearer glimpse of the features of the man whose decision was likely to produce so deep an influence on his own fortunes.

The old man's eyes were closed as he passed the Huron, and, leaning upon his two aged assistants, he walked slowly to the chief seat of

council, and seated himself, like a father, in the center of his nation.

Then several of the younger warriors, at the command of a chief, left the crowd and went to the lodge in which the white prisoner-guests were kept.

In a few moments they returned, and with them came the prisoners who were the cause of all this stir and consultation of a nation—the sisters, Cora and Alice, Heyward, the soldier, and Hawkeye, the scout.

Cora stood foremost among the prisoners, entwining her arms in those of Alice in the tenderness of sisterly love. Notwithstanding the fearful and threatening array of savages on every side of her, no fear on her own account could prevent the noble-minded maiden from keeping her eyes fastened on the pale and anxious features of the trembling Alice. Close at their side stood Heyward, with an interest in both at this moment of intense uncertainty. Hawkeye had placed himself a little in the rear. Uncas was not there.

When perfect silence was again restored, and after the usual long, impressive pause, one of the two aged chiefs who sat at the side of the patriarch arose, and demanded aloud, in very intelligible English, "Which of my prisoners is the Long Carbine?"

Neither Duncan nor the scout answered. After a pause Hawkeye spoke. He told them that he had not answered to the name of the Long Carbine because Killdeer was not a carbine, but a grooved

rifle, and, besides, he did not allow any Mingo to give him a name when he had one of his own. "My father," he said, "named me Nathaniel; my friends, the Delawares, called me Hawkeye; and those are the names I answer to."

The eyes of all present were now turned, on the instant, toward the tall form of this pretender to the distinguished name. Some of their old men consulted together in private, and then, as it would seem, they determined to question their visitor on the subject.

Then the Fox, standing in the center of the circle, and directly before the prisoners, began to speak.

He spoke of the difference between the red man and the white; of the greed, and tyranny, and robberies of the white man; of the greatness of the Indians until the white man had come to their destruction; of the power of the Delawares in the old days; of their deeds, their glory, their happiness, their losses, their defeats, their misery; of his great reverence and love for them, even though he came of another tribe and nation. Then he stopped.

"I have done," he said. "My tongue is still, for my heart is glad. I listen."

Old Tamenund, or Tammany, the aged chief of all the Delawares, said:

"Who speaks of things gone? Why tell the Delawares of good that is past? Better thank the Great Spirit for what remains to us. What does the Huron want?"

"Justice," replied the Fox, standing before the

chief. "His prisoners are with his brothers, and he comes for his own."

Tamenund turned his head toward one of his supporters, and listened to the short explanation the man gave. Then, facing the Fox, he regarded him a moment with a deep attention; after which he said, in a low and unwilling voice:

"Justice is the law of the Great Spirit. My children, give the stranger food. Then, Huron, take thine own and depart."

On the delivery of this solemn judgment, the patriarch seated himself, and closed his eyes again, as if better pleased with the images of his own mind within than with the visible objects of the world. The words were barely uttered when four or five of the younger warriors, stepping behind Heyward and the scout, passed thongs so dexterously and rapidly around their arms as to hold them both in instant bondage.

The Fox cast a look of triumph around the whole assembly before he proceeded to the execution of his purpose. Perceiving that the men were unable to offer any resistance, he turned his looks on Cora. She met his gaze with an eye so calm and firm that his resolution wavered. Then, turning swiftly, he caught up Alice from the arms of the warrior against whom she leaned, and, beckoning Heyward to follow, he motioned for the encircling crowd to open. But Cora, instead of obeying the impulse he had expected, rushed to the feet of the patriarch, Tamenund, and, raising her voice, exclaimed aloud:



“Just and venerable Delaware, on thy wisdom and power we lean for mercy! Be deaf to yonder monster, who poisons thy ears with falsehoods to feed his thirst for blood. Thou that hast lived long, and that hast seen the evil of the world, shouldst know how to be kind to the miserable.”

The old man opened his eyes slowly and looked at the queenly girl.

“Who art thou?” he said.

Cora told him that she was a woman of the hated English race, but begged for mercy, for release, for permission simply to depart, and not to be delivered to the cruel Huron Fox.

Then she said, “Is Tamenund a father?”

The old man looked out upon the people, who revered him as their chief ruler. Then he smiled benignantly.

“Of a nation,” he answered.

“For myself,” said Cora, “I ask nothing. But yonder is one who has never known the weight of Heaven’s displeasure until now. She is the daughter of an old and failing man, whose days are near their close. She has many, very many, to love her and delight in her; and she is too good, much too precious, to become the victim of that villain.”

“I know that the palefaces are a proud and hungry race. I know that they claim not only to have the earth, but that the meanest of their color is better than the sachems of the red man. The dogs and crows of their tribes,” continued the earnest old chieftain, without heeding the wounded

spirit of his listener, "would bark and caw before they would take a woman to their wigwams whose blood was not of the color of snow."

"It is so," said Cora, drawing a long breath, as if reviving from a trance, raising her face, and shaking back her shining veil, with a kindling eye that contradicted the death-like paleness of her countenance; "but why—it is not permitted us to inquire. There is yet one of thine own people who has not been brought before thee; before thou lettest the Huron depart in triumph, hear him speak."

Observing Tamenund to look about him doubtfully, one of his companions said:

"It is a snake—a redskin in the pay of the English. We keep him for the torture."

"Let him come in," the old chief commanded.

There was a pause; then the circle opened, and Uncas stood before him, his eye fixed on the patriarch.

"With what tongue does the prisoner speak?" he asked.

"Like his fathers," Uncas replied; with the tongue of a Delaware."

At this sudden and unexpected answer, a low, fierce yell ran through the multitude that might not inaptly be compared to the growl of the lion, as his spirit is first awakened—a fearful omen of the weight of his future anger. The effect was equally strong on the sage, though differently shown. He passed a hand before his eyes, as if to exclude the least evidence of so shameful a spectacle, while he

repeated, in his low, guttural tones, the words he had just heard.

“A Delaware!” said the aged chief and father of his tribe, “thou art not worthy of thy name. He who deserts his tribe is a traitor. He is yours, my children. Deal justly by him.”

It was the sentence of Uncas. At once a cry of vengeance burst from all the nation, and a chief proclaimed, in a high voice, that the captive was condemned to endure the dreadful trial of torture by fire.

At once they prepared for the sacrifice. But the prisoners were deeply moved by the sad fate of their friend, Uncas. Heyward struggled madly with his captors; Hawkeye began to look around him, earnestly and hopefully, as if he expected aid of some sort for his friend, while Cora again threw herself at the feet of the patriarch, a suppliant for mercy.

Throughout the whole of these trying moments, Uncas had alone preserved his serenity. He looked on the preparations with a steady eye, and, when the tormentors came to seize him, he met them with a firm and upright attitude. One among them, if possible more fierce and savage than his fellows, seized the hunting-shirt of the young warrior, and, at a single effort, tore it from his body. Then, with a yell of frantic pleasure, he leaped toward his unresisting victim, and prepared to lead him to the stake. But, at that moment, when he appeared most a stranger to the feelings of humanity, the purpose of the savage was arrested

as suddenly as if some unknown power had appeared in the behalf of Uncas. The eyeballs of the Delaware seemed to start from their sockets; his mouth opened, and his whole form became frozen in an attitude of amazement. Raising his hand, with a slow and regulated motion, he pointed with a finger to the bosom of the captive. His companions crowded about him in wonder, and every eye was, like his own, fastened intently on the figure of a small tortoise beautifully tattooed on the breast of the prisoner, in a bright blue tint.

For a single instant Uncas enjoyed his triumph, calmly smiling on the scene. Then, motioning the crowd away, with a high and haughty sweep of his arm, he advanced in front of the nation with the air of a king, and spoke in a voice louder than the murmur of admiration that ran through the multitude:

“Men of the Lenni Lenape!” he said, “my race upholds the earth! Your feeble tribe stands on my shell! What fire that a Delaware can light would burn the child of my fathers?” he added, pointing proudly to the simple figure marked on his skin. “The blood that came from such a stock would smother your flames! My race is the grandfather of nations!”

“Who art thou?” demanded Tamenund, rising at the startling tones he heard, more than at any meaning conveyed by the language of the prisoner.

“Uncas, the son of Chingachgook,” answered the captive, modestly turning from the nation, and bending his head in reverence to the other’s char-

acter and years; "a son of the great chief, clan of the Turtle."

"The hour of Tamenund is nigh!" exclaimed the sage; "the day is come, at last, to the night! I thank the Great Spirit that one is here to fill my place at the council-fire. Uncas, the child of Uncas, is found! Let the eyes of a dying eagle gaze on the rising sun!"

The youth stepped lightly, but proudly, on the platform, where he became visible to the whole agitated and wondering multitude. Tamenund held him long at the length of his arm, and read every turn in the fine lineaments of his countenance with the untiring gaze of one who recalled days of happiness.

"Is Tamenund a boy?" at length the bewildered prophet exclaimed. "Have I dreamed of so many snows—that my people were scattered like floating sands—of the white men, more plenty than the leaves on the trees? The arrow of Tamenund would not frighten the fawn; his arm is withered like the branch of a dead oak; the snail would be swifter in the race; yet is Uncas before him as they went to battle against the plaefaces! Uncas, the panther of his tribe, the eldest son of the Lenape, the wisest sagamore of the Mohicans! Tell me, ye Delawares, has Tamenund been a sleeper for a hundred winters?"

The calm and deep silence which succeeded these words sufficiently announced the awful reverence with which his people received the utterance of the patriarch. None dared to answer,

though all listened in breathless expectation of what might follow. Uncas, however, looking in his face with the fondness and veneration of a favored child, presumed on his own high and acknowledged rank to reply:

“Four warriors of his race have lived, and died,” he said, “since Uncas, the friend of Tamenund, led his people in battle. The blood of the Turtle has been in many chiefs, but all have gone except Chingachgook, and Uncas, his son.”

“It is true,” said the old man. “Our wise men have often said that two warriors of the unchanged race were in the hills of the English. Why have their seats at the council-fires of the Delawares been so long empty?”

“Once,” said Uncas, “we were rulers and sagamores. But when the Delawares gave way before the white men, we, the Mohicans, said, ‘We are children of the sea. Here will we stay until the Great Spirit says, Come!’ Such, Delawares, is the belief of the children of the Turtle. We are the last of the Mohicans. But our eyes are on the rising, and not on the setting sun. It is enough.”

The Delawares listened with respect. Uncas watched them carefully. Then, when he saw that he was honored by them all, he thought of his white friends. Looking over the throng, he first saw Hawkeye, bound and a prisoner.

He stepped to the side of the scout, and, with a quick and angry stroke of his knife, cut him loose; then, taking him by the hand, he led him to the feet of Tamenund.

“Father,” he said, “look at this paleface—a just man and the friend of the Delawares.”

“What name is his?”

“We call him Hawkeye,” Uncas replied, “for his sight never fails. The Mingos—the Hurons—know him better by the death he gives their warriors. They call him the Long Carbine.”

“The Long Carbine!” exclaimed Tamenund, regarding the scout sternly. “My son has not done well to call him friend.”

“I call him so who so proves himself,” returned the young chief, calmly. “If Uncas is welcome among the Delawares, then is Hawkeye with his friends.”

“The paleface has struck down my young men,” said the old chief. “For this is his name great.”

Then Hawkeye spoke.

“That I have slain the Mingos,” he said, “I am no man to deny, even at their own council-fires; but that, knowingly, my hand has ever harmed a Delaware, is not true, for I am friendly to them and all that belongs to their nation.”

A low exclamation of applause passed among the warriors, who exchanged looks with each other like men that first began to perceive their error.

“Where is the Huron?” demanded Tamenund. “Has he stopped my ears?”

The Fox, whose feelings during that scene in which Uncas had triumphed may be much better imagined than described, answered to the call by stepping boldly in front of the patriarch.

“The just Tamenund,” he said, “will not keep what a Huron has lent.”

“Tell me, son of my brother,” returned the sage, avoiding the dark countenance of the Fox, and turning gladly to the more ingenuous features of Uncas, “has the stranger a conqueror’s right over you?”

“He has none. The panther may get into snares set by the women; but he is strong, and knows how to leap through them.”

“The Long Carbine?”

“Laughs at the Mingos. Go, Huron, ask your squaws the color of a bear.”

“The stranger and the white maiden that came into my camp together?”

“Should journey on an open path.”

“And the woman that the Huron left with my warriors?” Uncas made no reply.

“And the woman that the Mingo has brought into my camp?” repeated Tamenund, gravely.

“She is mine, cried the Fox, shaking his hand in triumph at Uncas. “Mohican, you know that she is mine.”

“My son is silent,” said Tamenund, endeavoring to read the expression of the face that the youth turned from him in sorrow.

“It is so,” was the low answer.

A short and impressive pause succeeded, during which it could be seen that the tribe, reluctantly, admitted the Fox’s claim. Then Tamenund spoke:

“Huron, depart,” he said.

“As he came, just Tamenund?” demanded the cruel Fox.



“Huron, would you take one against her wishes to your wigwam?” said the old chief. “An unwilling maiden makes an unhappy wigwam. Take you the wampum and our love.”

“Nothing but what I brought will I take,” declared the Fox.

“Then, said Tamenund, “depart with thine own. The Great Spirit forbids that a Delaware should be unjust.”

The Fox strode to Cora’s side and grasped her by the arm. The Delawares fell back in silence, and Cora prepared to submit to her fate.

Heyward in vain pleaded with the Fox to release the girl; and Hawkeye offered himself to go in her place as a prisoner to the Hurons.

At his generous proposal a murmur of approval went through the throng. But the Fox paused only a moment. Then looking at Cora, he said:

“The Fox has but one mind, come,” and he put his hand on the shoulder of the captive girl. “A Huron does not talk twice. We will go.”

“Take off your hand,” said Cora. “I will follow you, though it is to my death. Hawkeye, from my soul I thank you. Your generous offer is of no avail. But neither could I accept it. Serve me even more, I pray you, by saving my sister and returning her to my father. Would that I could hear but one last word from his dear lips. Duncan, good-by. Be faithful and kind to Alice.

Then she kissed her unconscious sister, a long deep, loving kiss, and, turning proudly to her

captor, said, "Now, sir, if it please you, I will follow. Go on."

"Go then, brute," cried Heyward, "Go, if you will. These Delawares have their laws, which forbid them to detain you. But—I am not held by their laws. Go, if you wish, and go at once."

The Huron listened to Heyward's threat to follow, at first with a fierce display of joy, and then with a look of cunning coldness.

"The woods are open," he was content with answering, "the 'Open Hand' can come."

"Hold," cried Hawkeye, seizing Duncan by the arm, and detaining him by violence; "you know not the craft of the imp. He would lead you to an ambushment, and your death—"

"Huron," interrupted Uncas, who, submissive to the stern customs of his people, had been an attentive and grave listener to all that passed; "Huron, the justice of the Delawares comes from the Great Spirit. Look at the sun. He is now in the upper branches of the hemlock. Your path is short and open. When the sun is seen above the trees, there will be men on your trail."

"I hear a crow!" exclaimed the Fox, with a taunting laugh. "Go," he added, shaking his hand at the crowd, which had slowly opened to admit his passage—Dogs, rabbits, thieves—I spit on you!"

His parting gibes were listened to in a dead, boding silence, and, with these biting words in his mouth, the triumphant Huron passed unmolested into the forest, followed by his submissive captive,

and protected by the sacred laws of Indian hospitality.

For a while all was still in the council of the Delawares. Then, as the Huron and his prisoner disappeared in the forest and the law of their hospitality had been fulfilled, the reaction came.

“Vengeance!” was the cry. “Death to the wicked Huron.”

The village was in a great stir. The women and children, and the patriarch Tamenund, were sent away or conducted to their lodges, and then all the chiefs and braves of the Lenni Lenape, as the Delawares called their nation in its broadest and loftiest name, gathered for the war-dance and the war-trail.

Then, when the sun stood above the tops of the hemlocks, Uncas saw that the truce of hospitality promised to the Huron was over, and he told his warriors at once to prepare for the warpath.

Hawkeye had sent an Indian boy to the place where his guns had been hidden, and now held once again his beloved Killdeer. He had also returned to Uncas the Mohican’s own rifle. Then Uncas told the Delawares of the strength in war of the scout and of the command that Duncan Heyward held in the army of the English. To Hawkeye was given the command of twenty active, skilful Delaware forest hunters. But Heyward declined a command, and said he preferred to act as a volunteer by the side of the scout. Uncas himself led upon the war-path two hundred warriors and their chiefs.

Just as they were ready to start, who should appear on the scene but David, the singing-master. He said that the Hurons were making so much noise and "ungodly revelry," as he called their war-songs and dances, that he had fled to the Delawares in search of peace.

He did not find it among them; but he did find his friends. He told them that the Hurons were now hidden in the forest in wait for the Delawares, and that the Fox, after placing Cora in the cave they knew of, was himself at the head of the Hurons, "raging," so David expressed it, "like a raging wolf."

Then Hawkeye determined to call to his assistance Chingachgook, the sagamore, and Colonel Munro, and with his twenty men to strike the right of the Hurons. At the same time Uncas, with his force, was to assail them in front, and, after driving them in, they would unite forces and attack the village, release Cora, and, by a swift and skilful dash, defeat the whole Huron force.

This was carried out as agreed. There was fierce and bitter forest fighting between the hostile tribes. Many Delawares fell; many Hurons were killed. But Hawkeye led his men resistlessly against the foe, and Uncas, with his warriors, pressed them so hard that at last the Hurons broke and ran, except one little knot of desperate fighting men, who, under the lead of the Fox, backed slowly, fighting, up the rocky hillside.

Step by step they were forced back, with Uncas

in the lead of the pursuers, hunting the baffled Fox like a hound upon the stag.

One by one the companions of the Huron were killed; he stood alone against the vengeance of Uncas and the pursuit of Hawkeye, Heyward, and David. For the poor singing-master was as determined to assist and save Cora as were the Indian, and the scout, and the soldier.

Suddenly the Fox disappeared into the mouth of the cave in which Heyward had once discovered Alice, and from which he had saved her.

Not stopping to consider, the pursuers leaped in after the retreating Hurons. Far ahead in the gloomy passages they could get, now and then, glimpses of the fleeing Hurons. But when, on a path that seemed leading up the mountain, they caught the flutter of a white dress, Heyward gave a shout.

“Cora! It is Cora!” he cried.

“Cora! Cora!” echoed Uncas, and bounded forward like a deer.

“Courage, courage,” cried the scout in his cheeriest voice. “We are coming.”

But the Hurons knew the passages better than did their pursuers, and were out of the cave before them, although with Cora to carry they could not make the speed in flight that would save them.

Brought to bay, with the Delaware and the white men almost upon him, the Fox turned, and, waiting but a brief moment, lifted his knife as if to kill the girl. Just then, down the height, straight upon the Huron, leaped Uncas, and, as he did so, another

Huron, who had fled with the Fox, buried his knife in Cora's heart.

The Fox sprang upon Uncas as he fell, and plunged his weapon in his back, but the Mohican leaped to his feet and struck down the murderer of Cora with the last of his failing strength. Then he swayed and fell, while the Fox, driving his knife once more into the bosom of Uncas, himself fell dead over the precipice, shot down by the avenging rifle of Hawkeye, the friend of Uncas.

The battle was over. The Delawares were victors, but at what cost: Uncas had fallen, Cora was dead, and the cruel Fox, instead of being a prisoner in their hands for punishment, had fallen in the fight.

Cora, wrapped in Indian robes, was buried in the forest, while her aged father stood beside her bowed in grief.

But Uncas was arrayed for the grave in full Indian fashion, and in the most gorgeous ornaments that the wealth of the tribe could furnish.

At last, the long funeral rites were over.

Colonel Munro, with his remaining daughter, Alice, and Heyward and David accompanying them, turned from Cora's grave toward the post of the English army; and so all the white men except Hawkeye passed from the eyes of the Delawares and were lost in the depths of the forest.

Hawkeye returned to the spot where his own sympathies led him with a force that no ideal bond of union could bestow. He was just in time to catch a parting look of the features of Uncas, whom

the Delawares were already enclosing in his last vestments of skins. They paused to permit the longing and lingering gaze of the sturdy woodsman, and, when it was ended, the body was enveloped, never to be unclosed again.

The Indian service was over. Then Chingachgook, the sagamore, the father of Uncas, stood before them.

“Why do my brothers mourn?” he said, regarding the dark race of dejected warriors by whom he was environed; “why do my daughters weep? That a young man has gone to the happy hunting-grounds? That a chief has filled his time with honor? He was good; he was dutiful; he was brave. Who can deny it? The Great Spirit had need of such a warrior, and he has called him away. As for me, the son and the father of Uncas, I am a blazed pine in a clearing of the palefaces. I am alone—”

“No, no!” cried Hawkeye, who had been gazing with a yearning look at the rigid features of his friend, with something like his own self-command, but with feelings that could be kept down no longer. “No, sagamore, not alone. The gifts of our colors may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path. I have no kin, and, I may also say, like you, no people. He was your son, and a redskin by nature; and it may be that your blood was nearer—but, if ever I forget the lad who has so often fou’t at my side in the war, and slept at my side in peace, may He who made us all, whatever may be our color or our gifts,

forget me! The boy has left us for a time, but, sagamore, you are not alone."

Chingachgook grasped the hand that, in the warmth of feeling, the scout had stretched across the fresh earth, and in that attitude of friendship these two sturdy and fearless woodsmen bowed their heads together, while scalding tears fell to their feet, watering the graves of Uncas like drops of falling rain.

In the midst of the awful stillness with which such a burst of feeling, coming, as it did, from the two most renowned warriors of that region, was received, Tamenund lifted his voice to disperse the multitude:

"It is enough," he said. "Go, children of the Lenape; the anger of the Great Spirit is not done. Why should Tamenund stay? The palefaces are masters of the earth; the time of the red men has not come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the children of the great Turtle strong and happy. The night has come; yet have I lived to see the close of a mighty race,—Uncas, the last of the Mohicans."



# THE PATHFINDER

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## A TALE OF THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

**M**ANY years ago, a girl named Mabel Dunham was traveling to join her father. He was a soldier in a fort on Lake Ontario, one of the great fresh-water lakes that lie between New York and Canada.

Mabel's mother was dead, and her father had sent for her at the East to join him at the Fort. At the time of this story, almost all the great New York State, except along the Hudson River, was a wilderness—beautiful lakes, broad rivers, splendid mountains, but only inhabited by a few settlers, by soldiers, hunters, and Indians. The French, who lived in Canada, were all the time trying to get control of all the land on both sides of the great lakes, and were stirring up the Indians to be on their side, and against the English soldiers and settlers in New York.

So a journey from New York City to the Fort on Lake Ontario was through great forests and among savage Indians. It was full of danger and adventure, and only a brave girl could enjoy it, But Mabel Dunham was a soldier's daughter, and as brave as she was pretty. She was traveling in the care of her uncle, a regular old sea-water sailor. His name was Cap, and he did not think much of

dry land, or woods, or rivers, while, as for the fresh-water lakes he had heard about, he called them "wash-tubs," and said no one could ever be in danger on them. To him there was nothing like the ocean, and all his talk was sea-talk.

They had been guided through the forests by an Indian. He was of the Tuscarora tribe, and his name was Arrowhead; his wife whose name was June, was with him.

As Mabel, and Cap, and Arrowhead and June were going through the forest, they met at last, at a point agreed upon, the guides who were to take them the rest of the way.

The chief of these was a hunter and scout whose name was Natty Bumpo, but whom the soldiers called Pathfinder, because he never lost his way, and always knew just where the path he was traveling led to.

With him was a Mohican Indian, his companion and friend on many a hunt, named Chingachgook, and a young man who was the captain of a very smart brig, or cutter, called the "Scud," one of the swiftest sailing vessels on Lake Ontario. The sailor's name was Jasper Western.

They had many perilous adventures in the woods and on the river before they reached the Fort on the lake. But Pathfinder was a great guide, and brought them safely out of every danger, while Jasper looked carefully after Mabel, and at last they reached the Fort in safety, and Mabel was in the arms of the father whom she had not seen for years.



CHINGACHOOK OVERCOME BY THE IROQUOIS.



Sergeant Dunham, Mabel's father, was a grim and crusty old soldier. He had a good, kind heart, and loved his daughter. But he had always been a soldier, and his ways were those of a man accustomed to obeying and being obeyed.

Mabel was such a pretty girl that all the soldiers in the fort fell in love with her. But none of them loved her so dearly as did the sailor, Jasper Western, who, in their long and perilous journey to the lake, had seen what a good, brave, gentle girl she was. But he was a little afraid of Sergeant Dunham, and, as he was a modest, quiet, young fellow, he did not dare to tell the sergeant that he loved his daughter.

Sergeant Dunham, it seems, thought a great deal of Pathfinder, and believed he was just the one to make a kind husband and a good protector for Mabel. So he did not pay much attention to young Jasper Western, but he did talk to Pathfinder and tell him that he was just the man he desired as the husband of his daughter. But Mabel knew nothing about this.

Cap and Pathfinder were good friends, but could never agree, because one loved the ocean and the other the woods, and each claimed his choice to be the best. Now, Cap would not believe that Jasper, who was only a fresh-water sailor, was much of a sailor anyway, and he did not hesitate to tell him so. They were soon to have a chance to prove whether this was so or not, for Major Duncan, the commander of the fort, decided to send some of his soldiers to take the place of others in a smaller fort

on the St. Lawrence—the great river that leads from Lake Ontario to the Atlantic Ocean. Sergeant Dunham was to lead with the party, and as it was to be a stay of a month or more, he determined to take Mabel with him.

They were to sail to the St. Lawrence on Jasper Western's cutter, the "Scud." Pathfinder and Cap were to be of the party, and Lieutenant Muir, one of Major Duncan's assistants, went, too—not in command, but as a volunteer. Lieutenant Muir was a widower, who was also in love with Mabel, but the girl would not listen to his suit. He thought, however, that this trip would give him a chance to plead his cause.

So here they were all to be together on the little brig,—Mabel Dunham, and the three men, each of whom either wished to be or was selected to be her husband—Lieutenant Muir, Pathfinder, and Jasper Western. But Mabel liked Jasper best.

The whole force placed under the care of Sergeant Dunham consisted of but ten privates and two non-commissioned officers, though Mr. Muir was to go with the expedition as a volunteer, and some duty connected with his own department, as had been arranged between him and his commander, was the avowed object. To these must be added the Pathfinder and Cap, with Jasper and those under him, of whom one was a boy. The males of the entire party, consequently, consisted of less than twenty men and a lad of fourteen. Mabel and the wife of a common soldier were the only women.

Sergeant Dunham carried off his command in a large bateau or flat-bottomed boat, and then returned for his final orders, and to see that his brother-in-law and daughter were properly attended.

It was nearly dark when Mabel found herself in the boat that was to carry her off to the cutter. When the boat left the land, Mabel would not have known that she was afloat on so broad a sheet of water by any movement that is usual to such circumstances. The oars had barely time to give a dozen strokes when the boat lay at the cutter's side.

Jasper was in readiness to receive his passengers, and, as the deck of the "Scud" was but two or three feet above the water, no difficulty was met with in getting on board her. The little vessel contained four apartments below, all between-decks having been expressly fixed with a view to the carrying of officers and men, with their wives and families. First in rank was what was called the after-cabin, a small apartment that contained four berths, and which enjoyed the advantage of possessing small windows for the letting in of air and light. This was uniformly devoted to women, whenever any were on board; and as Mabel and her companion were alone, they had ample space and accommodation.

The main cabin was larger, and lighted from above. It was now set apart to the uses of the quartermaster, the sergeant, Cap, and Jasper, the Pathfinder roaming through any part of the cutter he pleased, the compartment for the women

excepted. The corporals and common soldiers occupied the space beneath the main hatch, which had a deck for such a purpose; while the crew were berthed, as usual, in the fore-castle. Although the cutter did not measure quite fifty tons, the draft of officers and men was so light that there was ample room for all on board, there being space enough to accommodate three times the number, if necessary.

As soon as Mabel had taken possession of her own really comfortable and pretty cabin, in doing which she could not escape the thought that some of Jasper's favor had been especially shown in her behalf, she went on deck again. The men were roving to and fro in quest of their knapsacks and other effects, but method and habit soon reduced things to order, when the stillness on board became even imposing, for it was connected with the idea of future adventure and ominous preparation.

Darkness was now beginning to render objects on shore indistinct, the whole of the land forming one shapeless black outline of even forest summits that was to be distinguished from the impending heavens only by the greater light of the sky. The stars, however, soon began to appear, one after another, in their usual mild, placid luster, bringing with them that sense of quiet which ordinarily accompanies night. There was something soothing as well as exciting in such a scene; and Mabel, who was seated on the quarter-deck, felt both influences. The Pathfinder was standing near



her, leaning, as usual, on his long rifle, and she fancied that, through the glowing darkness of the hour, she could trace even stronger lines of thought than usual in his rugged countenance.

“Will the ‘Scud’ remain with us when we reach the island?” she asked, after a little hesitation about the propriety of the question, “or shall we be left to ourselves?”

“That’s as may be. Jasper does not often keep the cutter idle when anything is to be done, and we may expect activity on his part. We shall have all right, under Jasper, I make no doubt, who can find a trail on Ontario as well as a Delaware can find one on the land.”

“And our own Delaware, Pathfinder, Chingachgook,—the Big Serpent, as you call him—why is he not with us to-night?”

“He is out with two or three more scouting the lake shores, and will join us down among the islands with the tidings he may gather. The sergeant is to good a soldier to forget his rear while he is facing the enemy in front!”

“Shall we have enemies to face in front?” asked Mabel, smiling, and for the first time feeling a slight anxiety about the dangers of the expedition. “Are we likely to have a battle?”

“If we have, Mabel, there will be men enough ready and willing to stand between you and harm. But you are a soldier’s daughter, and, we all know, have the spirit of one. Don’t let the fear of a battle keep your pretty eyes from sleeping.”

“I do feel braver out here in the woods, Path-

finder, than I ever felt before amid the weaknesses of the towns, althought I have always tried to remember what I owe to my dear father."

In the meanwhile, an interview at the Fort took place between Major Duncan and the sergeant.

"Have the men's knapsacks been examined?" demanded Major Duncan.

"All, your honor; and all are right."

"The ammunitiion—arms—?"

"All in order, Major Duncan, and fit for any service."

"You have the men named in my own draft, Dunham?"

"Without an exception, sir. Better men could not be found in the regiment."

"You have need of the best of our men, sergeant. This experiment has now been tried three times; always under one of the ensigns, who have flattered me with success, but have as often failed. After so much preparation and expense, I do not like to abandon the project entirely; but this will be the last effort, and the result will mainly depend on you and on the Pathfinder."

"You may count on us both, Major Duncan. The duty you have given us is not above our habits and experience, and I think it will be well done. I know that the Pathfinder will not be wanting."

"On that, indeed, it will be safe to rely. He is a most extraordinary man, Dunham—one who long puzzled me; but who, now that I understand him commands as much of my respect as any general in his Majesty's service." By the way,

you know that your would-be son-in-law, the quartermaster, will be of the party, and I trust you will at least give him an equal chance in the trial for your daughter's smiles."

"If respect for his rank, sir, did not cause me to do this, your honor's wish would be sufficient."

"I thank you, sergeant. We have served much together, and ought to value each other in our several stations. Understand me, however, I ask no more for Davy Muir than a clear field and no favor. In love, as in war, each man must gain his own victories. You have no doubt of the skill of Jasper Western?"

"The boy has been tried, sir, and found equal to all that can be required of him."

"He has passed much of his boyhood in the French colonies; has he French blood in his veins, sergeant?"

"Not a drop, your honor. Jasper's father was an old comrade of my own, and his mother came of an honest and loyal family in this very province."

"How came he, then, so much among the French, and whence his name? He speaks the language of the Canadas, too, I find."

"That is easily explained, Major Duncan. The boy was left under the care of one of our mariners in the old war, and he took to the water like a duck. Your honor knows that we have no ports on Ontario, that can be named as such, and he naturally passed most of his time on the other side of the lake, where the French have had a few

vessels these fifty years. He learned to speak their language as a matter of course."

"It is the duty of the soldier who is entrusted with the care of a distant and important post like this, Dunham, never to grow slack in his vigilance. We have two of the most artful enemies that the world has ever produced, in their several ways, to contend with—the Indians and the French; and nothing should be overlooked that can lead to injury."

"I hope your honor considers me fit to be entrusted with any particular reason that may exist for doubting Jasper, since you have seen fit to entrust me with this command."

"It is not that I doubt you, Dunham, that I hesitate to reveal all I may happen to know, but from a strong unwillingness to circulate an evil report concerning one of whom I have hitherto thought well. You must think well of the Pathfinder or you would not wish to give him your daughter?"

"For the Pathfinder's honesty I will answer with my life, sir," returned the sergeant firmly, and not without a dignity of manner that struck his superior. "Such a man doesn't know how to be false."

"I believe you are right, Dunham, and yet this last information has unsettled all my old opinions. The truth is, sergeant, I have received a letter without any name signed to it, advising me to be on my guard against Jasper Western, who, it says, has been bought by the enemy, and giving me reason

to expect that further and more precise word will soon be sent."

"Letters without signatures to them, sir, are scarcely to be regarded in war."

"Or in peace, Dunham. No one can entertain a lower opinion of the writer of such a letter, in ordinary matters, than myself. The very act denotes cowardice, meanness, and baseness; and it usually is a token of falsehood, as well as of other vices. But in matters of war it is not exactly the same thing; besides, several suspicious circumstances have been pointed out to me. It is said, for instance, that your daughter and her party were permitted to escape the Iroquois, when they came in, merely to give Jasper credit with me. I am told that the Frenchmen care more for the capture of the 'Scud,' with Sergeant Dunham and a party of men, together with the defeat of our favorite plan, than for the capture of a girl and the scalp of her uncle."

"I understand the hint, sir; I do not give it credit. Jasper can hardly be true, and Pathfinder false; and as for the last, I would as soon distrust your honor as distrust him."

"This letter has made me uneasy; and, were there another to whom I could trust the cutter, I would devise some means to detain him here. I have spoken to you already of your brother-in-law, who goes with you, sergeant, and who is a sailor?"

"A real seafaring man, your honor, is Cap, though somewhat prejudiced against fresh water. I doubt if he could be induced to risk his character

on a lake, and I'm certain he never could find the station."

"The last is probably true, and, then, the man can not know enough of this treacherous lake to be fit for the employment. You will have to be doubly watchful, Dunham. I give you full powers, and should you detect this Jasper in any treachery kill him at once without trial."

"Being in the service of the crown, he has a right to martial law—"

"Very true—then iron him, from his head to his heels, and send him up here in his own cutter. That brother-in-law of yours must be able to find the way back after he has once traveled the road."

"I make no doubt, Major Dunham, we shall be able to do all that will be necessary, should Jasper turn out as you seem to expect; though I think I would risk my life on his truth."

"I like your confidence; it speaks well for the fellow—but that infernal letter! There is such an air of truth about it,—nay, there is so much truth in it, touching other matters—"

"I think your honor said it wanted the name at the bottom; a great omission for an honest man to make."

"Quite right, Dunham, and no one but a rascal, and a cowardly rascal into the bargain, would write an anonymous letter on private affairs. It *is* different, however, in war. Dispatches are feigned, and even falsehood is generally allowed to be justifiable."

"Military, manly deceits, sir, if you will; such

as ambushes, surprises, feints, false attacks, and even spies; but I never heard of a true soldier who could wish to undermine the character of an honest young man by such means as these."

"I have met with many strange events, and some stranger people, in the course of my experience. But fare you well, sergeant; I must detain you no longer. You are now on your guard, and I recommend to you untiring vigilance.

"Be wary, and do not trust that young man unnecessarily. Make a confidant of Pathfinder at once; he may be of service in detecting any villainy that may be stirring. His simple honesty will help him in keeping the matter secret. *He must be true.*"

"For him, sir, my own head shall answer, or even my rank in the regiment. I have seen him too often tried to doubt him."

"You have bethought you of the spare flints?"

"A sergeant is a safe commander for all such details, your honor."

"Well, then, give me your hand, Dunham. God bless you, and may you be successful. And now, once more, farewell, sergeant. Beware of that Jasper, and consult with Muir in any difficulty. I shall expect you to return triumphant this day month."

"God bless your honor; if anything should happen to me I trust to you, Major Dunham, to care for an old soldier's character."

"Rely on me, Dunham—you will rely on a friend. Be vigilant; remember you will be in the very jaws

of the lion,—pshaw, of no lion, neither, but of treacherous tigers,—in their very jaws, and beyond support. Have the flints counted and examined in the morning—and—farewell, Dunham, farewell.”

So they parted, and soon the “Scud” was sailing on its voyage. The sergeant called Pathfinder into the cabin, and then told him Major Duncan’s doubts about Jasper Western.

“I have known Jasper Western since he was a boy,” said Pathfinder, confidently, “and I have as much faith in his honesty as I have in my own, or that of the Sarpent himself.”

“But the Sarpent, Pathfinder, has his tricks and ambushes in war as well as another!”

“Ay, them are his nat’ral gifts, and such as belong to his people. Neither redskin nor pale-face can deny natur’; but Chingachgook is not a man to feel a doubt ag’in.”

“That I believe; nor should I have thought ill of Jasper this very morning. But it seems to me, Pathfinder, that somehow the lad does not bustle about his deck naturally, as he used to do, but that he is silent and moody and thoughtful, like a man who has a load on his conscience.”

“Jasper is never noisy, and he tells me noisy ships are generally ill-worked ships. Master Cap agrees in this, too. No, no; I will believe naught against Jasper until I see it. Send for your brother, sergeant, and let us question him in this matter; for to sleep with distrust of one’s fri’nd in the heart is like sleeping with lead there. I have no faith in your doubtful feelings.”



The sergeant, although he scarce knew himself with what object, complied, and Cap was summoned to join in the consultation.

The Pathfinder explained to Cap the nature of the suspicions which the sergeant held, and the reasons why they had been excited, so far as the latter had been communicated by Major Duncan.

“The youngster talks French, does he?”

“They say he speaks it better than common,” returned the sergeant gravely. “Pathfinder knows this to be true.”

“I’ll not gainsay it, I’ll not gainsay it,” answered the guide. “at least they tell me such is the fact. But this would prove nothing ag’in a man like Jasper. I speak the Mingo dialect myself, having l’arnt it while a prisoner among the reptyles; but who will say I am their fri’nd?”

“Ay, Pathfinder, but Jasper did not get his French as a prisoner: he took it in, in boyhood, when the mind is easily impressed, and gets its lasting notions.

“A very just remark,” added Cap, “for that is the time of life when we all learn the catechism, and other moral improvements. The sergeant’s observation shows that he understands human nature, and I agree with him perfectly; it *is* a bad thing for a youngster, up here, on this bit of fresh water, to talk French.

“Jasper is no Mingo, sergeant.”

“Brother Cap, can you recollect no movement of this unfortunate young man, in the way of his calling, that would seem to denote treachery?”

“Not distinctly, sergeant, though he has gone to work wrong end foremost half his time. It is true that one of his hands coiled a rope against the sun, and he called it *curling* a rope, too, when I asked him what he was about; but I am not certain that anything was meant by it; though I dare say the French coil half their running rigging the wrong way, and may call it ‘curling it down,’ too, for that matter. Then Jasper himself belayed the end of the jib-halyards to a stretcher in the rigging, instead of bringing them in to the mast, where they belong,—at least among British sailors.”

“I dare say Jasper may have got some Canada notions about working his craft, from being so much on the other side,” Pathfinder interposed, “but catching an idee or a word isn’t treachery or bad faith. I sometimes get an idee from the Mingos themselves, but my heart has always been with the Delawares. No, no; Jasper is true; and the king might trust him with his crown, just as he would trust his eldest son, who, as he is to wear it one day, ought to be the last man to wish to steal it.”

But still they talked on against Jasper, and even Pathfinder could not convince the others that the young sailor was all right. He talked French, and did not call things by their sea names. These were enough to convict him with the sergeant and the seaman.

For the next day everything that Jasper did was put down against him. The sergeant and Cap watched him closely, and found fault with him so constantly that the poor young sailor felt certain

they had noticed how much he looked at Mabel, and were angry with him accordingly.

Toward evening, Cap, who was standing in the forward part of the cutter, saw something on the water.

“Sail, ho!” he shouted—or “Boat, ho!” would be nearer the truth.

Jasper ran forward; and, sure enough, a small object was to be seen about a hundred yards ahead of the cutter, and nearly on her lee bow. At the first glance he saw it was a bark canoe.

“This may be an enemy,” the young man remarked; “and it may be well to overhaul him.”

“He is paddling with all his might, lad,” observed the Pathfinder, “and means to cross your bows and get to windward, when you might as well chase a full-grown buck on snow-shoes.”

“Let her luff!” cried Jasper, to the man at the helm. “Luff up till she shakes—there, steady, and hold all that.”

The helmsman complied, and as the “Scud” was now dashing the water aside merrily, a minute or two put the canoe so far to leeward as to render escape very difficult. Jasper now sprang to the helm. And by skilful and careful handling he got so near the canoe that it was secured by a boat hook. What was his surprise to find that its occupants were Arrowhead and his wife.

Now, Arrowhead, you remember, was the Tuscarora Indian who had guided Mabel and her uncle through the woods until they met Pathfinder. Then he had disappeared suddenly.

Everyone suspected him to be an enemy. So, when he was captured in his canoe, Pathfinder questioned him closely, but could learn nothing from him.

It was determined however to hold him as a prisoner, but in the night Arrowhead seized a moment when he was not watched, cut his canoe loose, and with his wife paddled away into the darkness. But both Cap and the sergeant were sure that he had escaped through the help of Jasper Western, who had thereby shown that he was a traitor.

At once, therefore, and without any explanation except that he had let Arrowhead escape, Jasper was told by Sergeant Dunham that he felt it to be his duty to deprive him, for the present, of the command of the cutter, and to give it to his own brother-in-law. A natural burst of surprise which escaped the young man was met by a quiet remark, reminding him that military service was often of a nature that required concealment, and a declaration that the present was of such a character that this particular arrangement had become necessary. The young man was accustomed to obey with military submission; and he quietly submitted, with his own mouth directing the little crew to receive their further orders from Cap until another change should be effected. When, however, he was told the case required that not only he himself, but his principal assistant, who was usually termed the pilot, were to remain below, there was an alteration in his countenance and

manner that denoted deep mortification, though it was so well mastered as to leave even the distrustful Cap in doubt as to its meaning.

As soon as Jasper and the pilot were below, the sentinel at the hatch received private orders to pay particular attention to both; to allow neither to come on deck again without giving instant notice to the person who might then be in charge of the cutter, and to insist on his return below as soon as possible. This precaution, however, was uncalled for, Jasper and his assistant both throwing themselves silently on their beds, which neither quitted again that night.

But now, when Cap set about sailing the "Scud," he found things so different from on shipboard at sea that he soon got all snarled up. The sailors did not understand his orders; he did not have the fresh-water names for things, and he did not know which way to steer, as both the captain and pilot had been sent below.

So they had all sorts of troubles. Twice they very nearly ran ashore; they lost their course so badly that they sailed in the wrong direction, and actually passed the fort which they had left the day before. Then they were nearly captured by a French vessel, and when the wind blew up a storm they would really have been shipwrecked had not the sergeant come to the conclusion that Jasper knew how to sail on the lake better than Cap, and called him up, just in the nick of time to save the "Scud" from going ashore. And so they were saved.

Jasper came about, and headed his vessel for the point which was their original destination, the fort on Station Island, in the St. Lawrence. He had to keep a sharp lookout, however. He knew that the northern shore of the lake was lined with French forts and blockhouses, and that the French vessel they had but barely escaped was somewhere on the lake in search of the "Scud." So he sailed cautiously.

When the sun was setting the "Scud" was already a hundred miles on her route toward Oswego, into which river Sergeant Dunham now thought it his duty to go, in order to receive any communications that Major Duncan might please to make.

When the next day dawned the cutter had the mouth of the Oswego well under her lee, distant about two miles, and just as the morning gun from the Fort was fired, Jasper gave the order to ease off the sheets and to bear up for his port. At that moment a cry from the forecastle drew all eyes toward the point on the eastern side of the outlet and there, just without the range of shot from the light guns of the works, with her canvas reduced to barely enough to keep her stationary, lay the French vessel they had escaped, the "Montcalm," as she was called, and evidently in waiting for their appearance. To pass her was impossible, for, by filling her sails, the French ship could have caught up to them in a few minutes, and the condition of affairs called for a prompt decision. After a short consultation the sergeant again changed his plan,

determining to make the best of his way toward the station for which he had been originally destined, trusting to the speed of the "Scud" to throw the enemy so far astern as to leave no clew to her movements.

The cutter accordingly hauled up on the wind with the least possible delay, with everything set that would draw. Guns were fired from the Fort, ensigns shown, and the ramparts were again crowded. But sympathy was all the aid that Major Duncan could lend to his party; and the "Montcalm," also firing four or five guns of defiance, and throwing abroad several of the banners of France, was soon in chase, under a cloud of canvas.

For several hours the two vessels were pressing through the water as fast as possible, making short stretches to windward, apparently with a view to keep the port under their lee, the one to enter it, if possible, and the other to defeat it in the attempt.

At noon the French ship was hull down dead to leeward, the disadvantage of sailing on a wind being very great, and some islands were nearby, behind which Jasper said it would be possible for the cutter to hide her future movements. Although Cap and the sergeant, and particularly Lieutenant Muir, to judge by his language, still felt a good deal of distrust of the young man, and though the French lake-port and station of Frontenac was not distant, this advice was followed, for time pressed, and the quartermaster wisely said that Jasper could not well betray them without running openly

into the enemy's harbor—a step they could at any time prevent, since the only cruiser of force the French possessed at the moment was under their lee, and not in a situation to do them any immediate injury.

Left to himself, Jasper Western soon proved how much was really in him. He weathered upon the islands, passed them, and, on coming out to the eastward, kept broad away, with nothing in sight in his wake or to leeward. By sunset again the cutter was up with the first of the islands that lie in the outlet of the lake, and ere it was dark she was running through the narrow channels on her way to the long-sought station. At nine o'clock, however, Cap insisted that they should anchor, for the maze of the islands became so twisted and obscure that he feared at every opening the party would find themselves under the guns of a French fort. Jasper consented cheerfully, it being a part of his standing instructions to approach the station in such a manner as would prevent the men from obtaining any very exact notion of its position, lest a deserter might betray the little garrison to the enemy.

The "Scud" was brought to in a small, retired bay, where it would have been difficult to find her by daylight, and where she was perfectly hidden at night, when all but a solitary sentinel on deck sought their rest.

The next morning, under Jasper's marvelous piloting among the countless islands and through the winding channel, they safely reached the sta-



tion, and the soldiers were greeted by their waiting comrades with the satisfaction that a relief usually brings.

Mabel sprang upon the shore with a delight which she did not care to express, and her father led his men after her with a quickness which proved how wearied he had become of the cutter. The station, as the place was familiarly termed by the soldiers of the Fifty-fifth, was indeed a spot to raise expectations of enjoyment among those who had been cooped up so long in a vessel of the size of the "Scud." None of the islands were high, though all lay at a sufficient elevation above the water to render them perfectly healthy and secure. Each had more or less wood, and the greater number, at that distant day, were clothed with the native forest. The one selected by the troops for their purpose was small, containing about twenty acres of land, and by some of the accidents of the wilderness it had been partly stripped of its trees, probably centuries before the period of which we are writing, and a little grassy glade covered nearly half its surface.

The shores of Station Island were completely fringed with bushes, and great care had been taken to preserve them, as they answered as a screen to conceal the persons and things collected within their circle. Favored by this shelter, as well as by that of several thickets of trees and different copses, some six or eight low huts had been erected to be used as quarters for the officer and his men, to contain stores, and to serve the purpose of kitchens,

hospital, etc. These huts were built of logs in the usual manner, had been roofed by bark brought from a distance, lest the signs of labor should attract attention, and, as they had now been inhabited some months, were as comfortable as dwellings of that description usually get to be.

At the eastern extremity of the island, however, was a small, densely wooded peninsula, with a thicket of underbrush so closely matted as nearly to prevent the possibility of seeing across it so long as the leaves remained on the branches. Near the narrow neck that connected this acre with the rest of the island, a small blockhouse had been erected with some attention to its means of resistance. The logs were bullet-proof, squared, and jointed with a care to leave no defenseless points; the windows were loop-holes; the door massive and small; and the roof, like the rest of the structure, was framed of hewn timber, covered properly with bark to exclude the rain. The lower apartment, as usual, contained stores and provisions; here, indeed, the party kept all their supplies; the second story was intended for a dwelling as well as for the citadel, and a low garret was subdivided into two or three rooms, and could hold the cots on which the soldiers slept, ten or fifteen in number. All the arrangements were exceedingly simple and cheap, but they were sufficient to protect the soldiers against surprise. As the whole building was considerably less than forty feet high, its summit was hidden by the tops of trees, except from the eyes of those who had reached the interior of the

island. On that side the view was open from the upper loops, though bushes, even there, more or less concealed the base of the wooden tower.

The object being purely defense, care had been taken to place the blockhouse so near an opening in the limestone rock that formed the base of the island as to admit of a bucket being dropped into the water in order to obtain that great necessity in the time of a siege. In order to do this more easily and to protect the base of the building, the upper stories projected several feet beyond the lower, in the manner usual to blockhouses, and pieces of wood filled the apertures cut in the log flooring, which were intended as loops and traps. The different stories were reached by means of ladders.

The hour that followed the arrival of the "Scud" was one of hurried excitement. The party on the island had done nothing worthy of being mentioned, and, wearied with their loneliness, they were all eager to return to Oswego. The sergeant and the officer he came to relieve had no sooner gone through the little ceremonies of transferring the command than the latter hurried on board the "Scud" with his whole party, and Jasper, who would gladly have passed the day on the island, was required to get under way forthwith, the wind promising a quick passage up the river and across the lake. Before separating, however, Lieutenant Muir, Cap, and the sergeant had a private talk with the ensign who had been relieved, in which the latter was made acquainted with the suspicions

that were felt against the fidelity of the young sailor. Promising due caution the officer embarked, and in less than three hours from the time when she had arrived the cutter was again in motion. Mabel had taken possession of a hut, and with female readiness and skill, she made all the simple little household arrangements of which the circumstances would admit, not only for her own comfort but for that of her father. To save labor a mess table was prepared in a hut set apart for that purpose, where all the heads of the detachments were to eat, the soldier's wife performing the necessary labor. The hut of the sergeant was the best on the island.

As soon as these important duties were completed she strolled out on the island, taking a path that led through the pretty glade, and which led to the only point that was not covered with bushes. Here she stood gazing at the limpid water which lay, with scarcely a ruffle on it, at her feet, musing on the novel situation in which she was placed, and permitting a pleasing and deep excitement to steal over her feelings as she remembered the scenes through which she had so lately passed, and guessed at those which still lay veiled in the future.

Lieutenant Muir came to call on Mabel, and to talk as sweetly as he could to her; but she did not care to listen to him, and was well pleased when Pathfinder came and with some difficulty succeeded in taking his place. For some little time they sat enjoying the beautiful scene, talking over the exciting experiences of the recent journey, and the

events which had transpired at the Fort. But Pathfinder was now in turn called away by the lieutenant, who seemed to have something of importance to tell him.

“We hold,” he said, “an exceedingly dangerous and uncertain position here,—almost in the jaws of the lion, as it were. There are savages, out scouting through these thousand islands and over the forest, searching for this very spot, and the greatest service you can render the regiment is to discover their trails and lead them off on a false scent. Unhappily, Sergeant Dunham has taken up the notion that the danger is to be looked for up-stream, because Frontenac lies above us; whereas all experience tells us that Indians come on the side that is most contrary to reason, and consequently are to be expected from below. Take your canoe, therefore, and go down stream among the islands, that we may have notice if any danger approaches from that quarter.”

“The Big Sarpent is on the lookout in that quarter,” said Pathfinder, “and as he knows the station well, no doubt he will give us timely notice should any wish to sarcumvent or cheat us in that direction.”

“He is but an Indian, after all, Pathfinder, and this is an affair that calls for the knowledge of a white man.

The quartermaster then continued to reason with his companion in order to induce him to quit the island without delay, using such arguments as first suggested themselves, sometimes contradicting

himself and not infrequently urging at one moment a motive that at the next was directly opposed by another. The Pathfinder, simple as he was, saw these flaws in the lieutenant's reasoning, though he was far from suspecting that they proceeded from a desire to clear the coast of Mabel's suitor. He did not exactly suspect the secret objects of Muir, but he was far from being blind to his poor reasoning. The result was that the two parted, after a long dialogue, unconvinced and distrustful of each other's motives, though the distrust of the guide, like all that was connected with the man, partook of his own upright, disinterested, and open nature.

A meeting that took place soon after between Sergeant Dunham and the lieutenant led to more consequences. When it was ended secret orders were issued to the men, the blockhouse was taken possession of, the huts were occupied, and one accustomed to the movements of soldiers might have perceived that an expedition was in the wind. In fact, just as the sun was setting, the sergeant, came into his own hut, followed by Pathfinder and Cap, and, as he took his seat at the neat table that Mabel had prepared for him, he opened the budget of his news.

"You are likely to be of some use here, my child," the old soldier commenced, "as this tidy and well-ordered supper can testify; and I trust when the proper moment arrives you will show yourself to be the descendant of those who know how to face their enemies.

“Lest you should be surprised at not seeing us when you awake in the morning, it is proper that I now tell you we intend to march in the course of this very night.”

“*We*, father—and leave me and Jennie on this island alone!”

“No, my daughter, not quite as unmilitary as that. We shall leave Lieutenant Muir, Brother Cap, Corporal McNab, and three men, to compose the garrison during our absence. Jennie will remain with you in this hut and Brother Cap will occupy my place.”

Mabel did not like the idea of having Lieutenant Muir as a companion, but her father continued:

“Neither you nor Mabel, Brother Cap,” he said, “can have any legal authority with the garrison I leave behind on the island, but you may counsel and influence. Strictly speaking, Corporal McNab will be the commanding officer, and I have endeavored to impress him with a sense of his dignity, lest he might give way too much to the superior rank of Lieutenant Muir, who, being a volunteer, can have no right to interfere with the duty. I wish you to sustain the corporal, Brother Cap, for should the quartermaster once break through the regulations of the expedition he may pretend to command me as well as McNab.”

“Of course, sergeant, you’ll leave everything that is afloat under my care. The greatest confusion has grown out of misunderstandings between commanders-in-chief ashore and afloat.”

“In one sense, brother, though in a general way

the corporal is commander-in-chief. The corporal must command, but you can counsel freely, particularly in all matters relating to the boats, of which I shall leave one behind to secure your retreat should there be occasion. I know the corporal well—he is a brave man and a good soldier, and one that may be relied on. But then, he is a Scotchman, and will be liable to the quartermaster's influence, against which I desire both you and Mabel to be on your guard."

"But why leave us behind, dear father? I have come thus far to be a comfort to you, and why not go farther?"

"You are a good girl, Mabel, and very like the Dunhams! But you must halt here. We shall leave the island to-morrow before the day dawns, in order not to be seen by any prying eyes, and shall take the two largest boats, leaving you the other and one bark canoe. We are about to go into the channel used by the French, where we shall lie in wait perhaps a week to catch their supply boats that are about to pass up on their way to Frontenac, loaded in particular with a heavy amount of Indian goods."

Supper was no sooner ended than the sergeant dismissed his guests, and then held a long and confidential talk with his daughter. He was little used to giving way to the gentler emotions, but the novelty of his present situation awakened feelings to which he was unused.

The talk between father and daughter was long and affectionate, and when it was over the old sergeant kissed her fondly.



“God bless and protect you, girl,” he said, “you are a good daughter.”

Mabel threw herself in her father's arms, and sobbed on his bosom like an infant. The stern old soldier's heart was melted, and the tears of the two mingled; but Sergeant Dunham soon started, as if ashamed of himself, and gently forcing his daughter from him, bade her good-night, and sought his couch. Mabel went sobbing to the rude corner that had been prepared for her reception, and in a few minutes the hut was undisturbed by any sound save the heavy breathing of the veteran.

It was not only broad daylight when she awoke, but the sun had actually been up some time. Her sleep had been tranquil, for she rested on an approving conscience, and fatigue helped to render it sweet, and no sound of those who had been so early in motion had interfered with her rest. Springing to her feet, and rapidly dressing herself, the girl was soon breathing the fragrance of the morning in the open air. For the first time she was sensibly struck with the singular beauties, as well as with the profound retirement, of her present situation.

But the island seemed absolutely deserted. The previous night the bustle of the arrival had given the spot an appearance of life that was now entirely gone, and our heroine had turned her eyes around on nearly every object in sight before she caught a view of a single human being to remove the sense of utter solitude. Then, indeed, she beheld all who were left behind, collected in a group, around

a fire which might be said to belong to the camp. Beside Cap and the quartermaster, there were the corporal, the three soldiers, and the woman who was cooking. The huts were silent and empty, and the low but tower-like summit of the block-house rose above the bushes, by which it was half concealed, in picturesque beauty.

Perceiving that all the others were occupied with that great concern of human nature, a breakfast, Mabel walked unobserved toward an end of the island where she was completely shut out of view by the trees and bushes. Here she got a stand on the very edge of the water by forcing aside the low branches, and stood watching the barely perceptible flow and re-flow of the miniature waves that washed the shore. She gazed through the different vistas formed by the openings between the islands, and thought she had never looked on aught more lovely.

While thus occupied, Mabel was suddenly alarmed by fancying that she caught a glimpse of a human form among the bushes that lined the shore of the island that lay directly before her. Aware that her sex would be no protection against a rifle-bullet, should an Iroquois get a view of her, the girl instinctively drew back, taking care to conceal her person as much as possible by the leaves, while she kept her own look riveted on the opposite shore, vainly awaiting for some time in the expectation of seeing the stranger. She was about to quit her post in the bushes and hasten to her uncle in order to tell him of her suspicions, when she saw the

branch of an alder thrust beyond the bushes on the other island, and waved toward her significantly, and, as she fancied, in token of friendliness. This was a breathless and trying moment to one as unacquainted with frontier warfare as our heroine, and yet she felt the great necessity that existed for preserving her self-control and of acting with steadiness and discretion.

It at once struck her that now was the moment for her to show that she was Sergeant Dunham's child. The motion of the branch was such as, she believed, indicated friendliness; and, after a moment's hesitation, she broke off a twig, fastened it to a stick, and, thrusting it through an opening, waved it in return, imitating as closely as possible the manner of the other.

This dumb show lasted two or three minutes on both sides, when Mabel perceived that the bushes opposite were cautiously pushed aside, and a human face appeared at an opening. A glance sufficed to let Mabel see that it was the countenance of a redskin, as well as that of a woman. A second and a better look satisfied her that it was the face of June, the wife of Arrowhead, the Tuscarora. During the time she had traveled in company with this woman, Mabel had been won by the gentleness of manner, the meek simplicity, and the mingled awe and affection with which she regarded her husband. The squaw had shown much attachment to her, and they had parted with a deep feeling in the mind of our heroine that in June she had lost a friend.

She no longer hesitated about showing herself clear of the bushes, and was not sorry to see June imitate her confidence by stepping fearlessly out of her own cover. The two girls—for the Tuscarora, though married, was even younger than Mabel—now openly exchanged signs of friendship, and the latter beckoned to her friend to approach, though she knew not how in which this object could be effected. But June was not slow in letting it be seen that it was in her power; for, disappearing a moment, she soon showed herself again in the end of a bark canoe, the bows of which she had drawn to the edge of the bushes, and of which the body still lay in a sort of covered creek.

With half a dozen noiseless strokes of the paddle June concealed her canoe in the bushes of Station Island. In another minute Mabel held her hand, and was leading her through the grove toward her own hut. Fortunately the latter was so placed as to be completely hidden from the sight of those at the fire, and they both entered it unseen. Hastily explaining to her guest, in the best manner she could, the necessity of quitting her for a short time, Mabel, first placing June in her own room, with a full certainty that she would not quit it until told to do so, went to the fire and took her seat among the rest, with all the composure it was in her power to command.

“Late come, late served, Mabel,” said her uncle, between two mouthfuls of broiled salmon, for though the cooking might be very simple on that remote frontier, the food was generally deli-

scious; "late come, late served: it is a good rule, and keeps laggards up to their work."

"I am no laggard, uncle, for I have been stirring near an hour, and exploring our island."

That was the only explanation that Mabel gave of her lateness, and, in fact, to most of the conversation during breakfast she paid but little attention, though she felt some surprise that Lieutenant Muir, an officer whose character for courage stood well, should openly recommend, as he did in his talk, an abandonment of what appeared to her to be a double duty, her father's character being connected with the defense of the island. Her mind, however, was so much occupied with her guest, that, seizing the first favorable moment, she left the table, and was soon in her own hut again. Carefully fastening the door, and seeing that the curtain was drawn before the single little window, Mabel led June into the outer room, making signs of affection and confidence.

"I am glad to see you, June," said Mabel, with one of her sweetest smiles, and in her own winning voice; "very glad to see you. What has brought you hither, and how did you discover the island?"

"Talk slow," said June, returning smile for smile, and pressing the little hand she held with one of her own, that was scarcely larger, though it had been hardened by labor, "more slow—too quick."

Mabel repeated her questions, trying to check the earnestness of her feelings, and she succeeded in speaking so distinctly as to be understood.

"June, friend," returned the Indian woman.

“I believe you, June—from my soul I believe you; what has this to do with your visit?”

“Friend come to see friend,” answered June, again smiling openly in the other’s face.

“There is some other reason, June, else would you never run this risk, and alone—you are alone, June?”

“June wid you—no one else. June come alone, paddle canoe.”

“I hope so—I think so—nay, I *know* so. You would not be treacherous with me, June?”

“What treacherous?”

“You would not betray me—would not give me to the French—to the Iroquois—to Arrowhead”—June shook her head earnestly—“you would not sell my scalp?”

Here June passed her arm fondly around the slender waist of Mabel, and pressed her to her heart, with a tenderness and affection that brought tears into the eyes of our heroine. It was done in the fond caressing manner of a woman, and it was scarcely possible that it should not obtain credit for sincerity with a young and open-hearted person of the same sex. Mabel returned the pressure, and then, looking her steadily in the face, continued her inquiries.

“If June has something to tell her friend, let her speak plainly,” she said. “My ears are open.”

“June ’fraid Arrowhead kill her.”

“But Arrowhead will never know it.” Mabel’s blood mounted to her temples as she said this, for she felt that she was urging a wife to be treacher-

ous to her husband. "That is, Mabel will not tell him."

"Blockhouse good place to sleep—good place to stay."

"Do you mean that I may save my life by keeping in the blockhouse, June? Surely, surely, Arrowhead will not hurt you for telling me that. He can not wish me any great harm, for I never injured him."

"Arrowhead wish no harm to handsome pale-face," returned June, averting her face, and, though she always spoke in the soft gentle voice of an Indian girl, permitting its notes to fall so low as to cause them to sound melancholy and timid. "Arrowhead love paleface girl."

Mabel blushed, she knew not why, and for a moment her questions were repressed by a feeling of inherent delicacy. But it was necessary to know more, for her apprehensions had been keenly awakened, and she resumed her inquiries.

"But, tell me, June, ought I keep in the blockhouse to-day—this morning—now?"

"Blockhouse very good; good for squaw. Blockhouse got no scalp."

"I fear I understand you only too well, June. Do you wish to see my father?"

"No here; gone away."

"You can not know that, June; you see the island is full of his soldiers."

"No full; gone away"—here June held up four of her fingers—"so many redcoats."

"And Pathfinder—would you not like to see the

Pathfinder? He can talk to you in the Iroquois tongue."

"Tongue gone wid him," said June, laughing; "keep tongue in his mout."

There was something so sweet and contagious in the infantile laugh of the Indian girl that Mabel could not refrain from joining in it, much as her fears were aroused by all that had passed.

"You appear to know, or think you know, all about us, June. But, if Pathfinder be gone, Jasper Western can speak French, too. You know Jasper Western; shall I run and bring *him* to talk with you?"

"Jasper gone, too; all but heart; that there." As June said this, she laughed again, and laid her hand on Mabel's bosom.

Our heroine had often heard of the wonderful shrewdness of the Indians, and of the surprising manner in which they noted all things, while they appeared to regard none, but she was scarce prepared for the direction the talk had so singularly taken. She hoped to hear more of what she really desired to learn, and to avoid allusions to that which she found so embarrassing.

"You know how much or how little you ought to tell me, June," she said, "and I hope you love me well enough to give me the information I ought to hear. My dear uncle, too, is on the island, and you are, or ought to be, his friend, as well as mine; and both of us will remember your conduct when we get back to Oswego."

"Blockhouse very good," she repeated, as soon



as her countenance ceased to express uncertainty, laying strong emphasis on the two last words.

"Well, I understand this, June, and will sleep in it to-night"

"You appear to think you know our situation pretty well, June," Mabel continued. "Have you been on the island before this visit?"

"Just come."

"How, then, do you know that what you say is true? My father, the Pathfinder, and Jasper may all be here within the sound of my voice, if I choose to call them."

"All gone," said June, positively, smiling good-humoredly at the same time.

"Nay, this is more than you *can* say certainly, not having been over the island to examine it."

"Got good eyes; see boat with men go away—see ship with Jasper."

"Then you have been some time watching us; I think, however, you have not counted them that remain."

June laughed, held up her four fingers, and then pointed to her two thumbs; passing her finger over the first, she repeated the word "redcoats," and, touching the last, she added, "Saltwater," "Quartermaster."

"You think, then, June," Mabel continued, "that I had better live in the blockhouse?"

"Good place for squaw. Blockhouse got no scalp. Logs t'ick."

"Does anyone but yourself know how to find this island? Have any of the Iroquois seen it?"

“Much eye, Iroquois.”

“Eyes will not always do, June. This spot is hid from sight, and few of even our own people know how to find it.”

“One man can tell—some English talk French.”

Mabel felt a chill at her heart. All the suspicions against Jasper, which she had hitherto refused to allow, crowded in a body on her thoughts, and the sensation that they brought was so sickening that for an instant she imagined she was about to faint. Arousing herself, and remembering her promise to her father, she arose and walked up and down the hut for a minute, fancying that Jasper’s wrong-doings were naught to her, though her inmost heart yearned with the desire to think him innocent.

“I understand your meaning, June,” she then said. “You wish me to know that someone has treacherously told your people where and how to find the island.”

June laughed, for in her eyes artifice in war was oftener a merit than a crime; but she was too true to the tribe herself to say more than the occasion required.

“Paleface know now,” she added. “Blockhouse good for girl—no matter for men and warriors.”

“But it is much matter with me, June, for one of these men is my uncle, whom I love, and the others are my countrymen and friends. I must tell them what has passed.”

“Then June be kill,” returned the young Indian quietly, though she spoke with concern.

“No—they shall not know that you have been here. Still, they must be on their guard, and we can all go into the blockhouse.”

“Arrowhead know—see everything, and June be kill. June come to tell young paleface friend, not to tell men. Every warrior watch his own scalp. June squaw, and tell squaw; no tell men.”

Mabel was greatly distressed at this declaration of her wild friend, for it was now evident the young creature understood that her words were to go no farther.

“June,” she said eagerly, folding her arms round the gentle but uneducated being, “we are friends. From me you have nothing to fear, for no one shall know of your visit. If you could give me some signal just before the danger comes, some sign by which to know when to go into the blockhouse—how to take care of myself.”

June paused, for she had been in earnest in her intention to depart; and then she said quietly:

“Bring June pigeon.”

“A pigeon! Where shall I find a pigeon to bring you?”

“Next hut—bring old one—June go to canoe.”

“I think I understand you, June; but had I not better lead you back to the bushes, lest you meet some of the men?”

“Go out first—count men—one—two—t’ree—four—five—six”—here June held up her fingers and laughed—“all out of way—good—all but one—call him one side. Then sing, and fetch pigeon.”

Mabel smiled at the readiness and ingenuity of

the girl, and prepared to execute her requests. At the door, however, she stopped, and looked back entreating, at the Indian woman.

“Is there no hope of your telling me more, June?” she said.

“Know all now—blockhouse good—pigeon tell—Arrowhead kill.”

The last words sufficed; for Mabel could not urge her to tell more when her companion herself told her that the penalty of her revelations might be death by the hand of her husband. Throwing open the door, she made a sign of farewell to June, and went out of the hut. Instead of looking about her with the intention of recognizing faces and dresses, she merely counted them; and found that three still remained at the fire, while two had gone to the boat, one of whom was Mr. Muir. The sixth man was her uncle, and he was coolly arranging some fishing-tackle, at no great distance from the fire. The woman was just entering her own hut; and this accounted for the whole party. Mabel now, affecting to have dropped something, returned nearly to the hut she had left, warbling an air, stooped as if to pick up some object from the ground, and hurried toward the hut June had mentioned. This building was almost in ruins and it had been converted by the soldiers of the last detachment into a sort of storehouse for their live stock. Among other things, it contained a few dozen pigeons, which were feeding on a pile of wheat that had been brought off from one of the farms plundered on the Canada

shore. Mabel had not much difficulty in catching one of these pigeons, and, concealing it in her dress, she stole back toward her own hut with the prize. It was empty; and, without doing more than cast a glance in at the door, the eager girl hurried down to the shore. At the canoe she found June, who took the pigeon, placed it in a basket of her own making, and repeating the words, "Block-house good," glided out of the bushes and across the narrow passage as noiselessly as she had come.

On returning, however, from the shore, Mabel was struck with a little circumstance that, in an ordinary situation, would have attracted no attention, but which, now that her suspicions had been aroused, did not pass before her uneasy eye unnoticed. A small piece of red bunting, such as is used in the ensigns of ships, was fluttering at the lower branch of a small tree, fastened in a way to permit it to blow out, or to droop like a vessel's pennant.

She saw at a glance that this bit of cloth could be observed from an adjacent island; that it lay so near the line between her own hut and the canoe, as to leave no doubt that June had passed near it, if not directly under it; and that it might be a signal to communicate some important fact connected with the mode of attack to those who were probably lying in ambush near them. Tearing the little strip of bunting from the tree, Mabel hastened on, scarce knowing what duty next required. June might be false to her; but her

manner, her looks, her affection, and her disposition, as Mabel had known it in the journey, forbade the idea.

As she walked toward the blockhouse she met Lieutenant Muir, who, after a few words of compliment, said, suddenly, "What is that you're twisting round your slender finger, Mistress Mabel, as you may be said to twist hearts?"

"It is nothing but a bit of cloth—a sort of flag—a trifle that is hardly worth our attention at this grave moment—if—"

"A trifle! It's not so trifling as you may imagine, Mistress Mabel," taking the bit of bunting from her and stretching it at full length with both his arms extended, while his face grew grave and his eye watchful. "You didn't find this, Mabel Dunham, in the breakfast, did you?"

Mabel simply told him of the spot where, and the manner in which she had found the bit of cloth. While she was speaking the eye of the quartermaster was not quiet for a moment, glancing from the rag to the face of our heroine, then back again to the rag. That his suspicions were awakened was easy to be seen, nor was he long in letting it be known what direction they had taken.

"We are not in a part of the world where our ensigns ought to be spread abroad to the wind, Mabel Dunham!" he said, with an ominous shake of the head.

"I thought as much myself, Mr. Muir, and brought away the little flag, lest it might be the means of betraying our presence here to the enemy,

even though nothing is intended by its display. Ought not my uncle to be told of this?"

"I don't see the necessity for that, Mabel, for, it is a circumstance, and circumstances sometimes worry the worthy mariner. But this flag, if flag it can be called, belongs to a seaman's craft. It's surprisingly like the fly of the 'Scud's' ensign! And now I recollect me to have observed that a piece had been cut from that very flag!"

Mabel felt her heart sink, but she had sufficient self-command not to attempt an answer.

"It must be looked to," Muir continued, "and, after all, I think it may be well to hold a short consultation with Master Cap."

"I have thought the warning so serious," Mabel rejoined, "that I am about to remove to the block-house and to take the woman with me."

She took a hasty leave of her companion, and was about to trip away toward the hut of the other woman, when Muir arrested the movement by laying a hand on her arm.

"One word, Mabel," he said, "before you leave me. This little flag may, or it may not, have a particular meaning; if it has, now that we are aware of its being shown, may it not be better to put it back again, while we watch carefully for some answer that may betray the plot; and if it mean nothing, why, nothing will follow."

"This may be all right, Mr. Muir, though, if the whole is accidental, the flag might be the occasion of the Fort being discovered."

Mabel stayed to utter no more, but she was soon

out of sight, running into the hut toward which she had been first going. The quartermaster remained on the very spot, and in the precise attitude in which she had left him, for quite a minute, first looking at the bounding figure of the girl, and then at the bit of bunting, which he still held before him. His irresolution lasted but for this minute, however, for he was soon beneath the tree, where he fastened the mimic flag to a branch again; though from his ignorance of the precise spot from which it had been taken by Mabel, he left it fluttering from a part of the oak where it was still more exposed than before to the eyes of any passenger on the river, though less in view from the island itself.

Removing at once into the blockhouse, as June had advised, Mabel left Jennie, the soldier's wife, in charge, and went, herself, to see how matters stood.

But, even as she stood talking with Corporal McNab, whom her father had left in charge, the sharp crack of a rifle sounded from the thicket, and the corporal fell dead at her feet.

Then came over Mabel the full consciousness of her situation, and of the necessity of exertion. She cast a rapid glance at the body at her feet, saw that it had ceased to breathe, and fled. It was but a few minutes' run to the blockhouse, the door of which Mabel had barely gained when it was closed violently in her face by Jennie, the soldier's wife, who, in blind terror, thought only of her own safety. The reports of five or six rifles were heard



while Mabel was calling out for admittance; and the additional terror they produced prevented the woman within from undoing quickly the very fastenings she had been so very expert in applying. After a minute's delay, however, Mabel found the door reluctantly yielding to her constant pressure, and she forced her slender body through the opening the instant it was large enough to allow of its passage. Instead of yielding to the almost convulsive efforts of her companion to close the door again, she held it open long enough to ascertain that none of her own party was in sight, or likely, on the instant, to endeavor to gain admission; she then allowed the opening to be shut. She then ascended the ladder to the room above, where, by means of loopholes, she was enabled to get as good a view of the island as the surrounding bushes would allow.

To her great surprise, Mabel could not, at first, see a living soul on the island, friend or enemy. Neither Frenchman nor Indian was visible, though a small, straggling white cloud, that was floating before the wind, told her in which quarter she ought to look for them. The rifles had been discharged from the direction of the island whence June had come, though whether the enemy were on that island, or had actually landed on her own, Mabel could not say. Going to the loop that commanded a view of the spot where McNab lay, her blood curdled at perceiving all three of his soldiers lying apparently lifeless at his side. These men had rushed to a common center at the first

alarm, and had been shot down almost at the same moment by the invisible foe, whom the corporal had affected to despise.

Neither Cap nor Lieutenant Muir were to be seen. With a beating heart, Mabel examined every opening through the trees, and ascended even to the upper story, or garret, of the blockhouse, where she got a full view of the whole island, so far as its covers would allow, but with no better success. She had expected to see the body of her uncle lying on the grass, like those of the soldiers, but it was nowhere visible. Turning toward the spot where the boat lay, Mabel saw that it was still fastened to the shore; and then she supposed that, by some accident, Muir had been prevented from making his retreat in that quarter. In short, the island lay in the quiet of the grave, the bodies of the soldiers, rendering the scene as fearful as it was extraordinary.

Jennie, fearing for the safety of her husband, peered out of the blockhouse door. Again the rifles cracked, and, as the war-whoop of the Iroquois rang out, Jennie fell dead across the body of her murdered husband. The savages had surrounded the blockhouse.

Mabel was alone in the blockhouse. But she bravely secured the door and waited for what was to come.

Long and painfully melancholy hours passed, during which Mabel heard the yells of the savages; for the liquor which they had found in the stores had carried them beyond the bounds of wisdom.

Toward the middle of the day she fancied she saw a white man on the island, though his dress and wild appearance at first made her take him for a newly arrived savage. She felt as if there was now one of a species more like her own present, and one to whom she might appeal for succor in the last time of need. Mabel little knew, alas! how small was the influence exercised by the whites over their savage allies when the latter had begun to taste of blood; or how slight, indeed, was the disposition to divert them from their cruelties.

The day seemed a month by Mabel's computation, and the only part of it that did not drag were the minutes spent in prayer. She had recourse to this relief from time to time; and at each effort she found her spirit firmer, her mind calmer, and her tendency to resignation more confirmed.

While the light lasted, the situation of our heroine was sufficiently alarming, but as the shades of evening gradually gathered over the island it became fearfully appalling. By this time the savages had wrought themselves up to the point of fury, for they had possessed themselves of all the liquor of the English, and their outcries and gesticulations were those of men truly possessed of evil spirits. All the efforts of their French leader to restrain them were entirely fruitless, and he had wisely withdrawn to an adjacent island, where he had a sort of camp-fire, that he might keep at a safe distance from friends so apt to run into excesses. Before quitting the spot, however, this officer, at great risk to his own life, succeeded

in extinguishing the fire and in securing the ordinary means to relight it. This precaution he took lest the Indians should burn the blockhouse, the preservation of which was necessary to the success of his future plans.

Morning had almost come, when a light footstep was audible below, and one of those gentle pushes at the door was heard which just moved the massive beams on the hinges.

“Who wishes to enter? Is it you, dear, dear uncle?” whispered Mabel.

“Saltwater no here” was the answer. “Open quick—want to come in.”

It was June, the faithful Tuscarora woman.

The step of Mabel was never lighter, or her movements more quick and natural, than while she was descending the ladder and turning the bars, for all her motions were earnest and active. This time she thought only of her escape, and she opened the door with a rapidity that did not admit of caution. Her first impulse was to rush into the open air, in the blind hope of quitting the blockhouse, but June repulsed the attempt and, entering, she coolly barred the door again, before she would notice Mabel's eager efforts to embrace her.

“Bless you—bless you, June,” cried our heroine most fervently—“you are sent by Providence to be my guardian angel!”

“No hug so tight—” answered the Tuscarora woman. “Paleface woman all cry or all laugh. Let June fasten door.”

Mabel became more rational, and in a few minutes the two were in the upper room, seated, hand in hand.

“Now, tell me, June,” Mabel commenced, as soon as she had given and received one warm embrace, “have you seen or heard aught of my poor uncle?”

“Don’t know. No one see him; no one hear him; no one know anyt’ing. Saltwater run into river, I t’ink, for I no find him; quartermaster gone too. I look, and look, and look; but no see ’em, one, t’other, nowhere.”

“Blessed be God! They must have escaped, though the means are not known to us. I thought I saw a Frenchman on the island, June?”

“Yes—French captain, but he go away, too. Plenty of Injin on island.”

“Oh! June, June, are there no means to prevent my beloved father from falling into the hands of his enemies?”

“Don’t know; t’ink dat warriors wait in ambush, and Yengeese must lose scalp.”

The night was far more quiet than that which had preceded it, and Mabel slept with an increasing confidence, for she now felt satisfied that her own fate would not be decided until the return of her father. The following day he was expected, however, and when our heroine awoke, she ran eagerly to the loops in order to ascertain the state of the weather and the skies, as well as the condition of the island. The weather had changed. The wind blew fresh from the southward, and

though the air was bland, it was filled with the elements of storm.

"This grows more and more difficult to bear, June," Mabel said, when she left the window.

"Hush! Here they come! June thought hear a cry, like a warrior's shout when he take a scalp."

"What mean you? There is no more butchery! There *can* be no more."

"Saltwater!" exclaimed June, laughing, as she stood peeping through a loophole.

"My dear uncle! Thank God, he then lives. Oh! June, June, *you* will not let them harm *him*."

"June poor squaw. What warrior t'ink of what she say? Arrowhead bring him here."

By this time Mabel was at a loop, and, sure enough, there were Cap and the quartermaster in the hands of the Indians, eight or ten of whom were conducting them to the foot of the block; for by this capture the enemy now well knew that there could be no man in the building. Mabel scarcely breathed until the whole party stood ranged directly before the door, when she was rejoiced to see that the French officer was among them. A low conversation followed, in which both the white leader and Arrowhead spoke earnestly to their captives, when the quartermaster called out to her, in a voice loud enough to be heard:

"Mabel! Pretty Mabel!" he said. "Look out of one of the loopholes and pity our condition. We are threatened with instant death, unless you open the door to the conquerors. Relent, then,

or we'll no be wearing our scalps half an hour from this blessed moment."

Mabel thought there were mockery and levity in this appeal, and its manner rather fortified than weakened her resolution to hold the place as long as possible.

"Speak to me, uncle," she said, with her mouth at a loop, "and tell me what I ought to do."

"Thank God! Thank God!" ejaculated Cap. "The sound of your sweet voice, Mabel, lightens my heart of a heavy load, for I feared you had shared the fate of poor Jennie. You ask me what you ought to do, child, and I do not know how to advise you, though you are my own sister's daughter!

"But, uncle, is your life in danger—do *you* think I ought to open the door?"

"I would counsel no one who is out of the hands of these Frenchers and redskins to unbar or unfasten anything, in order to fall into them. As to the quartermaster and myself, we are both elderly men, and not of much account to mankind in general, and it can make no great odds to him whether he balances the purser's books this year or the next; and as for myself, why, if I were on the seaboard I should know what to do—but up here in this watery wilderness, I can only say that if I were behind that bit of a bulwark, it would take a good deal of Indian logic to rouse me out of it."

But the quartermaster advised surrender. He said: "To be frank with you, finding myself and your uncle in a very peculiar situation, I have

assumed the power that belongs to His Majesty's commission, and entered into a verbal agreement, by which I have engaged to give up the blockhouse and the whole island. It is the fortune of war, and must be submitted to; so open the door, pretty Mabel, forthwith, and confide yourself to the care of those who know how to treat beauty and virtue in distress.

"No leave blockhouse," muttered June, who stood at Mabel's side, attentive to all that passed. "Blockhouse good; got no scalp."

Our heroine might have yielded, but for this appeal. Now, however, she replied bravely—

"I shall remain as I am, Mr. Muir, until I get some tidings of my father. He will return in the course of the next ten days."

"Ah! Mabel, this plan of yours will no deceive the enemy, who are familiar with all our doings and plans, and well know that the sun will not set before the worthy sergeant and his companions will be in their power. Aweel! Submission to Providence is truly a Christian virtue!"

"Mr. Muir, you appear to be deceived in the strength of this work, and to fancy it weaker than it is. Do you desire to see what I can do in the way of defense, if so disposed?"

"I don't mind if I do," answered the quartermaster.

"What do you think of that, then? Look at the loop of the upper story."

As soon as Mabel had spoken all eyes were turned upward, and beheld the muzzle of a rifle cautiously



thrust through a hole. The result did not disappoint expectation. No sooner did the Indians catch a sight of the fatal weapon, than they leaped aside, and in less than a minute every man among them had sought a cover. The French officer kept his eye on the barrel of the piece, in order to ascertain that it was not pointed in his particular direction, and he coolly took a pinch of snuff. As neither Muir nor Cap had anything to fear from the quarter in which the others were threatened, they kept their ground.

“Be wise, my pretty Mabel, be wise,” exclaimed the former, “and no be provoking useless contention.”

“What do ye think of the Pathfinder, Master Muir, for a garrison to so strong a post!” cried Mabel, resorting to a trick that the circumstances rendered very excusable. “What will your French and Indian companions think of the aim of the Pathfinder’s rifle?”

“Bear gently on the unfortunate, pretty Mabel. If Pathfinder be, indeed, in the blockhouse, let him speak, and we will talk directly with him. He knows us as friends, and we fear no evil at his hands.”

The reliance on Pathfinder’s friendship did not extend beyond the quartermaster and Cap, however, for even the French officer, who had hitherto stood his ground so well, shrunk at the sound of the terrible name. So unwilling, indeed, did this individual, a man of iron nerves, and one long accustomed to the dangers of the peculiar warfare in which he was engaged, appear to be to remain

exposed to the assaults of Killdeer, Pathfinder's famous rifle, that he did not disdain to seek a cover, insisting that his two prisoners should follow him.

The enemy now seemed disposed to abandon all attempts on the blockhouse for the present, and June, who had ascended to a trap in the roof, whence the best view was to be obtained, reported that the whole party had assembled to eat on a distant and sheltered part of the island, where Muir and Cap were quietly sharing in the good things that were going, as if they had no concern on their minds. This information greatly relieved Mabel, and she began to turn her thoughts again to the means of affecting her own escape, or at least of letting her father know of the danger that awaited him. The sergeant was expected to return that afternoon, and she knew that a moment gained or lost might decide his fate.

Three or four hours flew by. The island was again buried in a profound quiet, the day was wearing away, and yet Mabel had decided on nothing. June was in the basement preparing their simple meal, and Mabel herself had climbed to the roof, which was provided with a trap that allowed her to go out on the top of the building, when she commanded the best view of surrounding objects that the island possessed.

Her eye had turned carefully round the whole horizon, and she was just on the point of drawing in her person, when an object that struck her as new caught her attention. In one of the most covered channels, concealed in a great measure by

the bushes of the shore, lay, what a second look assured her, was a bark canoe. It contained a human being beyond question. Confident that, if an enemy, her signal could do no harm, and, if a friend, that it might do good, the eager girl waved a little flag toward the stranger, which she had prepared for her father, taking care that it should not be seen from the island.

Mabel had repeated her signal eight or ten times in vain, and she began to despair of its being noticed, when a sign was given in return, by the wave of a paddle, and the man so far discovered himself as to let her see it was Chingachgook. Here, then, at least, was a friend, one, too, who was able, and she doubted not would be willing, to aid her! From that instant her courage and her spirits revived. The Mohican had seen her—must have recognized her, as he knew that she was of the party; and, no doubt, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, he would take the steps necessary to release her. That he was aware of the presence of the enemy was apparent by the great caution he observed, and she had every reliance in his skill as well as in his courage.

The principal difficulty now existed with June, for Mabel had seen too much of her fidelity to her own people, relieved as it was by sympathy for herself, to believe she would consent to a hostile Indian entering the blockhouse, or, indeed, to her leaving, it with a view to defeat Arrowhead's plans. She knew June's decision and coolness, notwithstanding all her gentleness and womanly feeling,

and at last she came to the conclusion that there was no other way of attaining her end than by deceiving her tried companion and protector. It was revolting to one as sincere and natural, as pure of heart, and as much disposed to truthfulness as Mabel Dunham, to practise deception on a friend like June; but her own father's life was at stake, her companion would receive no positive injury, and she had feelings and interests directly touching herself that would have removed greater objections.

As soon as it was dark, Mabel's heart began to beat with violence, and she adopted and changed her plan of procedure at least a dozen times in the course of a single hour. June was always the source of her greatest embarrassment, for she did not well see, firstly, how she was to ascertain when Chingachgook was at the door, where she doubted not he would soon appear; and, secondly, how she was to admit him without giving the alarm to her watchful companion. After running over various projects in her mind, therefore, Mabel came to her companion and said, with as much calmness as she could assume—

“Are you not afraid, June, now your people believe Pathfinder is in the blockhouse, that they will come and try to set it on fire?”

“No t'ink such t'ink. No burn blockhouse. Blockhouse good; got no scalp.”

“June, we can not know. They hid because they believed what I told them of Pathfinder's being with us.”

“Believe fear. Fear come quick, go quick. Fear make run away; wit make come back. Fear make warrior fool, as well as young girl.”

“I feel uneasy, June, and wish you yourself would go up again to the roof and look out upon the island to make certain that nothing is plotting against us; you know the signs of what your people intend to do better than I.”

“June go, Lily wish; but very well know that Indian sleep; wait for fader. Warrior eat, drink, sleep, all time, when don't fight, and go on war-trail. Den never sleep, eat, drink—never feel. Warrior sleep, now.”

“God send it may be so; but go up, dear June, and look well about you. Danger may come when we least expect it.”

June arose and prepared to ascend to the roof. Just as she reached the upper floor a lucky thought suggested itself to our heroine, and, by expressing it in a hurried but natural manner, she gained a great advantage in carrying out her projected scheme.

“I will go down,” she said, “and listen by the door, June, while you are on the roof, and we will thus be on our guard, at the same time, above and below.”

Though June thought this showed unnecessary caution, but as it was made apparently with frankness, it was received without distrust. By these means our heroine was enabled to descend to the door as her friend ascended to the roof.

June discovered nothing from her elevated

stand; the darkness, indeed, almost forbade the hope of such a result, but it would not be easy to describe the sensation with which Mabel thought she perceived a slight and guarded push against the door. Fearful that all might not be as she wished, and anxious to let Chingachgook know that she was near she began, though in tremulous and low notes, to sing. So profound was the stillness of the moment that the sound of the unsteady warbling ascended to the roof, and in a minute June began to descend. A slight tap at the door was heard immediately after. Mabel was bewildered, for there was no time to lose. Hope proved stronger than fear, and with unsteady hands she commenced unbarring the door. The moccasin of June was heard on the floor above her when only a single bar was turned. The second was released as her form reached half-way down the lower ladder.

“What you do?” exclaimed June, angrily. “Run away—mad—leave blockhouse? Blockhouse good. The hands of both Mabel and June were on the last bar, one trying to open the other to keep it shut, and it would not have been cleared from the fastenings but for a vigorous shove from without which jammed the wood. A short struggle ensued, though both were disinclined to violence. June would probably have prevailed had not another and more vigorous push from without forced the door past the trifling hindrance that held it, when the door opened. The form of a man was seen to enter, and both the young women

rushed up the ladder as if equally afraid of the consequences. The stranger secured the door, and, first examining the lower room with great care, he cautiously ascended the ladder. June, as soon as it became dark, had closed the loops of the principal floor and lighted a candle. By means of this dim taper, then, the two women stood in expectation, waiting to see their visitor, whose wary ascent of the ladder was distinctly heard. It would not be easy to say which was the more astonished on finding, when the stranger had got through the trap, that the Pathfinder stood before them.

“God be praised!” Mabel exclaimed, for the idea that the blockhouse would be secure with such a garrison at once crossed her mind. “Oh! Pathfinder, what has become of my father?”

“The sergeant is safe as yet, and victorious, though it is not in the gift of man to say what will be the end of it. Is not that the wife of Arrowhead, skulking in the corner there?”

“Speak not of her unkindly, Pathfinder; I owe her my life—my present safety. Tell me, what has happened to my father’s party, why you are here, and I will relate all the horrible events that have passed upon this island.”

“Few words will do the last, Mabel; for one used to Indian deviltries needs but little explanation on such a subject. Everything turned out as we had hoped with the expedition, for the Serpent was on the lookout, and he met us with all the information heart could desire. We surprised three boats, drove the Frenchers out of them, got possession and

sunk them, according to orders, in the deepest part of the channel; and the savages of Upper Canada will fare badly for Indian goods this winter. We did not lose a man, or have even a skin barked; nor do I think the inimy suffered to speak of. As soon as the sergeant found himself successful, he sent me and the Sarpent off in canoes to tell you how matters had turned out, and he is following with the two boats; which, being so much heavier, can not arrive before morning. I parted from Chingachgook this forenoon, it being agreed that he should come up one set of channels and I another, to see that the path was clear. I've not seen the chief since."

Mabel now explained the manner in which she had discovered the Mohican, and her expectation that he would yet come to the blockhouse.

"Not he—not he! A regular scout will never get behind walls or logs so long as he can keep the open air and find useful employment. I should not have come myself, Mabel, but I promised the sergeant to comfort you, and look a'ter your safety. Ah's me! I watched the island with a heavy heart this forenoon, and there was a bitter hour when I fancied you might be among the slain."

"By what lucky accident were you prevented from paddling up boldy to the island and from falling into the hands of the enemy?"

"By such an accident, Mabel, as Providence employs to tell the hound where to find the deer, and the deer how to throw off the hound. We never come in upon a post blindly; and I have lain



outside a garrison a whole night, because they had changed their sentries and their mode of standing guard. Neither the Sarpent nor myself would be likely to be taken in by these contrivances."

"Can we not get into your canoe and go and meet my father?" Mabel asked.

"That is not the course I advise. I don't know by which channel the sergeant will come, and there are twenty; rely on it, the Sarpent will be winding his way through them all. No, no; my advice is to stay here. The logs of this blockhouse are still green, and it will not be easy to set them on fire; and I can make good the place, bating a burning, ag'in a tribe. The sergeant is now camped on some island, and will not come in until morning. If we hold the block, we can give him timely warning—by firing rifles, for instance; and should he determine to attack the savages, as a man of his temper will be very likely to do, the possession of this building will be of great account in the affair. No, no; my judgment says remain, if the object be to sarve the sergeant; though escape for our two selves will be no very difficult matter."

"Stay," murmured Mabel, "stay, for God sake, Pathfinder. Anything—everything, to save my father!"

"Yes, that is natur'. I'm glad to hear you say this, Mabel, for I own a wish to see the sergeant fairly supported. Yes, yes, Mabel, we must not only save the sergeant's life, but we must save his honor."

"My father could not have suspected that the

position of the island was known to the enemy," resumed Mabel.

"That is true; nor do I well see how the Frenchers found it out. The spot is well chosen, and it is not an easy matter, even for one who has traveled the road to and from it, to find it again. There has been treachery, I fear; yes, yes, there must have been treachery."

"Oh, Pathfinder, can this be?"

"Nothing is easier, Mabel, for treachery comes as nat'ral to some men as eating. Now, when I find a man all fair words, I look close to his deeds; for when the heart is right, and raally intends to do good, it is generally satisfied to let the conduct speak, instead of the tongue."

"Jasper Western is not one of these," said Mabel, impetuously. "No youth can be more sincere in his manner, or less apt to make the tongue act for the head."

"Jasper Western!—tongue and heart are both right with that lad, depend on it, Mabel; and the notion taken up by the major, and the quartermaster, and the sergeant, and your uncle, too, is as wrong as it would be to think that the sun shone by night and the stars shone by day. No, no; I'll answer for Jasper's honesty with my own scalp, or, at need, with my own rifle."

"Bless you—bless you, Pathfinder!" exclaimed Mabel, extending her own hand, and pressing the iron fingers of her companion. "You are all that is generous—all that is noble."

"I've been thinking about the woman, for it will

not be safe to shut our eyes and leave hers open on this side of the blockhouse door. If we put her in the upper room and take away the ladder, she'll be a prisoner at least."

"I can not treat one thus who has saved my life. It would be better to let her depart; I think she is too much my friend to do anything to harm me."

"You do not know the race, Mabel; you do not know the race. It's true she's not a full-blooded Mingo, but she consorts with the vagabonds and must have learned some of their tricks. What is that?"

"It sounds like oars—some boat is passing through the channel."

Pathfinder closed the trap that led to the lower room, to prevent June from escaping, extinguished the candle, and went hastily to a loop, Mabel looking over his shoulder in breathless curiosity. These several movements consumed a minute or two, and by the time the eye of the scout had got a view of things without, two boats had swept past and shot up to the shore, at a spot some fifty yards beyond the block, where there was a regular landing. The obscurity prevented more from being seen; and Pathfinder whispered to Mabel that the newcomers were as likely to be foes as friends, for he did not think her father could possibly have arrived so soon. A number of men were now seen to quit the boats, and then followed three hearty English cheers, leaving no further doubts of the character of the party. Pathfinder sprang to the trap, raised it, glided down the ladder, and began

to unbar the door with an earnestness that proved how critical he deemed the moment. Mabel had followed, but she rather hindered than aided his exertions, and but a single bar was turned when a heavy discharge of rifles was heard. They were still standing in breathless suspense as the war-whoop rang in all the surrounding thickets. The door now opened, and both Pathfinder and Mabel rushed into the open air. All human sounds had ceased. After listening half a minute, however, Pathfinder thought he heard a few stifled groans near the boats; but the wind blew so fresh, and the rustling of the leaves mingled so much with the murmurs of the passing air, that he was far from certain. But Mabel was borne away by her feelings, and she rushed by him, taking the way toward the boats.

“This will not do, Mabel,” said the scout in an earnest but low voice, seizing her by the arm, “this will never do. Sartain death would follow, and that without helping anyone. We must return to the block.”

“Father!—my poor, dear, murdered father!” said the girl wildly, though habitual caution, even at that trying moment, induced her to speak low. “Pathfinder, if you love me, let me go to my dear father!”

“This will not do, Mabel. It is singular that no one speaks; no one returns the fire from the boats—and I have left Killdeer in the block. But of what use would a rifle be when no one is to be seen.”

At that moment the quick eye of Pathfinder,

which, while he held Mabel firmly in his grasp, had never ceased to roam over the dim scene, caught an indistinct view of five or six dark, crouching forms endeavoring to steal past him, doubtless with the intention of intercepting their retreat to the blockhouse. Catching up Mabel, and putting her under an arm as if she were an infant, the sinewy frame of the woodsman was exerted to the utmost, and he succeeded in entering the building. The tramp of his pursuers seemed immediately at his heels. Dropping his burden, he turned, closed the door, and fastened one bar, as a rush against the solid mass threatened to force it from its hinges. To secure the other bar was the work of an instant.

Mabel now ascended to the first floor, while Pathfinder remained as a sentinel below. Our heroine was in that state in which the body exerts itself apparently without the control of the mind. She re-lighted the candle, as her companion had desired, and returned with it below, where he was waiting her reappearance. No sooner was Pathfinder in possession of the light than he examined the place carefully, to make certain no one was concealed in the fortress, ascending to each floor in succession after assuring himself that he left no enemy in his rear. The result was the conviction that the blockhouse now contained no one but Mabel and himself, June having escaped. When perfectly convinced on this important point, Pathfinder rejoined our heroine in the principal apartment, setting down the light and examining the priming of Killdeer before he seated himself.

“Our worst fears are realized,” said Mabel, to whom the hurry and excitement of the last five minutes appeared to contain the emotions of a life. “My beloved father and all his party are slain or captured!”

“We don’t know that; morning will tell us all. I do not think the affair as settled as that, or we should hear the vagabond Mingos yelling out their triumph around the blockhouse. Of one thing we may be sartain: if the inimy has really got the better he will not be long in calling upon us to surrender.

“Surely, I hear a groan! Surely some one is below, and in pain!”

Pathfinder was compelled to own that the quick senses of Mabel had not deceived her. He cautioned her to hide her feelings, and reminded her that the savages were in the practice of resorting to every trick to attain their ends, and that nothing was more likely than that the groans were feigned with a view to lure them from the blockhouse, or at least to induce them to open the door.

“No—no—no,” said Mabel, hurriedly, “there is no deceit in those sounds, and they come from anguish of body, if not of spirit. They are fearfully natural.”

“Well, we shall soon know whether a friend is there or not. Hide the light again, Mabel, and I will speak to the person from a loop.”

“Who is below?” Pathfinder demanded. “Is anyone in suffering? If a friend, speak boldly, and depend on our aid.”

“Pathfinder!” answered a voice that both Mabel and the person addressed at once knew to be the sergeant’s, “Pathfinder, in the name of God, tell me what has become of my daughter!”

“Father I am here—unhurt—safe—and, oh! that I could think the same of you!”

The words of thanksgiving that followed could be distinctly heard by the two, but with them was clearly mingled a groan of pain.

“My worst fears are realized!” said Mabel, with a sort of desperate calmness. “Pathfinder, my father must be brought within the block, though we hazard everything to do it.”

“This is natur’, and it is the law of God. But, Mabel, be calm, and indeavour to be cool. All that can be effected for the sergeant by human invention shall be done. I only ask you to be cool.”

“I am—I am—Pathfinder. Never in my life was I more calm, more collected, than at this moment. But remember how perilous may be every instant; for heaven’s sake, what we do, let us do without delay.”

Pathfinder was struck with the firmness of Mabel’s tones, and perhaps he was a little deceived by the forced calmness and self-possession she was showing. At all events, he did not deem any further explanation necessary, but descended forthwith and began to unbar the door. This delicate process was conducted with the usual precaution, but as he warily permitted the mass of timber to swing back on the hinges, he felt an impression against it that nearly induced him to close it again.

But, catching a glimpse of the cause through a crack, the door was permitted to swing back, when the body of Sergeant Dunham, which was propped against it, fell partly within the block. To draw in the legs and secure the fastenings occupied the Pathfinder but a moment. Then there existed no obstacle to their giving their undivided care to the wounded man.

Mabel, in this trying scene, conducted herself with the sort of unnatural energy that her sex, when aroused, is apt to show. She got the light, administered water to the parched lips of her father, and assisted Pathfinder in forming a bed of straw for his body and a pillow of clothes for his head. All the time Mabel had merely guessed the condition of her parent. Pathfinder, however, showed greater attention to the danger of the sergeant. He found that a rifle ball had passed through the body of the wounded man, and he was sufficiently familiar with injuries of this nature to be certain that the chances of his surviving the hurt were very slight, if any.

At once Mabel and Pathfinder made the sergeant as comfortable as possible, but they could not calm his mind which was troubled at the thought that all these disasters to his post had been brought about through treachery—whose, he could not say, for his suspicion of Jasper had long since disappeared.

As they looked to their defenses another knock for admission came to the blockhouse door. This time it was Cap, who had escaped his captors, and



made his way to the blockhouse in the hope of saving Mabel.

Still another summons came on the blockhouse door. It was Lieutenant Muir, sent by the Frenchman to advise surrender. But nothing was farther from the thoughts of Pathfinder and Cap. They absolutely refused, and Pathfinder assured the lieutenant that those in the blockhouse would defend it to the last.

While speaking with the lieutenant Pathfinder kept his body covered, lest a treacherous shot should be aimed at the loop; and he now directed Cap to ascend to the roof in order to be in readiness to meet the first assault. Although the latter was as quick as possible, he found no less than ten blazing arrows sticking to the bark, while the air was filled with the yells and whoops of the enemy. A rapid discharge of rifles followed, and the bullets came pattering against the logs in a way to show that the struggle had indeed seriously commenced.

These were sounds, however, that appalled neither Pathfinder nor Cap, while Mabel was too much absorbed in her sorrow to feel alarm. She had good sense enough, too, to understand the nature of the defenses, and fully to appreciate their importance.

Mabel murmured her thanks, and tried to give all her attention to her father, whose efforts to rise were only prevented by his weakness. During the fearful minutes that succeeded, she was so much occupied with the care of the invalid that she scarce heeded the clamor that reigned around her.

Cap preserved his coolness admirably. As he was now on the deck of a house, if not on the deck of a ship, and knew that there was little danger of boarders, he moved about with a fearlessness and a rash exposure of his person that Pathfinder, had he been aware of the fact, would have been the first to condemn. Instead of keeping his body covered, agreeably to the usages of Indian warfare, he was seen on every part of the roof, dashing the water right and left with the apparent steadiness and unconcern he would have manifested had he been a sail-trimmer exercising his art in a battle afloat. He appeared to possess a charmed life; for, though the bullets whistled around him on every side, and his clothes were several times torn, nothing cut his skin. After a time the Indians ceased to fire at him, and even to shoot their flaming arrows at the block—having taken up the notion simultaneously and by common consent that the “Saltwater was mad;” and it was a singular effect of their feeling never to lift a hand against those whom they imagined devoid of reason.

The conduct of Pathfinder was very different. Everything he did was regulated by the most exact calculation—the result of long experience and habitual thoughtfulness. His person was kept carefully out of a line with the loops, and the spot that he selected for his lookout was one that was quite removed from danger. The Pathfinder bethought him of Mabel, and of what might possibly be the consequences to that poor girl should any

harm befall himself. But the thought rather quickened his intellect than changed his customary prudence.

“There is one riptyle the less,” Pathfinder muttered to himself, as he discharged his rifle from a loop; “I’ve seen that vagabond afore, and know him to be a merciless devil. One more of the knaves, and that will sarve the turn for to-night. When daylight appears we may have hotter work.”

All this time another rifle was getting ready, and as Pathfinder ceased a second savage fell. This, indeed, sufficed; for, indisposed to wait for a third visitation from the same hand, the whole band, which had been crouching in the bushes around the block, ignorant of who was and who was not exposed to view, leaped from their covers and fled to different places for safety.

“Now, pour away, Master Cap,” said Pathfinder; “I’ve made my mark on the blackguards, and we shall have no more fires lighted to-night.”

“Scaldings!” cried Cap, upsetting the barrel with a care that at once and completely put out the flames.

This ended the singular conflict, and the remainder of the night passed in peace. Pathfinder and Cap watched alternately, though neither can be said to have slept.

As the light returned Pathfinder and Cap ascended again to the roof, with a view once more to view the state of things on the island. The shape of the little island was generally oval, and its greatest length was from east to west. By keeping in

the channels that washed it, in consequence of their several courses and of the direction of the wind, it would have been possible for a vessel to range past the island on either of its principal sides and always to keep the wind very nearly abeam. These were the facts first noticed by Cap, and explained to his companion, for the hopes of both now rested on the chances of relief sent from the Fort. At this instant, while they stood gazing anxiously about them, Cap cried out in his lusty, hearty manner: "Sail, ho!"

Pathfinder turned quickly in the direction of his companion's face, and there, sure enough, was just visible the object of the old sailor's exclamation. The canvas of a vessel was seen through the bushes that fringed the shore of an island that lay to the southward and westward.

Anxiety and suspense prevented Pathfinder from attempting to make any signal. It was not easy, truly, to see how it could be done, for the "Scud" came foaming through the channel on the weather side of the island at a rate that scarce admitted of the necessary time. Nor was any one visible on her deck to make signs to; even her helm seemed deserted, though her course was as steady as her progress was rapid.

Cap stood in silent admiration of a spectacle so unusual. But, as the "Scud" drew nearer, his practised eye detected the helm in play by means of tiller-ropes, though the person who steered was concealed. As the cutter had weather-boards of some little height, the mystery was explained, no doubt

remaining that her people lay behind the latter in order to be protected from the rifles of the enemy. As this fact showed that no force beyond that of the small crew could be on board, Pathfinder received his companion's explanation with an ominous shake of the head.

"This proves that the Sarpent has not reached the Fort," he said, "and that we are not to expect succor from the garrison. I hope the major has not taken it into his head to displace the lad, for Jasper Western would be a host of himself in such a strait. We three, Master Cap, ought to make a manful warfare—you, as a seaman, to keep up the intercourse with the cutter; Jasper, as a laker, who knows all that is necessary to be done on the water; and I, with gifts that are as good as any among the Mingos, let me be what I may in other particulars, I say we ought to make a manful fight in Mabel's behalf."

"That we ought—and that we will," answered Cap heartily, for he began to have more confidence in the security of his scalp now that he saw the sun again; "I set down the arrival of the 'Scud' as one favorable circumstance, and the chances of Jasper's honesty as another. This Jasper is a young man of prudence, you find, for he keeps a good offing, and seems determined to know how matters stand on the island before he ventures to bring up."

"I have it, I have it," exclaimed Pathfinder with exultation; "there lies the canoe of the Sarpent on the cutter's deck, and the chief has got on board, and no doubt has given a true account of our con-

dition; unlike a Mingo, a Delaware's sartain to get a story right or to hold his tongue."

So it proved, and as the "Scud" came up the channel and abreast of the blockhouse Jasper sprang upon his feet and gave three hearty cheers. Regardless of all risk, Cap leaped upon the rampart of logs and returned the greeting, cheer for cheer. On the other hand, Pathfinder kept in view the useful, utterly disregarding the mere showy part of warfare. The moment he beheld his friend Jasper, he called out to him:

"Stand by us, lad, and the day's our own! Give 'm a grist in yonder bushes, and you'll put 'm up like partridges."

Part of this reached Jasper's ears, but most was borne off to leeward on the wings of the wind. By the time this was said the "Scud" had driven past, and the next moment she was hidden from view by the grove in which the blockhouse was partially concealed.

Two anxious minutes followed, but at the end of that brief space the sails were again gleaming through the trees, Jasper having wore, jibed, and hauled up under the lee of the island on the other tack. When, however, the "Scud" had made the circuit of the island, and had again got her weathery position in the channel by which she had first approached, her helm was put down, and she tacked.

The "Scud" now kept so much away that for a moment the two observers on the blockhouse feared Jasper meant to come to, and the savages

in their lairs gleamed out upon her with the sort of exultation that the crouching tiger may be supposed to feel as he sees his unconscious victim approach his bed. But Jasper had no such intention. Familiar with the shore, and acquainted with the depth of water at every part of the island, he well knew that the "Scud" might be run against the bank with impunity, and he ventured fearlessly so near that as he passed through the little cove he swept the two boats of the soldiers from their fastenings and forced them out into the channel, towing them with the cutter. As all the canoes were fastened to the two Dunham boats, by this bold and successful attempt the savages were at once deprived of the means of quitting the island, unless by swimming, and they appeared to be instantly aware of the very important fact. Rising in a body, they filled the air with yells, and poured in a harmless fire. While up in this unguarded manner two rifles were discharged by their adversaries. One came from the summit of the block, and an Iroquois fell dead in his tracks, shot through the brain. The other came from the "Scud." The last was the piece of the Delaware, but, less true than that of his friend, it only maimed an enemy for life. The people of the "Scud" shouted, and the savages sank again to a man, as it might be, into the earth.

"That was the Serpent's voice," said Pathfinder, as soon as the second piece was discharged. "I know the crack of his rifle as well as I do that of Killdeer. 'Tis a good barrel, though not sartain death. Well, well; with Chingachgook and Jas-

per on the water, and you and I in the block, friend Cap, it will be hard if we don't teach these Mingo scamps the plan of a fight."

All this time the "Scud" was in motion. As soon as she had reached the end of the island, Jasper sent his prizes adrift, and they went down before the wind until they stranded on a point more than a mile to leeward. He then wore, and came, stemming the current again, through the other passage. But the appearance of June, bearing a white flag, and accompanied by the French officer and Muir, stayed the hands of all, and was the forerunner of another parley.

The negotiation that followed was held beneath the blockhouse, and so near it as at once to put those who were uncovered completely at the mercy of Pathfinder's unerring aim. Jasper anchored directly abeam, and the howitzer, too, was kept trained upon the negotiators, so that the besieged and their friends, with the exception of the man who held the match, had no hesitation about exposing their persons. Chingachgook alone lay in ambush; more, however, from habit than distrust.

"You've triumphed, Pathfinder," called out the quartermaster, "and Captain Sanglier has come himself to offer terms. You'll no be denying a brave enemy an honorable retreat, when he has fought ye fairly and done all the credit he could to king and country. I am authorized to offer on the part of the enemy a giving up of the island, a mutual exchange of prisoners, and a restoration of scalps.



As the conversation was necessarily carried on in a high key, both on account of the wind and on account of the distance, all that was said was heard equally by those on the block and those in the cutter.

“What do you say to that, Jasper?” called out Pathfinder. “You hear the tarms; shall we let the vagabonds go?”

“What has befallen Mabel Dunham?” demanded the young man, with a frown on his handsome face that was visible even to those in the block. “If a hair of her head has been touched it will go hard with the whole Iroquois tribe.”

“Nay, nay, she is safe below, nursing a dying parent. We owe no grudge on account of the sergeant’s hurt, which comes of lawful warfare; and as for Mabel—”

“She is here!” exclaimed the girl herself, who had mounted to the roof the moment she found the direction things were taking. “She is here; and in the name of our holy religion, and of that God whom we profess to worship in common, let there be no more bloodshed! Enough has been spilled already, and if these men will go away, Pathfinder,—if they will depart peaceably, Jasper,—oh! do not detain one of them. My poor father is nearing his end, and it were better that he should draw his last breath in peace with the world.”

By this time both Pathfinder and Cap doubted the loyalty of Lieutenant Muir. They thought that the Frenchman, perhaps, had offered the quartermaster life and freedom in exchange for

good terms from the blockhouse. But they talked the matter over, and, after a short discussion, all the savages on the island were collected in a body, without arms, at the distance of a hundred yards from the block, and under the gun of the "Scud," while Pathfinder descended to the door of the blockhouse and settled the terms on which the island was to be finally abandoned by the enemy. The Indians were compelled to give up all their arms, even to their knives and tomahawks, as a measure of precaution, their force being still quadruple that of their foes. The French officer, Monsieur Sanglier, as he chose to call himself, remonstrated against this act as one likely to reflect more discredit on his command than any other part of the affair; but Pathfinder, who had witnessed one or two Indian massacres, and knew how valueless pledges became when put in opposition to interest where a savage was concerned, was obdurate. The second demand was of nearly the same importance. It compelled Captain Sanglier to give up all his prisoners, who had been kept, well guarded, in the very hole or cave in which Cap and Muir had taken refuge. When these men were brought out, four of them were found to be unhurt; they had fallen merely to save their lives, a common trick in that species of warfare; and of the remainder, two were so slightly injured as not to be unfit for service. As they brought their muskets with them, this addition to his force immediately put Pathfinder at his ease, for having collected all the arms of the enemy in the blockhouse, he

directed these men to take possession of the building, stationing a regular sentinel at the door.

As soon as Jasper was made acquainted with the terms, and the agreements had been so far observed as to render it safe for him to be absent, he got the "Scud" under way, and, running down to the point where the boats had stranded, he took them in tow again, and making a few stretches brought them into the leeward passage. Here all the savages instantly embarked, when Jasper took the boats in tow a third time, and running off before the wind he soon set them adrift, quite a mile to leeward of the island. The Indians were furnished with but a single oar in each boat to steer with, the young sailor well knowing that by keeping before the wind they would land on the shores of Canada in the course of the morning.

Captain Sanglier, Arrowhead, and June alone remained when this disposition had been made of the rest of the party; the former, Sanglier, having certain papers to draw up and sign with Lieutenant Muir, who, in his eyes, possessed the virtues which are attached to a commission, and the latter, Arrowhead, preferring, for reasons of his own, not to depart in company with his late friends, the Iroquois. Canoes were retained for the departure of these three when the proper moment should arrive.

In the meantime, or while the "Scud" was running down with the boats in tow, Pathfinder and Cap, aided by proper assistants, busied themselves with preparing a breakfast, most of the party not having eaten for four-and-twenty hours.

When this was accomplished and the party assembled at the blockhouse, Lieutenant Muir, by virtue of his commission, and because of the condition of Sergeant Dunham, assumed command of the post, and his first order to his soldiers was to arrest Jasper Western for treason.

Pathfinder sprang to his feet.

“What does that mean, indeed?” he cried, stepping forward, and shoving the two soldiers away with a power of muscle that would not be denied. “Who has the heart to do this to Jasper Western, and who has the boldness to do it before my eyes?”

“It is by my orders, Pathfinder,” answered the quartermaster, “and I command it on my own authority. Ye’ll no tak’ on yourself to dispute the lawfulness of orders given by one who bears the king’s commission to the king’s soldiers?”

“I’d dispute the king’s words if they came from the king’s own mouth, did they say that Jasper deserves this. Has not the lad just saved all our scalps?—taken us from defeat and given us victory? No, no, lieutenant; if this is the first use that you make of your authority, I for one will not respect it.”

“This savors a little of disobedience,” answered Muir; “but we can bear much from Pathfinder. It is true this Jasper has *seemed* to serve us in this affair, but we ought not to overlook past transactions. Did not Major Duncan himself denounce him to Sergeant Dunham before we left the post? Have we not seen sufficient with our own eyes to make sure of having been betrayed? And is it not

natural and almost necessary to believe that this young man has been the traitor? ”

“Jasper Western is my friend,” returned Pathfinder. Jasper is a brave lad, and an honest lad, and a loyal lad; and no man shall lay hands on him short of Major Duncan’s own orders while I’m in the way to prevent it. You may have authority over your soldiers, but you have none over Jasper or me, Master Muir.”

“Will ye no hearken to reason, Pathfinder? Ye’ll no be forgetting our suspicions and judgments; and here is another circumstance to increase and aggravate them all. Ye can see this little bit of bunting; well, where should it be found but by Mabel Dunham, on the branch of a tree on this very island, just an hour or so before the attack of the enemy; and if ye’ll be at the trouble to look at the fly of the ‘Scud’s’ ensign, ye’ll just say that the cloth has been cut from it. Evidence was never stronger.”

“Talk to me of no ensigns and signals when I know the heart,” continued the Pathfinder. “Jasper has the gift of honesty; and it is too rare a gift to be trifled with like a Mingo’s conscience. No, no; off hands, or we shall see which can make the stoutest battle—you and your men of the Fifty-fifth, or the Sarpent, here, and the Killdeer, with Jasper and his crew.”

“Well, if I must speak plainly, Pathfinder, I e’en must. Captain Sanglier, here, and Arrowhead, this brave Tuscarora, have both informed me that this unfortunate boy is the traitor. After

such testimony you can no longer oppose my right to correct him, as well as the necessity of the act."

"Captain Sanglier is a brave soldier, and will not gainsay the conduct of an honest sailor," put in Jasper. "Is there any traitor here, Captain?"

"Ay," added Muir, "let him speak out, then, since ye wish it, unhappy youth, that the truth may be known. I only hope that ye may escape the last punishment when a court will be sitting on your misdeeds. How is it, Captain; do ye or do ye not see a traitor among us?"

"Yes, sir. I do, sir," replied the Frenchman.

"Too much lie," said Arrowhead, in a voice of thunder, striking the breast of Muir with the back of his own hand in a sort of ungovernable gesture. "Where my warriors? Where the English scalp? Too much lie."

Muir wanted not for personal courage, nor for a certain sense of personal honor. The violence which had been intended only for a gesture he mistook for a blow, for conscience was suddenly aroused within him; and he stepped back a pace, extending a hand toward a gun. His face was livid with rage, and his countenance expressed the fell intention of his heart. But Arrowhead was too quick for him. With a wild glance of the eye the Tuscarora looked about him; then, thrusting a hand beneath his own girdle, drew forth a concealed knife and in the twinkling of an eye buried it in the body of the quartermaster to the handle. As the latter fell at his feet, gazing into his face with the vacant stare of one surprised by death,

Sanglier took a pinch of snuff, and said in a calm voice:

“That ends the affair, but it is the death of a traitor.”

The act was too sudden to be prevented, and when Arrowhead, uttering a yell, bounded into the bushes, the white men were too confounded to follow. Chingachgook, however, was more collected, and the bushes had scarcely closed on the passing body of the Tuscarora than they were again opened by that of the Delaware in full pursuit.

Jasper Western spoke French fluently, and the words and manner of Sanglier struck him.

“Speak, sir,” he said, “*am* I the traitor?”

“See!” answered the cool Frenchman; “that is our spy—our agent—our friend—but a fine traitor. See here!”

As he spoke Sanglier bent over the dead body, and thrust a hand into a pocket of the quartermaster, out of which he drew a purse. Emptying the contents on the ground, several double-louis rolled toward the soldiers, who were not slow in picking them up. Casting the purse from him in contempt, the soldier of fortune turned toward the soup he had been preparing with so much care, and finding it to his liking he began to break his fast, with an air of indifference that the most stoical Indian warrior might have envied.

It was the truth; Lieutenant Muir had been in the pay of the French for months, and had deliberately accompanied the party with the intention

of surrendering all, and the island fort, into the hands of the enemy.

But Jasper was freed of all suspicion. His innocence, his loyalty, and his courage had all been proved after a hard and cruel test, and Mabel and Pathfinder both rejoiced.

And when, on that green island in the great river, the brave sergeant breathed his last, leaving Mabel as a charge to Pathfinder, the true and gentle scout, although loving Mabel dearly, saw that she cared the most for Jasper, and, acting in her father's place, put his own wishes aside and bade Jasper take Mabel as his wife.

Then he bade them good-by.

"Good-by!" cried Jasper. "Why, you do not mean to leave us, dear friend?"

"'Tis best, Mabel and Jasper; best and wisest," Pathfinder replied. "I could live and die in your company if I only followed feeling; but if I follow reason I shall quit you here. You will go back to the Fort and become man and wife as soon as you arrive while I shall return to the wilderness and my Maker. Come, Mabel," continued Pathfinder, rising and drawing nearer to our heroine with grave decorum, "kiss me, Jasper will not grudge me one kiss; then we'll part."

"Oh, Pathfinder!" exclaimed Mabel, falling into the arms of the guide and kissing his cheeks again and again with a freedom and warmth she had been far from showing while held to the bosom of Jasper; "God bless you, dearest Pathfinder! You will come to us hereafter. We shall see you





SERGEANT DUNHAM WOUNDED.



again. When old you will come to our dwelling and let me be a daughter to you?"

"Yes—that's it," returned the guide, almost gasping for breath; "I'll try to think of it in that way. You're more befitting to be my daughter than to be my wife, you are. Farewell, Jasper. Now we'll go to the canoe; it's time you were on board."

The manner in which Pathfinder led the way to the shore was solemn and calm. As soon as he reached the canoe he again took Mabel by the hands, held her at the length of his own arms, and gazed wistfully into her face, until the unbidden tears rolled out and trickled down his rugged cheeks in streams.

Before he retired he took Jasper by the arm, and led him a little aside, when he spoke as follows:

"You're kind of heart and gentle by natur', Jasper; but we are both rough and wild in comparison with that dear creatur'. Be careful of her, and never show the roughness of man's natur' to her soft disposition. You'll get to understand her in time, and the Lord keep you happy and worthy to be so!"

Pathfinder made a sign for his friend to depart, and he stood leaning on his rifle until the canoe had reached the side of the "Scud." Mabel wept as if her heart would break, nor did her eyes once turn from the open spot in the glade where the form of the Pathfinder was to be seen, until the cutter had passed a point that completely shut out the island. When last in view, the sinewy frame of this extraordinary man was as motionless as if it were a

statue set up in that solitary place to commemorate the scenes of which it had so lately been the witness.

Jasper soon after married Mabel Dunham, but neither he nor his wife ever beheld the Pathfinder again. They remained for another year on the banks of Ontario, and then the pressing solicitations of Cap induced them to join him in New York, where Jasper eventually became a successful and respected merchant. Thrice Mabel received valuable presents of furs, at intervals of years, and her feelings told her whence they came, though no name accompanied the gift. Later in life still, when the mother of several sons, she had occasion to visit the interior, and found herself on the banks of the Mohawk, accompanied by her boys, the eldest of whom was capable of being her protector. On that occasion she observed a man in a singular guise watching her in the distance with an intentness that induced her to inquire into his pursuits and character. She was told he was the most renowned hunter of that portion of the State—a being of great purity of character and of as marked peculiarities, and that he was known in that region of country by the name of the Leatherstocking. Further than that Mrs. Western could not learn, though the distant glimpse and singular deportment of this unknown hunter gave her the assurance that it might indeed be her brave defender on the island in the St. Lawrence; her more than father, her true and loyal friend; loyal and true, also, to Jasper in his days of trial—the noble, generous, and valiant Pathfinder.

# THE PIONEERS

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## A TALE OF THE NEW YORK FORESTS.

**O**N a bright December day, years ago, when the beautiful lake district of Central New York was a border-land between civilization and the wilderness, Judge Temple and his daughter, Elizabeth, were journeying home from Elizabeth's school in New York City.

Judge Temple was a great landholder, who had obtained a large tract, or patent, of land near to Lake Otsego. His daughter had just finished a four-year's course of schooling in New York, and was coming home in the care of her father.

Their sleigh was driven by their black coachman, Aggy, but as they neared their home at Templeton, on the shores of the lake, the judge heard the barking of dogs in the forest.

He knew that meant game, and he was very fond of hunting.

"Hold up, Aggy," he said, "there is old Hector; I should know his bay among ten thousand! The Leatherstocking has put his hounds into the hills, this clear day, and they have started their game. There is a deer track a few rods ahead; and now, Bess, if you can muster courage enough to stand fire, I will give you a saddle of venison for your Christmas dinner."

The black drew up, with a cheerful grin upon his chilled features, and began thrashing his arms together in order to warm them, while the speaker stood erect, and, throwing aside his outer covering, stepped from the sleigh upon a bank of snow, which bore his weight without yielding.

In a few moments the Judge succeeded in bringing forth a double-barreled fowling-piece from among a multitude of trunks and bandboxes. After throwing aside the thick mittens which had encased his hands, he examined his priming, and was about to move forward, when the light, bounding noise of an animal plunging through the woods was heard, and a fine buck darted into the path a short distance ahead of him. As it came first into view the Judge raised the fowling-piece to his shoulder, and, with a practised eye and steady hand, drew a trigger. The deer dashed forward undaunted, and apparently unhurt. Without lowering his piece, the traveler turned its muzzle toward his victim and fired again. Neither discharge, however, seemed to have taken effect.

The whole scene had passed with a rapidity that confused the girl, who was unconsciously rejoicing in the escape of the buck, as he darted like a meteor across the road, when a sharp, quick sound struck her ear, quite different from the full, round reports of her father's gun, but still sufficiently distinct to be known as caused by firearms. At the same instant that she heard this unexpected report, the buck sprang from the snow to a great height in the air, and directly a second discharge, similar in

sound to the first, followed, when the animal came to the earth, falling headlong, and rolling over on the crust. A loud shout was given by the unseen marksmen, and a couple of men instantly appeared from behind the trunks of two of the pines, where they had evidently placed themselves in expectation of the passage of the deer.

“Ha! Leatherstocking, had I known you were in ambush I should not have fired,” cried the traveler, moving toward the spot where the deer lay, near to which he was followed by the delighted black with his sleigh; “but the sound of old Hector was too inspiring to be quiet, though I hardly think I struck him, either.”

“No, no, Judge,” returned the hunter, with an inward chuckle, and with that look of exultation that indicates a consciousness of superior skill; “you burned your powder only to warm your nose this cold evening. Did ye think to stop a full-grown buck with that pop-gun in your hand? There’s plenty of pheasants among the swamps, and the snow-birds are flying round your own door, where you may shoot them at pleasure, any day; but if you’re for a buck or a little bear’s meat, Judge, you’ll have to take the long rifle, with a greased wadding, or you’ll waste more powder than you’ll fill stomachs, I’m thinking.”

As the speaker concluded he drew his bare hand across the bottom of his nose, and again opened his enormous mouth, with a kind of inward laugh.

“The gun scatters well, Leatherstocking, and it has killed a deer before now,” said the traveler,

smiling good-humoredly. "One barrel was charged with buckshot, but the other was loaded for birds only. Here are two hurts, one through the neck and the other directly through the heart. It is by no means certain, Leatherstocking, but that I gave him one of the two."

"No, no, Judge," said the hunter called Leatherstocking; "the creature came to his death by a younger hand than yours or mine," and he nodded toward his companion.

The Judge tried pleasantly to decide the question by lot, and next to buy from the young hunter, who accompanied Leatherstocking, the slaughtered deer. But the young man refused.

"First let us determine the question of right to the satisfaction of us both," he said firmly but respectfully, and with a pronunciation and language vastly superior to his appearance; "with how many shot did you load your gun?"

"With five, sir," said the Judge, a little struck with the other's manner; "are they not enough to slay a buck like this?"

"One would do it; but," moving to the tree from behind which he had appeared, "you know, sir, you fired in this direction—here are four of the bullets in the tree."

The Judge examined the fresh marks in the bark of the pine, and, shaking his head, said with a laugh—

"You are making out the case against yourself, my young advocate; where is the fifth?"

"Here," said the youth, throwing aside the rough



overcoat that he wore, and exhibiting a hole in his undergarment through which large drops of blood were oozing.

“Great Heavens!” exclaimed the Judge with horror; “have I been trifling here about an empty distinction, and a fellow-creature suffering from my hands without a murmur? But hasten—quick—get into my sleigh—it is but a mile to the village, where a doctor’s aid can be obtained—all shall be done at my expense, and you shall live with me until your wound is healed, aye, and forever afterward.”

“I thank you for your good intention, but I must decline your offer. I have a friend who would be uneasy were he to hear that I am hurt and away from him. The injury is but slight, and the bullet has missed the bones, but I believe, sir, you will now admit my title to the venison.”

“Admit it!” repeated the agitated Judge: “I here give you a right to shoot deer, or bears, or anything you please in my woods forever. Leatherstocking is the only other man that I have granted the same privilege to, and the time is coming when it will be of value. But I buy your deer—here, this bill will pay you, both for your shot and my own.”

The old hunter gathered his tall person up into an air of pride during this dialogue, but he waited until the other had done speaking.

“There’s them living who say that Nathaniel Bumpo’s right to shoot on these hills is of older date than Marmaduke Temple’s right to forbid

him," he said. "But if there's a law about it at all,—though who ever heard of a law that a man shouldn't kill deer where he pleased! But if there is a law at all, it should be to keep people from the use of smooth-bores. A body never knows where his lead will fly when he pulls the trigger of one of them uncertain firearms."

Without attending to the words of Leatherstocking, the youth bowed his head silently to the offer of the bank-note, and replied:

"Excuse me; I have need of the venison."

"But this will buy you many deer," said the judge; "take it, I entreat you," and lowering his voice to a whisper he added, "it is for a hundred dollars."

For an instant only the youth seemed to hesitate, and then, blushing even through the high color that the cold had given to his cheeks, as if with inward shame at his own weakness, he again declined the offer.

During this scene the girl in the sleigh arose; regardless of the cold air she threw back the hood which concealed her features, and now spoke with great earnestness.

"Surely, surely—young man—sir—you would not pain my father so much as to have him think that he leaves a fellow-creature in this wilderness whom his own hand has injured. I entreat you will go with us and receive medical aid."

The young man hesitated. Leatherstocking advised him to go, as that was the quickest way to get aid, and the wounded hunter, thus persuaded,

at last entered the sleigh. Aggy threw the dead buck across the baggage and took up the reins.

The Judge invited the old hunter to accompany them, but Leatherstocking declined.

"No, no," said the old man, shaking his head; "I have work to do at home this Christmas eve. Drive on with the boy, and let your doctor look at the shoulder; though, if he will only cut out the shot, I have yarbs that will heal the wound quicker than all his foreign 'intments."

The Judge and his sleigh drove over the crisp snow until the roofs of the little village of Templeton were passed and he reached his own mansion.

The wound of the young hunter, whose name, he said, was Oliver Edwards, was duly attended to in Judge Temple's home, where the country doctor operated upon him, but he was compelled to remain there for some little time, and so interested the judge, that, in spite of the young man's unwillingness to accept favors, he tried to induce him to live in his home instead of being the companion of a hunter and an Indian in a forest hut. And one day, when Leatherstocking and the young hunter were at the mansion, the plan was proposed.

"I have greatly injured you, Mr. Edwards," said the Judge, "but fortunately, it is in some measure in my power to repay you. My kinsman, Richard Jones, has received an appointment that will, in future, deprive me of his assistance, and leaves me, just now, in need of one who might greatly aid with me his pen. Your manner, notwithstanding appearances, is a sufficient proof of

your education, nor will your shoulder suffer you to labor for some time to come. My doors are open to you, my young friend. Become my assistant, for at least a season, and receive such payment as your services will deserve."

There was nothing in the manner or the offer of the Judge to cause the reluctance with which the youth listened to his speech, but after a powerful effort for self-command, he replied:

"I would serve you, sir, or any other man, for an honest support, for I do not pretend to conceal that my necessities are very great, even beyond what appearances would show; but I am fearful that such new duties would interfere too much with more important business, so that I must decline your offer and depend on my rifle, as before, for a living."

"It is an uncertain life," observed the Judge, "and one that brings more evils with it than present suffering. Trust me, young friend (my experience is greater than yours) when I tell you that the unsettled life of these hunters is of vast disadvantage for purposes of gain, and it totally removes one from the benefit of more sacred things."

"No, no, Judge," interrupted Leatherstocking, who was hitherto unseen or disregarded; "take him into your shanty in welcome, but tell him truth. I have lived in the woods for forty long years, and have spent five at a time without seeing the light of a clearing bigger than a wind-row in the trees; and I should like to know where you'll find a man in his sixty-eighth year who can get an easier

living, for all your betterments and your deer laws; and as for honesty, or doing what's right between man and man, I'll not turn my back to the longest-winded deacon on your patent."

"You are an exception, Leatherstocking," returned the Judge, nodding good-naturedly at the hunter, "or you have a temperance unusual in your class and a hardihood exceeding your years. But this youth is made of materials too precious to be wasted in the forest. I entreat you to join my family, if it be but till your arm be healed. My daughter, here, who is mistress of my dwelling, will tell you that you are welcome."

"Certainly," said Elizabeth, whose earnestness was a little checked by womanly reserve. "The unfortunate would be welcome at any time, but doubly so when we feel that we have occasioned the evil ourselves."

Finding himself thus ably seconded, the Judge pushed his advantage to the utmost. He entered into a detail of the duties that would attend the situation, and particularly mentioned the reward. The youth listened in extreme agitation. There was an evident contest in his feelings; at times he appeared to wish eagerly for the change, and then again the expression of disgust would cross his features, like a dark cloud obscuring a noonday sun.

Near them stood the old redskin whom they all called "Indian John, the Mohican." He stood listening to the offers of the Judge with an interest that increased with each syllable. Gradually he

drew nigher to the group, and when, with his keen glance, he detected the most marked evidence of yielding in the countenance of his young companion, he changed to the front of an Indian warrior, and moving, with great dignity, closer to the parties, he spoke:

“Listen to your father,” he said; “his words are old. Let the Young Eagle and the great Land Chief eat together; let them sleep without fear near each other. What makes the brother of Mohican and the Young Eagle foes? They are of the same tribe; their fathers and mothers are one. Learn to wait, my son: you are a Delaware, and an Indian warrior knows how to be patient.”

This figurative address seemed to have great weight with the young man, who gradually yielded to the words of the Judge, and finally consented to his proposal. It was, however, to be an experiment only; and if either of the parties thought fit to withdraw from the engagement, it was left at his choice to do so.

Once outside the mansion, the foresters—for the three hunters, notwithstanding their difference in character, well deserved this common name—pursued their course along the skirts of the village in silence. It was not until they had reached the lake, and were moving over its frozen surface toward the foot of the mountain where stood the hut of Leatherstocking, in which they lived, that the youth exclaimed:

“Who could have foreseen this a month since? I have consented to serve Marmaduke Temple—to

be an inmate in the dwelling of the greatest enemy of my race; yet what better could I do? The service can not be long, and when the motive for submitting to it ceases to exist, I will shake it off, like the dust from my feet."

"Is he a Mingo, that you will call him enemy?" said the Mohican. "The Delaware warrior sits still and waits the time of the Great Spirit. He is no woman, to cry out like a child."

"I will submit," said the youth, "I will forget who I am. Cease to remember, old Mohican, that I am the descendant of a Delaware chief who once was master of these noble hills, these beautiful vales, and of this water over which we tread. Yes, yes, I will become his bondsman—his servant. Is it not an honorable servitude, old man?"

"Old man!" repeated the Indian, solemnly, and pausing in his walk, as usual when much excited; "Yes, John is old; his hand is the hand of a squaw; his tomahawk is a hatchet, brooms and baskets are his enemies—he strikes no other. Hunger and old age come together. Take the great Land Chief by the hand, my son, and he will help you."

"Enough is said, my friends," cried the youth. "I feel that everywhere the surrender is required at my hands, and it shall be made; but say no more, I entreat you; I can not bear this subject now"

So the young man came into the household of the Judge and began the life of a gentleman; but, though earnestly engaged in the service of Judge

Temple during the days, his nights were often spent in the hut of Leatherstocking. John, the Mohican, whom Leatherstocking sometimes called Chingachgook and sometimes "The Serpent," seldom came to the mansion-house; Leatherstocking never came. But Oliver Edwards sought every leisure moment to visit his former abode, from which he would often return in the gloomy hours of the night, through the snow, or, if detained beyond the time at which the family retired to rest, with the morning sun.

Elizabeth Temple, who had been away from her father so long, was interested in all the people and plans she was brought in contact with, and one day questioned her father about Leatherstocking.

Her father told her that it was on his first visit to the forest section in which they now lived, that, tired and hungry, he was descending the mountains when he saw, on the eastern bank of the lake, a line of curling smoke.

"It was," he said, "the only indication of the vicinity of man that I had then seen. After much toil I made my way to the spot, and found a rough cabin of logs built against the foot of a rock and bearing the marks of a tenant, though I found no one within it—"

"It was the hut of Leatherstocking," said Edwards, quickly.

"It was, though I at first supposed it to be a habitation of the Indians. But while I was lingering around the spot, Natty, as I soon came to call Leatherstocking, made his appearance, staggering



under the carcass of a buck that he had slain. Our acquaintance began at that time; before, I had never heard that such a being tenanted the woods. He launched his bark canoe and set me across the foot of the lake, to the place where I had fastened my horse, and pointed out a spot where he might get a scanty browsing until the morning, when I returned and passed the night in the cabin of the hunter."

"And how did Leatherstocking discharge the duties of a host, sir?"

"Why, simply but kindly, until late in the evening, when he discovered my name and object, and the cordiality of his manner very sensibly diminished, or, I might better say, disappeared. He considered the introduction of the settlers as a trespass on his rights, I believe, for he expressed much dissatisfaction at the measure. I hardly understood his objections, myself, but supposed they related chiefly to an interruption of the hunting."

"Said he nothing of the Indian rights, sir? The Leatherstocking is much given to speak against the right of the whites to hold the country."

"I remember that he spoke of them, but I did not clearly comprehend him, and may have forgotten what he said; for the Indian title was ended so far back as the close of the old war, and if it had not been at all, I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, and no court in the country can affect my title."

“Doubtless, sir, your title is both legal and just,” returned the youth, coldly, and remained silent till the subject was changed.

This question of whether the land belonged to the Indians or to the pioneers who occupied and cleared it, was a question of hot debate in those days; but Leatherstocking, as those words of Oliver Edwards showed, took the side of the Indians as the real owners.

There was another way that he could not understand nor agree to,—that was the law that made it lawful to kill deer at certain times of the year only.

This law was, of course, to protect the game and keep it from being quite killed off. But Natty could not understand it.

“When I am hungry I must eat,” he said, “law or no law.” And so he would frequently have gotten into difficulty had it not been for Judge Temple’s protection, which made an exception in favor of Leatherstocking.

But there was one man, the constable of the village, named Hiram Doolittle, who was determined to get Leatherstocking into trouble. It was because he had seen this man prowling about Natty’s hut, as if he were trying to spy what was inside, that young Oliver Edwards hunted out the old man one day to warn him.

Standing on the shore of the lake, he saw the light-colored bark canoe of his companions riding on the water, and containing two figures that he at once knew to be the Mohican and the Leather-

stocking. He pulled, in a very few minutes, to the place where his friends were fishing, and fastened his boat to the light vessel of the Indian. The old men received Oliver with welcoming nods, but neither drew his line from the water nor in the least varied his occupation. When Edwards had secured his own boat, he baited his hook and threw it into the lake, without speaking.

“Did you stop at the wigwam, lad, as you rowed past?” asked Natty.

“Yes, and I found all safe; but that carpenter and constable, Mr., or, as they call him, Squire, Doolittle, was prowling through the woods. I made sure of the door before I left the hut.”

“There’s little to be said in favor of that man,” said Natty, while he drew in a perch and baited his hook. “He craves dreadfully to come into the cabin, and has as good as asked me as much to my face; but I put him off with unsartain answers.”

“I fear he is more knave than fool,” cried Edwards. “I dread that his impertinent curiosity may yet give us much trouble.”

“If he harbors too much about the cabin, lad, I’ll shoot the creater,” said the Leatherstocking, quite simply.

“No, no, Natty; you must remember the law,” said Edwards, “or we shall have you in trouble; and that would be an evil day, and sore tidings to all.”

For a short time a profound silence prevailed, during which each man was very busy with his hook and line; but Edwards, probably feeling that

it remained with him to renew the discourse, soon observed:

“I see no more reason for a law against deer-shooting than for one forbidding fishing, and certainly catching thousands of fish with a seine\* will shortly make it impossible to catch fish at all.”

“You’re right, my boy,” replied Leatherstocking, “if people would only fish with the spear, and kill no more than they require, it would be vastly better for all.”

The hunter was about to speak again, when, bending his ear near the water, he sat holding his breath and listening attentively, as if to some distant sound. At length he raised his head and said:

“If I hadn’t fastened the hounds with my own hands with a fresh leash of green buckskin, I’d take a Bible oath that I heard old Hector ringing his cry on the mountain.”

“It is impossible,” said Edwards; “it is not an hour since I saw him in his kennel.”

By this time the attention of the Mohican was attracted to the sounds; but although the youth was both silent and attentive, he could hear nothing but the lowing of some cattle from the western hills. He laughed aloud at what he deemed to be their imaginary sounds.

“Laugh, if you will, boy,” said Leatherstocking; “the hounds be out, and are hunting a deer. No man can deceive me in such a matter. I wouldn’t have had the thing happen for a beaver’s skin. Not

\*A seine is a large net used in fishing.

that I care for the law, but the venison is lean now, and the dumb things run the flesh off their own bones for no good. Now do you hear the hounds?"

Edwards started as a full cry broke on his ear, changing from the distant sounds that were caused by some intervening hill to confused echoes that rang among the rocks that the dogs were passing, and then directly to a deep and hollow baying that pealed under the forest on the lake shore. These variations in the tones of the hounds passed with amazing rapidity; and while his eyes were glancing along the margin of the water, a tearing of the branches of the alder and dog-wood caught his attention, at a spot near them, and at the next moment a noble buck sprang from the shore and buried himself in the lake. A full-mouthed cry followed, when Hector and the pup shot through the opening in the bushes and darted into the lake also, bearing their breasts gallantly against the water.

"I know'd it—I know'd it!" cried Natty, when both deer and hounds were in full view; "the buck has gone by them with the wind, and it has been too much for the poor rogues; but I must break them of these tricks or they'll give me a deal of trouble. He-re, he-re—'shore with you, rascals—'shore with you—will ye? Oh! off with you, old Hector, or I'll hatchel your hide with my ramrod when I get ye."

The dogs knew their master's voice, and after swimming in a circle, as if reluctant to give over the chase, and yet afraid to persevere, they finally

obeyed, and returned to the land, where they filled the air with their cries.

In the meantime the deer, urged by his fears, had swum over half the distance between the shore and the boats before his terror permitted him to see the new danger. But at the sound of Natty's voice he turned short in his course, and for a few moments seemed about to rush back again and brave the dogs. His retreat in this direction was, however, effectually cut off, and, turning a second time, he urged his course for the center of the lake, with an intention of landing on the western shore. As the buck swam by the fishermen, raising his nose high into the air, curling the water before his slim neck like the bead on the prow of a boat, the Leatherstocking began to sit very uneasy in his canoe.

" 'Tis a noble creater!" he exclaimed; "what a pair of horns! A man might hang up all his garments on the branches. Let me see—July is the last month, and the flesh must be getting good." While he was talking, Natty had instinctively employed himself in fastening the inner end of the bark rope, that served him for a cable, to a paddle, and rising suddenly on his legs, he cast this buoy away, and cried: "Strike out, John! let her go. The creater's a fool to tempt a man in this way."

The Mohican threw the fastening of the youth's boat from the canoe, and with one stroke of his paddle sent the light bark over the water like a meteor.

"Hold!" exclaimed Edwards. "Remember the

law, my old friends. You are in plain sight of the village, and I know that Judge Temple is determined to punish all who kill deer out of season."

The protest came too late; the canoe was already far from the skiff, and the two hunters were too much engaged in the pursuit to listen to his voice.

The buck was now within fifty yards of his pursuers, cutting the water gallantly, and snorting at each breath with terror and his exertions, while the canoe seemed to dance over the waves, as it rose and fell with the undulations made by its own motion. Leatherstocking raised his rifle and freshened the priming, but stood in suspense whether to slay his victim or not.

"Shall I, John, or no?" he said. "It seems but a poor advantage to take of the dumb thing, too. I won't; it has taken to the water on its own nater, which is the reason that God has given to a deer, and I'll give it the lake play; so, John, lay out your arm, and mind the turn of the buck; it's easy to catch them, but they'll turn like a snake."

The Indian continued to send the canoe forward with swiftness that proceeded much more from his skill than his strength. Both of the old men now used the language of the Delawares when they spoke.

"Hugh!" exclaimed the Mohican; "the deer turns his head. Hawkeye, lift your spear."

Natty never moved abroad without taking with him every implement that might, by possibility, be of service in his pursuits. From his rifle he never parted; and although intending to fish with

the line, the canoe was invariably furnished with all of its utensils. The hunter did as the Indian advised, and prepared to strike a blow, with the barbed weapon, into the neck of the buck.

He saw the deer coming bravely toward him, with an apparent intention of pushing for a point of land at some distance from the hounds, who were still barking and howling on the shore. Edwards caught the rope used for tying of his skiff, and, making a noose, cast it from him with all his force, and luckily succeeded in drawing its knot close around one of the antlers of the buck.

For one instant the skiff was drawn through the water, but in the next the canoe glided before it, and Natty, bending low, passed his knife across the throat of the animal, whose blood followed the wound, dyeing the waters. The short time that was passed in the last struggles of the animal was spent by the hunters in bringing their boats together and securing them in that position, when Leatherstocking drew the deer from the water and laid its lifeless form in the bottom of the canoe. He placed his hands on the ribs, and on different parts of the body of his prize, and then, raising his head, he laughed in his peculiar manner.

“So much for Marmaduke Temple’s law!” he said. “This warms a body’s blood, old John. I haven’t killed a buck in the lake afore this sin’ many a year. I call that good vension, lad; and I know them that will relish the creater’s steaks for all the betterments in the land.”

“I am afraid, Natty,” said Edwards, when the



heat of the moment had passed, and his blood began to cool, "that we have all been equally disobedient of the law. But keep your own counsel, and there are none here to betray us. Yet how came those dogs at large? I left them securely fastened, I know, for I felt the thongs and examined the knots when I was at the hut."

"It has been too much for the poor things," said Natty, "to have such a buck take the wind of them. See, lad, the pieces of the buckskin are hanging from their necks yet. Let us paddle up, John, and I will call them in and look a little into the matter."

When the old hunter landed, and examined the thongs that were yet fast to the hounds, his countenance sensibly changed, and he shook his head doubtfully.

"Here has been a knife at work," he said; "this skin was never torn, nor is it the work of a hound's tooth. No, no; Hector is not in fault, as I feared."

"Has the leather been cut?" cried Edwards.

"No, no—I didn't say it had been cut, lad; but this is a mark that was never made by a jump or a bite."

"Could that rascally constable have dared?"

"Ay! he durst do anything, when there is no danger," said Natty; "he is a curious body, and loves to be helping other people on with their consarns. But he had best not prowl around so much near the wigwam!"

In the meantime the Mohican had been examining, with an Indian's sagacity, the place where the

leather thong had been separated. After scrutinizing it closely he said, in Delaware:

“It was cut with a knife—a sharp blade and a long handle—the man was afraid of the dogs.”

“How is this, John?” exclaimed Edwards: “You saw it not; how can you know these facts?”

“Listen, son,” said the warrior. “The knife was sharp, for the cut is smooth; the handle was long, for a man’s arm would not reach from this gash to the cut that did not go through the skin: he was a coward, or he would not have cut the thongs around the necks of the hounds.”

“On my life,” cried Natty, “John is on the scent! It was the constable, and he has got on the rock back of the kennel and let the dogs loose by fastening his knife to a stick. It would be an easy matter to do it, where a man is so minded.”

“Your suspicions are just,” said Edwards. “Give me the canoe: I am young and strong, and will get down there yet, perhaps, in time to interrupt his plans. Heaven forbid that we should be at the mercy of such a man!”

His proposal was accepted, the deer being placed in the skiff in order to lighten the canoe, and in less than five minutes the little vessel of bark was gliding over the glassy lake, and was soon hid by the points of land, as it shot close along the shore.

The Mohican followed slowly with the skiff, while Natty called his hounds to him, bade them keep close, and, shouldering his rifle, ascended the mountain, with the intention of going to the hut by land.

That very day Elizabeth Temple and her friend, the minister's daughter, were strolling over the hills near Templeton. Though the forests were dense, danger at that summer season was not thought of, and the two girls walked and talked, picked flowers, and admired the green and blue of forest, lake, and sky, thinking it not possible that anything could harm them so long as they had with them Elizabeth's noble and watchful mastiff, Brave.

Suddenly, their dog was attacked by a female panther, and after a violent struggle was killed by the wild beast.

Elizabeth now lay wholly at the mercy of the panther. There is said to be something in the front of the image of the Maker that daunts the hearts of the inferior beings of His creation; and it would seem that some such power, in the present instance, suspended the threatened blow. The eyes of the monster and the kneeling maiden met for an instant,

Elizabeth Temple did not, or could not, move. Her hands were clasped in the attitude of prayer, but her eyes were still drawn to her terrible enemy—her cheeks were blanched to the whiteness of marble, and her lips were slightly separated with horror.

The moment seemed now to have arrived for the fatal end, and the beautiful figure of Elizabeth was bowing meekly to the stroke, when a rustling of leaves behind seemed to meet her ears.

"Hist! Hist!" said a low voice. "Stoop lower, gal; your bonnet hides the creater's head."

It was rather the yielding of nature than a compliance with this unexpected order that caused the head of our heroine to sink on her bosom; when she heard the report of the rifle, the whizzing of the bullet, and the enraged cries of the beast, who was rolling over on the earth biting its own flesh and tearing the twigs and branches within its reach. At the next instant the form of Leatherstocking rushed by her, and he called aloud:

“Come in, Hector, come in, old fool; 'tis a hard-lived animal, and may jump ag'in.”

Natty fearlessly kept his position in front of the two young women, notwithstanding the violent bounds and threatening looks of the wounded panther, which gave several indications of returning strength and ferocity, until his rifle was again loaded, when he stepped up to the enraged animal, and, placing the muzzle close to its head, every spark of life was put out by the discharge.

The death of her terrible enemy appeared to Elizabeth like a resurrection from her own grave. There was an elasticity in the mind of our heroine that rose to meet the pressure of instant danger, and the more direct it had been the more her nature had struggled to overcome them.

The thanks of both girls were uttered with the warmth that might be expected from the character of Elizabeth. Natty received her earnest words of gratitude with a simple expression of good-will, and with indulgence for her present excitement, but with a carelessness that showed how little he thought of the service he had rendered.

“Well, well,” he said, “be it so, gal; let it be so, if you wish it; we’ll talk the thing over another time. Come, come; let us get into the road, for you’ve had terror enough to make you wish yourself in your father’s house ag’in.”

This was uttered as they were proceeding, at a pace that was adapted to the weakness of Louisa, toward the highway; on reaching which the ladies separated from their guide, declaring themselves equal to the remainder of the walk without his assistance.

Leatherstocking remained on the hill, gazing after their retiring figures until they were hidden by a bend in the road, when he whistled in his dogs, and, shouldering his rifle, returned into the forest.

“Well, it was a skeary thing to the young creators,” said Natty, while he retrod the path toward the plain. “It might frighten an older woman to see a she painter so near her, with a dead cub by its side. It was a good shot, considering that I could see nothing but the head and the peak of its tail. Hah! who goes there?”

“How goes it, Natty?” said Mr. Doolittle, the village constable, stepping out of the bushes with a motion that was a good deal quickened by the sight of the rifle that was already lowered in his direction. “What! shooting this warm day! Mind, old man, the law don’t get hold on you.”

“The law, Squire! I have shook hands with the law these forty years,” returned Natty; “for what has a man who lives in the wilderness to do with the ways of the law?”

“Not much, maybe,” said Hiram; “but you sometimes trade in vension. I s’pose you know, Leatherstocking, that there is an act passed to lay a fine of five pounds currency, or twelve dollars and fifty cents, on every man who kills deer betwixt January and August. The Judge had a great hand in getting the law through.”

“I can believe it,” returned the old hunter; “I can believe that or anything of a man who carries on as he does in the country.”

“Yes, the law is quite positive, and the Judge is bent on putting it in force—five pounds penalty. I thought I heard your hounds out on the scent of so’thing this morning; I didn’t know but they might get you in difficulty.”

“They know their manners too well,” said Natty, carelessly. “And how much goes to the State’s evidence, Squire?”

“How much!” repeated Hiram, quailing under the honest but sharp look of the hunter; “the informer gets half, I—I believe—yes, I guess it’s half. But there’s blood on your sleeve, man—you haven’t been shooting anything this morning?”

“I have, though,” said the hunter, nodding his head significantly to the other, “and a good shot I made of it.”

“H-e-m!” ejaculated the magistrate, “and where is the game? I s’pose it’s of a good nater, for your dogs won’t hunt at anything that isn’t choice.”

“They’ll hunt anything I tell them to, Squire,” cried Natty, favoring the other with his laugh. “They’ll hunt you, if I say so. He-e-e-re,

Hector—he-e-e-re,—come this way, pups—come this way—come hither.”

“Oh! I have always heard a good character of the dogs,” returned Mr. Doolittle, quickening his pace by raising each leg in rapid succession, as the hounds scented around his person. “And where is the game, Leatherstocking?”

During this dialogue the speakers had been walking at a very fast gait, and Natty swung the end of his rifle round, pointing through the bushes, and replied.

“There lies one. How do you like such meat?”

“This!” exclaimed Hiram, “why this is Judge Temple’s dog Brave. Take care, Leatherstocking, and don’t make an enemy of the Judge. I hope you haven’t harmed the animal?”

“Look for yourself, Mr. Doolittle,” said Natty, drawing his knife from his girdle, and wiping it, in a knowing manner, once or twice across his garment of buckskin; “does his throat look as if I had cut it with this knife?”

“It is dreadfully torn! It’s an awful wound—no knife ever did this deed. Who could have done it?”

“The painters behind you, Squire.”

“Painters?” echoed Hiram, whirling on his heel with an agility that would have done credit to a dancing-master.

“Be easy, man,” said Natty; “there’s two of the venomous things; but the dog finished one and I have fastened the other’s jaws for her; so don’t be frightened, Squire, they won’t hurt you.”

“And where’s the deer?” cried Hiram, staring about him with a bewildered air.

“Anan! deer!” repeated Natty.

“Sartain; ain’t there venison here, or didn’t you kill a buck?”

“What! when the law forbids the thing, Squire?” said the old hunter. “I hope there’s no law ag’in killing the painters.”

“No; there’s a bounty on the scalps—but—will your dogs hunt painters, Natty?”

“Anything; didn’t I tell you they’d hunt a man? He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, pups—”

“Yes, yes, I remember. Well, they are strange dogs, I must say—I am quite in a wonderment.”

Natty had seated himself on the ground, and having laid the grim head of his late ferocious enemy on his lap, was drawing his knife with a practised hand around the ears, which he tore from the head of the beast in such a manner as to preserve their connection, when he answered:

“What at, Squire? Did you never see a painter’s scalp afore? Come, you are a magistrate; I wish you’d make me out an order for the bounty.”

“But we have no pen or paper here, Leatherstocking; we must go to the hut for them, or how can I write the order?”

Natty turned his simple features on the cunning magistrate, with another of his laughs, as he said:

“And what should I be doing with scholars’ tools? I want no pens or paper, not knowing the use of either; and I keep none. No, no; I’ll bring the scalps into the village, Squire, and you can



make out the order on one of your law-books, and it will be all the better for it. The deuce take this leather on the neck of the dog, it will strangle the old fool. Can you lend me a knife, Squire?"

Hiram, who seemed particularly anxious to be on good terms with his companion, unhesitatingly complied. Natty cut the thong from the neck of the hound, and, as he returned the knife to its owner, carelessly remarked:

"'Tis a good bit of steel, and has cut such leather as this very same before now, I dare say."

"Do you mean to charge me with setting your hounds loose?" exclaimed the other, with a consciousness that made him forget his caution.

"Look you here, Mr. Doolittle," said the hunter, turning on the constable and striking the breech of his rifle violently on the ground, "what there is in the wigwam of a poor man like me that one like you can crave, I don't know; but this I tell you to your face, that you never shall put foot under the roof of my cabin with my consent, and that if you hang round the spot as you have done lately you will meet with treatment that you will little relish."

"And let me tell you, Mr. Bumpo," said Hiram, retreating, however, with a quick step, "that I know you've broke the law, and that I'm a magistrate, and will make you feel it, too, before you are a day older."

"That for you, and your law, too," cried Natty, snapping his fingers at the justice of the peace. "Away with you, you varmint, before the devil

tempts me to give you your desarts. Take care, if I ever catch your prowling face in the woods ag'in, that I don't shoot it for an owl."

There is something at all times commanding in honest indignation, and Hiram did not stay to provoke the wrath of the old hunter to extremities. When the intruder was out of sight, Natty proceeded to the hut, where he found all quiet as the grave. He fastened his dogs, and tapping at the door, which was opened by Edwards, asked:

"Is all safe, lad?"

"Everything," returned the youth. "Some one attempted the lock, but it was too strong for him."

"I know the creater," said Natty, "but he'll not trust himself within reach of my rifle very soon—" What more was uttered by the Leatherstocking, in his vexation, was rendered inaudible by the closing of the door of the cabin.

But Natty Bumpo's vexation was destined to grow into real and serious trouble.

For, upon charges being made against him by the constable, that he had killed a deer out of season, Judge Temple was obliged to issue a warrant and order a fine, even though, in his joy at the escape of his daughter from the panther, he was ready at once to pay the fine himself, and also see that Leatherstocking received the bounty promised by the State for the scalp of a panther.

But Leatherstocking was a curious old fellow. He did not understand, and, indeed, openly resisted the law of the frontier, and when Constable Doolittle and Billy Wiley came to his hut to serve the

warrant and lay the fine, he not only refused to allow them to do this or to enter his hut, but drove them away with his rifle, the unerring aim of which all the border knew.

This defiance and resistance to the law even Judge Temple could not overlook, and he was forced to issue an order to arrest "Nathaniel Bumpo, sometimes called Leatherstocking," and place him in the village jail.

As for young Edwards, when he knew that his friend was to be arrested, he turned upon Judge Temple with reproach and indignation.

But the Judge had determined to enforce the law and protect its officers. Edwards' plea was of no avail, and after a stormy scene the young man rushed from the house and took his way at once to Leatherstocking's hut.

Meantime the officers had gone to the forest to arrest the old man. So desperate a character was Leatherstocking considered by the pioneers, on account of his obstinacy and his rifle, that it was thought best to send a strong force to arrest him, and so the force that approached the hut was composed of a dozen armed men. The men divided, some plunging deeper into the forest, in order to gain their stations without giving an alarm, and others continuing to advance, at a gait that would allow the whole party to go in order; but all devising the best plan to repulse the attack of a dog, or to escape a rifle-bullet. It was a moment of dread expectation and interest.

When time enough had passed for the different

divisions of the force to arrive at their stations, the leader raised his voice in the silence of the forest, and shouted the watchword. The men rushed up the bank, and in a moment stood on the little piece of cleared ground in front of the spot where Natty had so long lived. To their amazement, in place of the hut they saw only its smouldering ruins.

The whole group were yet in the fulness of their surprise, when a tall form stalked from the gloom into the circle, treading down the hot ashes and dying embers with callous feet; and standing over the light, lifted his cap, and exposed the bare head and weather-beaten features of Leatherstocking. For a moment he gazed at the dusky figures who surrounded him, more in sorrow than in anger, before he spoke.

“What would ye with an old and helpless man?” he said. “You’ve driven God’s creators from the wilderness, where His providence had put them for His own pleasure; and you’ve brought in the troubles and divilries of the law where no man was ever known to disturb another. You have driven me, that have lived forty long years of my appointed time in this very spot, from my home and the shelter of my head. Lest you should put your wicked feet and wasty ways in my cabin, you’ve driven me to burn these logs, under which I’ve eaten and drunk—for the half of a hundred years; and to mourn the ashes under my feet as a man would weep and mourn for the children of his body. And now when an old man has come to see the last brand of his hut, before it is melted in ashes,

you follow him up, at midnight, like hungry hounds on the track of a worn-out and dying deer. What more would ye have? I come to mourn, not to fight; and, if it is God's pleasure, work your will on me."

When the old man ended, he stood, with the light glimmering around his thinly covered head, looking earnestly at the group, which drew back from the pile with an involuntary movement. After a pause of a few moments, the leader of the officers of the law began to rally his confused faculties; and, advancing, apologized for his duty, and made Leatherstocking his prisoner. The party now collected; and, preceded by the sheriff, with Natty in their center, they took their way toward the village.

During the walk, various questions were put to the prisoner concerning his reasons for burning the hut, and whither the Mohican had retreated; but to all of them he observed a profound silence, until, fatigued with their previous duties and the lateness of the hour, the sheriff and his followers reached the village and dispersed to their several places of rest, after turning the key of a jail on the aged and apparently friendless Leatherstocking.

It went badly enough for poor Leatherstocking at his trial. Pioneers are anxious always to uphold the law, and the open resistance made by the old hunter was a crime in the eye of the law that could not be overlooked.

So, when the jury had found him guilty, Judge Temple felt compelled, even though he hated to do

so, to impose upon the prisoner the sentence of the law.

“Nathaniel Bumpo,” commenced the judge, making the customary pause.

The old hunter, who had been musing again, with his head on the bar, raised himself, and cried, with a prompt, military tone:

“Here!”

The judge waved his hand for silence, and proceeded:

“In forming their sentence the court have been greatly governed as much by the consideration of your ignorance of the laws as by a strict sense of the importance of punishing such outrages as this of which you have been found guilty. They have therefore passed over the obvious punishment of whipping on the bare back, in mercy to your years; but, as the dignity of the law requires an open exhibition of the consequences of your crime, it is ordered that you be taken from this room to the public stocks, where you are to be confined for one hour; that you pay a fine to the State of one hundred dollars, and that you be imprisoned in the jail of this county for one calendar month; and, furthermore, that your imprisonment do not cease until the said fine shall be paid. I feel it my duty, Nathaniel Bumpo—”

“And where should I get the money?” interrupted Leatherstocking eagerly. “Where should I get the money? You’ll take away the bounty on the painters because I cut the throat of a deer, and how is an old man to find so much gold or

silver in the woods? No, no, Judge; think better of it, and don't talk of shutting me up in a jail for the little time I have to stay."

"If you have anything to urge against the passing of the sentence, the court will yet hear you," said the Judge mildly.

"I have enough to say ag'in it," cried Natty, grasping the bar on which his fingers were working with convulsive motion. "Where am I to get the money? Let me out into the woods and hills, where I've been used to breathe the clear air, and, though I'm threescore-and-ten, if you've left game enough in the country, I'll travel night and day but I'll make you up the sum afore the season is over.

"I must be governed by the law—"

"Talk not to me of law, Marmaduke Temple," interrupted the hunter. "Did the beast of the forest mind your laws when it was thirsty and hungering for the blood of your own child? She was kneeling to her God for a greater favor than I ask, and He heard her; and if you now say 'No' to my prayers, do you think He will be deaf?"

"My private feelings must not enter into—"

"Hear me, Marmaduke Temple," interrupted the old man, with melancholy earnestness, "and hear reason. I've traveled these mountains when you was no judge, but an infant in your mother's arms, and I feel as if I had a right and a privilege to travel them ag'in afore I die. Have you forgot the time that you come on to the lake shore, when there wasn't even a jail to lodge in, and didn't I

give you my own bearskin to sleep on, and the fat of a noble buck to satisfy the cravings of your hunger? Yes, yes; you thought it no sin then to kill a deer! And this I did, though I had no reason to love you, for you had never done anything but harm to them that loved and sheltered me. And now, will you shut me up in your dungeons to pay me for my kindness? A hundred dollars! Where should I get the money? Come, friend, let me pass; it's long sin' I've been used to such crowds, and I crave to be in the woods ag'in. Where are you, pups? Come away, dogs; come away! We have a grievous toil to do for our years, but it shall be done; yes, yes, I've promised it, and it shall be done."

"There must be an end to this," said the Judge, struggling to overcome his feelings. "Constable, lead the prisoner to the stocks. Mr. Clerk, what stands next on the calendar?"

Natty seemed to yield to his destiny, for he sunk his head on his chest and followed the officer from the court room in silence. The crowd moved back for the passage of the prisoner, and when his tall form was seen descending from the outer door a rush of the people for the scene of his disgrace followed.

Without a murmur the old hunter submitted to the punishment of the stocks; and when this was over he was led into the jail and locked up for the night.

But before the close of the day young Oliver Edwards was seen at the window in earnest dia-



logue with his friend; and after he departed it was thought that he had communicated words of comfort to the hunter, who threw himself on his pallet and was soon in a deep sleep.

The law having been upheld, Judge Temple determined to show his personal friendship and gratitude to Leatherstocking by paying the fine and promising to care for him after the term of his imprisonment was over. But he bade his daughter act as his messenger.

“You have reason, Bess, and much of it, too, but your heart lies too near your head. But listen: in this pocket-book are two hundred dollars. Go to the prison—there are none in this place to harm you—give this note to the jailer, and when you see Bumpo, say what you please to the poor old man; but try to remember, Elizabeth, that the laws can alone remove us from the condition of the savages; that he has been criminal, and that his judge was your father.”

Miss Temple made no reply, but she pressed the hand that held the pocket-book to her bosom, and taking her friend, Louisa Grant, by the arm, they issued together from the enclosure into the principal street of the village.

As they pursued their walk in silence, under the row of houses, where the deeper gloom of the evening effectually concealed their persons, no sound reached them excepting the slow tread of a yoke of oxen, with the rattling of a cart, that were moving along the street in the same direction with themselves. The figure of the teamster was barely to

be seen by the dim light, lounging by the side of his cattle with a listless air, as if fatigued by the toil of the day. At the corner, where the jail stood, the progress of the ladies was hindered for a moment by the oxen, who were turned up to the side of the building, and given a lock of hay, which they carried on their necks, as a reward for their patient labor. The whole of this was so natural and so common that Elizabeth saw nothing to induce a second glance at the team, until she heard the teamster speaking to his cattle in a low voice:

“Mind yourself, Brindle; will-you, sir! will you!”

There was something in the voice that startled Miss Temple. On turning the corner she necessarily approached the man, and her look was enabled to detect the person of Oliver Edwards concealed under the coarse garb of a teamster. Their eyes met at the same instant, and, notwithstanding the gloom, and the enveloping cloak of Elizabeth, the recognition was mutual.

“Miss Temple!” “Mr. Edwards!” were exclaimed at the same moment.

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Edwards, after the moment of doubt had passed: “Do I see you so nigh the jail? But you are going to the Rectory. I beg pardon; Miss Grant, I believe; I did not recognize you at first.”

The sigh which Louisa uttered was so faint that it was only heard by Elizabeth, who replied quickly:

“We are going not only to the jail, Mr. Edwards, but into it. We wish to show the Leatherstocking

that we do not forget his services, and that at the same time we must be just, we are also grateful. I suppose you are on a similar errand; but let me beg that you will give us leave to precede you ten minutes. Good-night, sir; I—I—am quite sorry, Mr. Edwards, to see you reduced to such labor. I am sure my father would—”

“I shall wait your pleasure, madam,” interrupted the youth, coldly. “May I beg that you will not mention my being here?”

Elizabeth promised, and was soon in the presence of the prisoner.

“Leatherstocking!” said Elizabeth, when the key of the door was turned on them again, “my good friend Leatherstocking! I have come on a message of gratitude. Had you submitted to the search, worthy old man, the death of the deer would have been a trifle, and all would have been well—”

“Submit to the sarch!” interrupted Natty, raising his face from resting on his knees, without rising from the corner where he had seated himself; “d’ye think, gal, I would let such a varmint into my hut? But they are wilcome to sarch among the coals and ashes now; they’ll find only some such heap as is to be seen at every potashery in the mountains.”

The old man dropped his face again on one hand, and seemed to be lost in melancholy.

“The hut can be rebuilt and made better than before,” returned Miss Temple, “and it shall be my office to see it done when your imprisonment is ended.”

“Can ye raise the dead child?” said Natty, in a sorrowful voice. “Can ye go into the place where you’ve laid your fathers, and mothers, and children, and gather together their ashes, and make the same men and women of them as afore? You do not know what ’tis to lay your head for more than forty years under the cover of the same logs, and to look on the same things for the better part of a man’s life.”

“Other logs and better, though, can be had, and shall be found for you, my old defender,” said Elizabeth. “Your confinement will soon be over, and before that time arrives I shall have a house prepared for you, where you may spend the close of your harmless life in ease and plenty.”

“Ease and plenty! house!” repeated Natty, slowly. “You mean well, you mean well, and I quite mourn that it can not be; but he has seen me a sight and a laughing-stock, and it can not be.”

“Ease and plenty!” he repeated. “What ease can there be for an old man, who must walk a mile across the open fields before he can find a shade to hide him from a scorching sun? Or what plenty is there, where you may hunt a day and not start a buck, or see anything bigger than a mink, or maybe a stray fox? But listen!” he said, suddenly.

“The time has come to go,” said the hunter, listening; “I hear the horns of the oxen rubbing ag’in the sides of the jail. You won’t betray us, gal?” he said, looking simply into the face of Elizabeth. “You won’t betray an old man, who craves to breathe the clear air of heaven?”

“But what mean you?” cried the wondering Elizabeth. “Here you must stay for thirty days; but I have the money for your fine in this purse. Take it; pay it in the morning, and be patient for your month. I will come often to see you, with my friend; we will make up your clothes with our own hands; indeed, you shall be comfortable.”

“Would ye, children?” said Natty, advancing across the floor with an air of kindness, and taking the hand of Elizabeth; “would ye be so kearful of an old man, and just for shooting the beast, which cost him nothing? Such things doesn’t run in the blood, I believe, for you seem not to forget a favor.

“I grieve, Leatherstocking,” continued Elizabeth, “that the law requires that you should be detained here so long; but, after all, it will be only a short month, and—”

“A month!” exclaimed Natty, opening his mouth with his usual laugh; “not a day, nor a night, nor an hour, gal. Judge Temple may sintence, but he can’t keep, without a better dungeon than this. The hunter paused and looked cautiously around the room, when, laughing again, he removed the bedclothes, and discovered a hole recently cut in the logs with a mallet and chisel. “It’s only a kick, and the outside piece is off, and then—”

“You will not leave us, surely, Leatherstocking,” broke in Miss Temple; “I beseech you, reflect that you will be driven to the woods entirely, and that you are fast getting old. Be patient for

a little time, when you can go abroad openly, and with honor." See, here is money to discharge the fine, and in a month you are free. See, here it is, in gold."

"Gold!" said Natty, with a kind of childish curiosity; "it's long sin' I've seen a gold piece."

"These are English guineas, and are yours," said Elizabeth; "an earnest of what shall be done for you."

"Me! Why should you give me this treasure?" said Natty, looking earnestly at the maiden.

"Why! have you not saved my life? Did you not rescue me from the jaws of the beast?" exclaimed Elizabeth.

The hunter took the money, and continued turning it in his hand for some time, piece by piece, talking aloud during the operation.

"There's a rifle, they say, out on the Cherry Valley, that will carry a hundred rods and kill. I've seen good guns in my day, but none quite equal to that. A hundred rods with any sartainty is great shooting! Well, well; I'm old, and the gun I have will answer my time. Here, child, take back your gold. But the hour has come; I hear him talking to the cattle, and I must be going. You won't tell of us, gal—you won't tell of us, will ye?"

"Tell of you!" echoed Elizabeth. "But take the money, old man; take the money, even if you go into the mountains."

"No, no," said Natty, shaking his head kindly. "I would not rob you so for twenty rifles. But

there's one thing you can do for me, if ye will, that no other is at hand to do."

"Name it—name it."

"Why, it's only to buy a canister of powder; 'twill cost two silver dollars. Will you get it for me in the town, gal? Say, will you get it for me?"

"Will I? I will bring it to you, Leatherstocking, though I toil a day in quest of you through the woods. But where shall I find you, and how?"

"Where?" said Natty, musing a moment; "tomorrow, on the 'Vision;' on the very top of the 'Vision' I'll meet you, child, just as the sun gets over our heads. See that it's the fine grain; you'll know it by the gloss and the price."

"I will do it," said Elizabeth firmly.

Natty now seated himself, and, placing his feet in the hole, with a slight effort he opened a passage into the street. The ladies heard the rustling of hay, and understood the reason why Edwards was in the capacity of a teamster.

"Let us go," said the hunter; "'twill be no darker to-night, for the moon will rise in an hour."

"Stay!" exclaimed Elizabeth; "it should not be said that you escaped in the presence of the daughter of Judge Temple. Wait, Leatherstocking; let us retire before you carry out your plan."

She retired with a cheery "Good night," and the next instant Leatherstocking was outside the jail. Their escape, however, was seen by watchful eyes. At once the chase was on.

"Spread yourselves, men," cried the constable

to the crowd, as he passed the ladies, his heavy feet sounding along the street like the tread of a dozen, "spread yourselves. To the mountains; they'll be in the mountains in a quarter of an hour, and then look out for a long rifle."

His cries were echoed from twenty mouths, for not only the jail, but the taverns had sent forth their numbers, some earnest in the pursuit, and others joining it as in sport.

The next morning, as she had promised, Elizabeth Temple was out in the mountains, bearing the canister of powder. But when she had reached that part of the mountain called for its beautiful view "the Vision," a dreadful thing happened. The forest were on fire.

Elizabeth had another narrow escape from death. Young Oliver Edwards, who was searching for his friend, the Mohican, found her and tried to rescue her. But the fire, advancing rapidly, almost surrounded them just as they discovered the Mohican almost overcome by the flames. The canister of powder, dropped in the excitement, exploded with a loud report, and, guided by this, Leatherstocking found them. Taking the Indian upon his back, he directed Edwards to wrap Elizabeth in a skin garment of his own, and led them through the burning forest.

It was a narrow escape. Even as they crossed the little terrace of rock, one of the dead trees that had been tottering for several minutes, fell on the spot where they had stood, and filled the air with its cinders.





LEATHERSTOCKING LEADS THE WAY.



Such an event quickened the steps of the party, who followed the Leatherstocking with the urgency required by the occasion.

“Tread on the soft ground,” he cried, when they were in a gloom where sight availed them but little, and keep in the white smoke; keep the skin close on her, lad; she’s a precious one, another will be hard to be found.”

Obedient to the hunter’s directions, they followed his steps and advice implicitly; and although the narrow passage along the winding of the spring led amid burning logs and falling branches, they happily accomplished it in safety. No one but a man long accustomed to the woods could have traced his route through a smoke, in which breathing was difficult and sight nearly useless; but the experience of Natty conducted them to an opening through the rocks, where, with a little difficulty, they soon descended to another terrace, and emerged at once into a tolerably clear atmosphere.

But John, the Mohican, the old warrior, Chingachgook, who had so long been the companion of Leatherstocking, did not survive.

The Judge was too deeply grateful to Leatherstocking for again saving the life of his daughter to allow him to be further prosecuted, and he now took measures to have all such proceedings abandoned.

And so it happened that young Oliver and Elizabeth Temple fell in love with each other, greatly to the joy of Judge Temple; and at last they were

married and lived happily in the great estate at Templeton.

But Leatherstocking would not stay. He had seen enough of the ways of civilization; a free hunter could not submit to its laws.

"No," he said to Oliver and Elizabeth, as he stood with them beside the slab they had raised to the memory of Chingachgook, the Mohican. "No, it's not all the same here. When I look about me, these hills, where I used to count sometimes twenty smokes curling over the tree-tops from the Delaware camps, it raises mournful thoughts to think that not a redskin is left of them all. Well, well! the time has come at last, and I must go—"

"Go!" echoed Edwards. "Whither do you go?"

The Leatherstocking turned his face aside to hide the workings of his muscles as he stooped to lift a large pack, which he placed deliberately on his shoulders.

"Go!" exclaimed Elizabeth, approaching him with a hurried step. "You should not venture so far in the woods alone at your time of life, Natty; it is imprudent. He is bent, Oliver, on some distant hunting."

"I know'd the parting would come hard, children; I know'd it would," said Natty, "and so I got aside by myself, and thought if I left ye perhaps ye wouldn't take it unkind, but would know that, let the old man's body go where it might, his feelings stayed behind him."

“This means something more than common,” exclaimed the youth. “Where is it, Natty, that you purpose going?”

The hunter drew nigh with a confident, reasoning air, as if what he had to say would silence all objections, and replied:

“Why, lad, they tell me that on the big lakes there’s the best of hunting, and a great range, without a white man on it, unless it may be one like myself. I’m weary of living in clearings, and where the hammer is sounding in my ears from sunrise to sundown. And though I’m much bound to ye both, children,—I wouldn’t say it if it was not true,—I crave to go into the woods ag’in, I do.”

“Woods!” echoed Elizabeth, trembling with her feelings. “Do you not call these endless forests woods?”

“Ah! child, these be nothing to a man that’s used to the wilderness. I have took but little comfort since your father come on with his settlers; but I wouldn’t go far while the life was in the body that lies under the sod there. But now Chingachgook is gone, and you be both young and happy. And now, I thought, was the time to try to get a little comfort in the close of my days. Woods, indeed! I doesn’t call these woods, children, where I lose myself every day of my life in the clearings.”

“If there be anything wanting to your comfort, name it, Leatherstocking; if it be attainable it is yours,” said Oliver.

“You mean all for the best, lad; I know it,

and so does the lady, too; but your ways isn't my ways. But somewhere we'll meet at last, children; somewhere. Yes, and as you've begun, and we shall meet in the land of the just at last."

"This is so new, so unexpected!" said Elizabeth, in almost breathless excitement. "I had thought you meant to live with us and die with us, Natty."

"Words are of no avail," exclaimed her husband; "the habits of forty years are not to be broken by the ties of a day. I know you too well to urge you further, Natty, unless you will let me build you a hut on one of the distant hills, where we can sometimes see you and know that you are comfortable."

"Don't fear for the Leatherstocking, children; God will see that his days be provided for, and his end happy. I know you mean all for the best, but our ways doesn't agree. I love the woods, and ye relish the face of man; I eat when hungry and drink when a-dry, and ye keep stated hours and rules. Nay, nay; you even overfeed the dogs, lad, from pure kindness; and hounds should be gaunt to run well. The meanest of God's creatures be made for some use, and I'm formed for the wilderness; if ye love me, let me go where my soul craves to be ag'in."

The appeal was decisive, and not another word of entreaty for him to remain was then uttered; but Elizabeth bent her head to her bosom and wept, while Oliver dashed away the tears from his eyes; and, with hands that almost refused to perform their office, he produced his pocket-book and extended a parcel of banknotes to the hunter.

“Take these,” he said; “at least take these; hide them about your person, and in the hour of need they will do you good service.”

The old man took the notes and examined them with a curious eye.

“This, then, is some of the new-fashioned money that they’ve been making at Albany, out of paper! It can’t be worth much to they that hasn’t larning! No, no, lad; take back the stuff; it will do me no sarvice. I took kear to get all the powder I could carry, and they say lead grows where I’m going. It is n’t even fit for wads, seeing that I use none but leather! And now, lady, let an old man kiss your hand, and wish God’s choicest blessings on you and your’n.

“Trust in God, lady, and in your honorable husband, and the thoughts for an old man like me can never be long nor bitter. I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind—the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness—and bless you, and all that belong to you, from this time till the great day when the whites shall meet the redskins in judgment, and justice shall be the law, and not power.”

Elizabeth raised her head and offered her colorless cheek to his salute, when he lifted his cap and touched it respectfully. His hand was grasped with convulsive fervor by the youth, who continued silent. The hunter prepared himself for his journey, drawing his belt tighter. Once or twice he essayed to speak, but a rising in his throat prevented it. At length he shouldered his rifle, and

cried, with a clear huntsman's call that echoed through the woods:

“He-e-e-re! he-e-e-re! pups—away dogs, away—ye’ll be footsore afore ye see the ind of the journey!”

The hounds leaped from the earth at this cry, and scenting around the graves and the silent pair, as if conscious of their own destination, they followed humbly at the heels of their master. A short pause succeeded, during which even Oliver hid his face. When the pride of manhood, however, had suppressed the feelings of nature, he turned to renew his entreaties, but saw that the cemetery was occupied only by himself and his wife.

“He is gone!” cried Oliver.

Elizabeth raised her face and saw the old hunter standing looking back for a moment on the verge of the wood. As he caught their glances he drew his hard hand hastily across his eyes again, waved it on high for an adieu, and uttering a forced cry to his dogs, who were crouching at his feet, he entered the forest.

This was the last that they ever saw of the Leatherstocking, whose rapid movements eluded the pursuit which Judge Temple both ordered and conducted. He had gone far toward the setting sun—the foremost in that band of pioneers who opened the way for the march of the nation across the continent.



# THE PRAIRIE

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## A TALE OF THE WEST.

**I**SHMAEL BUSH was a squatter. That was, years ago, a roving person who moved with his family and his belongings from place to place over the plains and prairies west of the Mississippi River, settling for a longer or shorter time wherever it suited his fancy or promised a fair living. Then, when tired or dissatisfied with results, he would pull up stakes, load his great wagons, and go farther west, hunting for a new camping-ground.

Ishmael was a big man, almost a giant in size and strength. He had a wife, Esther, as strong and rough as he, and six great sons and two daughters. With him also traveled his wife's brother, Abram White, a slouching, evil-faced, surly man, and a young and pretty girl who called Ishmael her uncle, and whose name was Ellen Wade. A funny, little, scientific man, hunting specimens, also was of the party. His name was Dr. Bat.

In the sunset light of an autumn day, as these prairie travelers were climbing a swelling rise of land, selecting a good camping-place for the night, they met an old, old man, dressed like one of the hunters of the prairie-land. He was a trapper.

His name was Nathaniel Bumpo, and he had had a long and adventurous life, living among Indians, moving westward as civilization followed after him, from the Hudson to the Ohio, from the Ohio to the Mississippi, until now, in his old age, he sought a living on the swelling prairie plains, seeing few white men, and preferring to live alone, a trapper along the western rivers.

The old man met the emigrants, or squatters, and showed them a place to camp; but Ishmael was suspicious, and did not like to have the old trapper stay around. Still, he gave him a surly sort of thanks, and invited him to stay with them all night if he cared to do so. But the trapper declined the invitation, and walked away, after the emigrants had chopped down trees on the bank of a stream, for the double purpose of allowing their cattle to browse upon the tops and of using the trunks and large branches to form a slight and irregular defense, and otherwise settled themselves in camp.

But that very night some of the wandering and warlike Indians of the prairies, called the Dacotahs or Tetons, came upon the traces of Ishmael's journey, and followed the trail to the camp.

Then the chief of the tribe, whose name was Mahtoree, proceeded carefully and silently to crawl toward the camp, hoping to escape the notice of the sentinels who he knew would be on guard, and spy into the camp, to see if there was anything there to make it worth his while to surprise and raid the camp of the squatters.

Dragging himself, inch by inch, through the long grass of the prairie, he came suddenly upon the sentinel. It was one of Ishmael's sons, named Asa; but he was asleep. Overcome by the march and work of the day, he had found himself too weary to keep awake, and thus the chief surprised him.

When certain that he was undiscovered, the Dacotah raised his person, and, bending forward, he moved his dark visage above the face of the sleeper in that sort of wanton and subtle manner with which the reptile is seen to play about its victim before it strikes. Satisfied at length, not only of the condition but of the character of the stranger, Mahtoree was in the act of withdrawing his head, when a slight movement of the sleeper showed the signs of awakening. The savage seized the knife which hung at his girdle, and in an instant it was poised above the breast of the young emigrant. Then, changing his purpose with an action as rapid as his own flashing thoughts, he sank back behind the trunk of the fallen tree against which the other reclined, and lay in its shadow, as dark, as motionless, and apparently as insensible as the wood itself.

He restrained his first impulse, which was to kill the young sentinel; and instead, took the opportunity of stealthily going through the entire camp and looking carefully at each person whom he found asleep. He even lifted the curtains of a tent, which seemed more carefully guarded than the rest of the camp. Whatever or whoever he

saw within, the light made his eyes glare with a desire to obtain the treasure. After a time, he went to another part of the camp where the horses and other animals were tied together.

Turning from the line of his former route, the Dacotah dragged himself directly toward the margin of the thicket.

As soon as he found himself among the beasts of burden, his delight was extreme, and it was with difficulty that he restrained the customary ejaculations of pleasure that were more than once on the point of bursting from his lips. Here he lost sight of the hazards by which he had gained access to his dangerous position; and the watchfulness of the wary and long-practised warrior was for the moment forgotten in the exultation of the savage.

Meantime the old trapper, Natty Bumpo, and a wandering bee-hunter named Paul Hover, had fallen into the power of the Indians and been captured.

Both knew of the encampment of Ishmael Bush, and when suddenly a long shrill yell rent the air, and was instantly echoed from the surrounding waste, as if a thousand demons opened their throats in common at the summons, Weucha, one of the Indian guards of the white prisoners, uttered a cry of exultation.

“Now!” shouted Paul, unable to control his impatience any longer, “now, old Ishmael, is the time to show the native blood of Kentucky! Fire low, boys—level into the swales, for the redskins are settling to the very earth!”

His voice was, however, lost, or rather unheeded,

in the midst of the shrieks, shouts, and yells that were, by this time, bursting from fifty mouths on every side of him.

In the midst of this tumultuous disorder a rushing sound was heard, similar to that which might be expected to precede the passage of a flight of buffaloes, and then came the flocks and cattle of Ishmael, in one confused and frightened drove.

“They have robbed the squatter of his beasts!” said the attentive trapper. “The reptiles have left him as hoofless as a beaver!” He was yet speaking, when the whole body of the terrified animals ascended the little elevation and swept by the place where he stood, followed by a band of dusky and demon-like figures, who pressed madly on their rear.

The impulse was felt by the Teton horses, long accustomed to sympathize in the untrained passions of their owners, and it was with difficulty that the keepers were enabled to restrain their impatience. At this moment, when all eyes were directed to the passing whirlwind of men and beasts, the trapper caught the knife from the hands of his inattentive keeper, with a power that his age would have seemed to contradict, and, at a single blow, severed the thong of hide which connected the whole drove. The wild animals snorted with joy and terror, and, tearing the earth with their heels, they dashed away into the broad prairies in a dozen different directions.

Weucha turned upon his assailant with the ferocity and agility of a tiger. He felt for the wea-

pon of which he had been so suddenly deprived, fumbled unsuccessfully for the handle of his tomahawk, and then, breaking away, joined in the swift pursuit. The trapper had continued calmly facing his foe during the instant of suspense that succeeded his hardy act, and now that Weucha was seen following his companions, he pointed after the dark train, saying, with his deep and nearly inaudible laugh:

“Red natur’ is red natur’, let it show itself on a prairie or in a forest. There goes the Teton after his horses as if he thought two legs as good as four in such a race! And yet the imps will have every hoof of them afore the day sets in, because its reason ag’in instinct. Well, the traveler may just make his pitch where he is; he has plenty of water, though natur’ has cheated him of the pleasure of stripping the ’arth of its lawful trees. He has seen the last of his four-footed creatures, or I am but little skilled in Sioux cunning.”

“The family is stirring,” said Paul. “What think you, old trapper? How long may it be before these Tetons, as you call them, will be coming for the rest of old Ishmael’s goods and chattels?”

“No fear of them,” returned the old man, laughing in his own peculiar and silent manner; “I warrant me the rascals will be scampering after their beasts these six hours yet. Hist! crouch again into the grass, down with ye both; as I’m a miserable piece of clay, I heard the clicking of a gun-lock!”

The trapper did not allow his companion time to hesitate, but, dragging Paul after him, he nearly buried his own person in the fog of the prairie while he was speaking. It was fortunate that the senses of the aged hunter remained so acute; and that he had lost none of his readiness of action. The two men were scarcely bowed to the ground when their ears were saluted with the well-known, sharp, short report of the western rifle, and instantly the whizzing of the ragged lead was heard, buzzing within dangerous proximity of their heads.

“Well done, young chips! well done, old block!” whispered Paul, whose spirits no danger nor situation could entirely depress. “As pretty a volley as one would wish to hear on the wrong end of a rifle! What d’ye say, trapper? Shall I give ’em as good as they send?”

“Give them nothing but fair words,” returned the other hastily, “or you are lost.”

“I’m not certain it would much mend the matter if I were to speak with my tongue instead of the piece,” said Paul, in a tone half jocular, half bitter.

Several shots came in quick succession, each sending its dangerous messenger still nearer than the preceding discharge.

“This must end,” said the trapper, rising with the dignity of one bent only on the importance of his object. “I know not what need ye may have, young man, to fear those who come hither, but something must be done to save your life.

Without waiting for any reply the trapper walked boldly down the declivity in his front, taking the

direction of the encampment, neither quickening his pace nor suffering it to be retarded by fear. The light of the moon fell brighter for a moment on his tall, gaunt form, and served to warn the emigrants of his approach. Indifferent, however, to this unfavorable circumstance, he held his way silently and steadily toward the copse, until a threatening voice met him with the challenge of:

“Who comes—friend or foe?”

“Friend,” was the reply: “one who has lived too long to disturb the close of life with quarrels.”

“But not so long as to forget the tricks of his youth,” said Ishmael, rearing his huge frame from beneath the slight covering of a low bush, and meeting the trapper face to face. “Old man, you have brought this tribe of red rascals upon us, and to-morrow you will be sharing the booty.”

“What have you lost?” calmly demanded the trapper.

“Eight as good mares as ever traveled in gears, besides a foal that is worth thirty of the brightest Mexicans. And now, stranger,” he added, dropping the butt of his rifle on the hard earth, with a violence and a clatter that would have intimidated one less firm than the man he addressed, “how many of these creatures may fall to your lot?”

“Horses have I never craved, nor even used; though few have journeyed over more of the wide lands of America than myself, old and feeble as I seem. As for woolen covering and cow’s milk, I covet no such womanly fashions. The beasts of the field give me food and raiment. No; I



crave no cloth better than the skin of a deer, nor any meat richer than its flesh.”

The squatter looked at the old man uncertainly.

“That is no fair answer,” he said. “It is, in my judgment, too lawyer-like for a straightforward, fair-weather and foul-weather hunter.”

“I claim to be no better than a trapper,” the other meekly answered.

“Hunter or trapper—there is little difference. I have come, old man, into these districts because I found the law sitting too tight upon me, but I didn’t come to be robbed of my plunder, and then to say thank’ee to the man who did it.”

“He who ventures far into the prairie must abide by the ways of its owners.”

“Owners!” echoed the squatter. “I am as rightful an owner of the land I stand on as any governor of the States. Can you tell me, stranger, where the law or the reason is to be found which says that one man shall have a section, or a town, or perhaps a county, to his use, and another have to beg for earth to make his grave in? This is not nature, and I deny that it is law.”

“I can not say that you are wrong,” returned the trapper, whose opinions on this important topic, though drawn from very different reasons, were in singular accord with those of his companion, “and I have often thought and said as much. But your beasts are stolen by them who claim to be masters of all they find in the deserts.”

“They had better not dispute that matter with a man who knows better,” said the other in a

threatening voice. "I call myself a fair trader, and one who gives to his chaps as good as he receives. You saw the Indians?"

"I did; they held me a prisoner while they stole into your camp."

"It would have been more like a white man and a Christian to let me have known as much in better season," retorted Ishmael, casting another ominous sidelong glance at the trapper, as if still meditating evil. But what is done is done, and can not be mended by words. Come out of your ambush, boys; here is no one but the old man; he has eaten of my bread and should be our friend, though there is such good reason to suspect him of lodging with our enemies."

The trapper made no reply to the harsh suspicion which the other did not hesitate to utter. The summons of the squatter brought an immediate increase to their party. Four or five of his sons made their appearance from beneath as many covers, where they had been posted. As each man approached and dropped his rifle into the hollow of his arm, he cast an indolent but inquiring glance at the stranger, though none of them expressed the least curiosity to know whence he had come or why he was there. This forbearance, however, proceeded only in part from their laziness and indolence. Indeed, the eldest, Asa,—the sleeping sentinel, by whose error Mahtoree had profited,—claimed that he had seen some one with the trapper, and asked who it was.

"If you had seen the Tetons racing across the

prairies like so many black-looking evil ones on the heels of your cattle, my friend," said the trapper "it would have been an easy matter to have fancied them a thousand."

"Come, stranger," said the emigrant, his rugged nature somewhat softened; "it is of small account what may be the groundwork of the disturbance when it's a Christian ag'in a savage. We shall hear more of this horse-stealing to-morrow; to-night we can do no wiser or safer thing than to sleep."

So saying, Ishmael deliberately led the way back toward his rifled encampment, and ushered the man whose life a few minutes before had been in real danger from his anger into the presence of his family. Here, with a very few words of explanation, he made his wife acquainted with the state of things on the prairie, and announced his own determination to repay himself for his broken rest by devoting the remainder of the night to sleep.

The trapper gave his ready assent to the measure, and adjusted his gaunt form on the pile of brush that was offered him with as much composure as a sovereign could resign himself to sleep in the security of his capital and surrounded by his armed protectors. Paul Hover, he saw, was not about. The bee-hunter, he decided, had observed the caution of keeping himself out of view; and, satisfied as to this, he slept, though with the peculiar watchfulness of one long accustomed to vigilance, even in the hours of deepest night.

In the morning the old trapper, in reply to a

direct question from Ishmael, advised him to remove his camp to some safer point.

“A rifle would send a bullet from these hills into your very sleeping-cabins; nay, arrows from the thicket in your rear would keep you all burrowed, like so many prairie dogs; it wouldn't do, it wouldn't do. Three long miles from this spot is a place where, as I have often thought in passing across the desert, a stand might be made for days and weeks together, if there were hearts and hands ready to engage in the bloody work.”

Another low, deriding laugh passed among the young men, announcing, in a manner sufficiently evident, their readiness to undertake a task even more difficult. The squatter himself eagerly seized the hint. A few direct inquiries served to obtain the little additional information that was necessary, in order to make the contemplated movement, and then Ishmael, who was, in times of need, as terrifically energetic as he was sluggish in common, set about effecting his object without delay.

Notwithstanding the industry and zeal of all engaged, the task was one of great labor and difficulty. The loaded vehicles were to be drawn by hand across a wide distance of plain, without track or guide of any sort except that which the trapper had furnished. But all bore a hand, and at last the camp was ready to move on. The trapper, with the watchfulness of the man who lives apart from his fellow-men, observed everything closely. His attention, however, was especially drawn toward the covered hut or tent

which the Indian, Mahtoree, had examined. It seemed to conceal something mysterious, and the old man had almost got his head within the drapery when he was discovered by the surly and evil-faced Abram White. Abram bluntly exclaimed:

“I am a fool, as you often say! But look for yourself. If that man is not an enemy I will call myself an Indian, and go hunt with the Sioux.”

The cloud, as it is about to discharge the subtle lightning, is not more dark nor threatening than the look with which Ishmael greeted the intruder. He turned his head on every side of him, as if seeking some engine sufficiently terrible to destroy the offending trapper at a blow; and then, possibly recollecting the further occasion he might have for his counsel, he forced himself to say, with an appearance of moderation that nearly choked him:

“Stranger, I did believe this prying into the concerns of others was the business of women in the towns and settlements, and not the manner in which men who are used to live where each has room for himself deal with the secrets of their neighbors. To what lawyer or sheriff do you calculate to sell your news?”

“I hold but little discourse, except with One, and then chiefly of my own affairs,” returned the old man, without the least alarm, and pointing imposingly upward: “a Judge, and Judge of all. Little does He need knowledge from my hands, and but little will your wish to keep anything secret from Him profit you, even in this desert.”

The mounting tempers of his untrained listeners

were rebuked by the simple, solemn manner of the trapper. Ishmael stood sullen and thoughtful, while his companion stole a furtive and involuntary glance at the placid sky, which spread so wide and blue above his head, as if he expected to see the Almighty eye itself beaming from the heavenly vault. The hesitation of the squatter was of short duration.

“It would be showing more of the kindness of a friend and comrade,” Ishmael returned, in a tone sufficiently sullen to betray his humor, although it was no longer threatening, “had your shoulder been put to the wheel of one of yonder wagons, instead of edging itself in here, where none are wanted but such as are invited.”

“I can put the little strength that is left me,” returned the trapper, “to this, as well as to another of your loads.”

“Do you take us for boys?” exclaimed Ishmael, laughing, half in ferocity and half in derision, applying his powerful strength at the same time to the little vehicle, which rolled over the grass with as much seeming facility as if it were drawn by its usual team.

The trapper paused and followed the departing wagon with his eye, marveling greatly as to the nature of its concealed contents, until it had also gained the summit of the eminence, and in its turn disappeared behind the swell of the land.

The squatters bent themselves faithfully to their task, and in a short time were entrenched in a kind of natural fortress. It was a solitary and ragged

rock which rose on the margin of a little water-course. The few trees which grew about it were soon cut down, and their trunks, with the help of rocks gathered from the sides of the hill, were formed into rude and not very strong defenses at the points which offered the fewest natural obstacles to attack. On the top of the rock was perched the tent which has been already mentioned, and while one of the party, frequently one of the women, kept continual watch on this height, the men spent their time for several days in idleness, their unruly tempers and the mystery which surrounded the tent giving rise to frequent quarrels.

After the squatters left him, the trapper remained for some time gazing after them. He continued muttering occasionally to himself until a rustling in the low bushes, which still grew for some distance along the swale that formed the thicket on which the camp of Ishmael had rested, caught his ear, and cut short his meditation. The habits of so many years spent in the wilderness caused the old man to bring his rifle to a poise with something like the activity and promptitude of his youth; but, suddenly recovering his recollection, he dropped it into the hollow of his arm again, and resumed his air of melancholy resignation.

“Come forth, come forth!” he said aloud. “Be ye bird or be ye beast, ye are safe from these old hands. I have eaten and I have drunk; why should I take life, when my wants call for no sacrifice. Come forth, come forth! You are safe from harm at these weak hands.”

“Thank you for the good word, old trapper!” cried Paul Hover, springing actively forward from his place of concealment. “There was an air about you, when you threw forward the muzzle of your piece, that I did not like, for it seemed to say that you were master of all the rest of the motions.”

“You are right, you are right!” cried the trapper, laughing with inward self-complacency at the recollection of his former skill. “The day has been when few men knew the virtues of a long rifle, like this I carry, better than myself, old and useless as I now seem. You are right, young man; and the time was when it was dangerous to move a leaf within ear-shot of my stand, or,” he added, dropping his voice and looking serious, “for a red Mingo to show an eyeball from his ambushment.”

In the woods Paul and the trapper met another wanderer. He was an officer in the United States army, who was also in search of Ishmael Bush and his camp, for in that camp he was confident was a treasure which he had been tracing and tracking for months.

For Captain Middleton’s beautiful young wife, a Mexican lady, had been kidnapped or stolen by Abram White, the evil-faced brother-in-law of Ishmael Bush, to be sold as a slave or held for a ransom, and it was this prize that was kept in the tent-like hut which the Dacotah chief had inspected, that had aroused the trapper’s curiosity, and well-nigh brought upon him the wrath and vengeance of Ishmael Bush.



At once a scheme of rescue was decided upon by the trapper, Paul Hover, Captain Middleton, and even funny little Dr. Bat, who did not wish to associate with kidnappers.

Choosing a time when all the men were absent, hunting, or trying to ascertain the whereabouts of the Indians, they approached the fortress, and although the daughters of Ishmael Bush made a fierce resistance, rolling down stones upon the attacking party, and bravely engaging in a hand-to-hand conflict with their brawny enemies, they succeeded in rescuing the young wife of the captain, while Ellen Wade, who hated her life in the camp and was in love with Paul, the bee-hunter, also escaped.

But meantime Asa, the eldest son of Ishmael Bush, had been killed on the prairie. His father was certain this had been done by the old trapper, in his attempt to get Inez from the camp, and Ishmael vowed revenge.

Falling in with the hostile party of Sioux or Dacotahs, the trapper and his party were compelled to accompany them on a second attack on the Fort, during which they managed to escape, mounted on horses which they did not hesitate to take. At last they reached a place of comparative safety, and disposed themselves to much-needed rest. The sleep of the fugitives lasted for several hours. The trapper was the first to shake off its influence, as he had been the last to seek its refreshment. Rising just as the gray light of day began to brighten the east, he summoned his com-

panions from their warm lairs and pointed out the necessity of their being once more on the alert. While Middleton attended to the arrangements necessary to the comfort of Inez and Ellen in the long and painful journey which lay before them, the old man and Paul prepared the meal, which the former had advised them to take before they proceeded to horse. The little group was soon seated about a repast which, though it might want the elegancies to which the bride of Middleton had been accustomed, was not deficient in the more important requisites of savory taste and strengthening food.

“When we get lower into the hunting-grounds of the Pawnees,” said the trapper, laying a morsel of delicate venison before Inez, on a little trencher neatly made of horn and expressly for his own use, “we shall find the buffaloes fatter and sweeter, the deer in more abundance, and all the gifts of the Lord abounding to satisfy our wants. Perhaps we may even strike a beaver and get a morsel from his tail\* by way of a rare mouthful.”

“What course do you mean to pursue when you have once thrown these bloodhounds from the chase?” demanded Middleton.

“If I might advise,” said Paul, “it would be to strike a water course, and get upon its downward current as soon as may be. Give me a cottonwood, and I will turn you out a canoe that shall carry us all, in perhaps the work of a day and a night.

\* The American hunters consider the tail of the beaver the most nourishing of all food.

Ellen is lively enough, but then she is no great race-rider; and it would be far more comfortable to boat six or eight hundred miles than to go loping along like so many elks measuring the prairies; besides, water leaves no trail."

"I will not swear to that," returned the trapper; "I have often thought the eyes of a redskin would find a trail in air."

"See, Middleton," exclaimed Inez, in a sudden burst of youthful pleasure, that caused her for a moment to forget her situation, "how lovely is that sky; surely it contains a promise of happier times!"

"It is glorious!" returned her husband. "Glorious and heavenly is that streak of vivid red, and here is a still brighter crimson; rarely have I seen a richer rising of the sun."

"Rising of the sun!" slowly repeated the old man, lifting his tall person from its seat with a deliberate and abstracted air, while he kept his eye riveted on the changing and certainly beautiful tints that were beaming on the vault of heaven. "Rising of the sun! I like not such risings of the sun. Ah's me! the imps have circumvented us with a vengeance. The prairie is on fire!"

"God in heaven protect us!" cried Middleton, catching Inez to his bosom, instantly realizing the greatness of their danger. "There is no time to lose, old man; each instant is a day; let us fly."

"Whither?" demanded the trapper, motioning him with calmness and dignity to arrest his steps. "In this wilderness of grass and reeds you are like a vessel in the broad lakes without a compass. A

single step on the wrong course might prove the destruction of us all. It is seldom danger is so pressing that there is not time enough for reason to do its work, young officer; therefore let us await its biddings."

"For my own part," said Paul Hover, looking about him with no equivocal expression of concern, "old trapper, I agree with the captain, and say mount and run."

"Ye are wrong—ye are wrong; man is not a beast to follow the gift of instinct and to snuff up his knowledge by a taint in the air or a rumbling in the sound, but he must see, and reason, and then conclude. So follow me a little to the left, where there is a rise in the ground, whence we may make our observations."

The old man waved his hand with authority, and led the way without further speech to the spot he had indicated, followed by the whole of his alarmed companions. Here a few minutes were lost in breaking down the tops of the surrounding herbage which, notwithstanding the advantage of their position, rose even above the heads of Middleton and Paul, and in obtaining a look-out that might command a view of the surrounding sea of fire.

The frightful prospect added nothing to the hopes of those who had so fearful a stake in the result. Although the day was beginning to dawn, the vivid colors of the sky continued to deepen. Bright flashes of flame shot up here and there along the margin of the waste. The anxiety on the rigid features of the trapper sensibly deepened as he

leisurely traced these evidences of a general fire, which spread in a broad belt about their place of refuge, until he had encircled the horizon.

“This is terrible!” exclaimed Middleton, folding the trembling Inez to his heart. “At such a time as this, and in such a manner!”

“The gates of heaven are open to all who truly believe,” murmured the pious young wife in his bosom.

The old man, who had continued during the whole scene like one much at a loss how to proceed, though also like one who was rather perplexed than alarmed, suddenly assumed a decided air, as if he no longer doubted on the course it was most advisable to pursue.

“It is time to be doing,” he said, “it is time to leave off moanings and to be doing.”

“You have come to your recollections too late, miserable old man,” cried Middleton; “the flames are within a quarter of a mile of us, and the wind is bringing them down in this quarter with dreadful rapidity.”

“Anan! the flames! I care but little for the flames. If I only knew how to circumvent the cunning of the Dacotahs as I know how to cheat the fire of its prey there would be nothing needed but thanks to the Lord for our deliverance. Come, lads, come: 'tis time to be doing now, and to cease talking; for yonder curling flame is truly coming on like a trotting moose. Put hands upon this short and withered grass where we stand, and lay bare the 'arth.”

The captain instantly began to imitate the industry of Paul, who was tearing the decayed herbage from the ground in a sort of desperate compliance with the trapper's direction. Even Ellen lent her hands to the labor, nor it was long before Inez was seen similarly employed, though none amongst them knew why or wherefore. A very few moments sufficed to lay bare a spot of some twenty feet in diameter. Into one edge of this little area the trapper brought the females, directing Middleton and Paul to cover their light dresses with the blankets of the party. So soon as this precaution was observed, the old man approached the opposite margin of the grass, which still surrounded them in a tall and dangerous circle, and selecting a handful of the driest of the herbage, he placed it over the pan of his rifle. The light leaves kindled at the flash. Then he placed the little flame in a bed of the standing fog, and withdrawing from the spot to the center of the ring he patiently awaited the result.

The fire seized with eagerness upon its new fuel, and in a moment forked flames were gliding among the grass,

"Now," said the old man, holding up a finger and laughing in his peculiarly silent manner, "you shall see fire fight fire! Ah's me! many is the time I have burnt a smooty path from wanton laziness to pick my way across a tangled bottom."

"But is this not fatal?" cried the amazed Middleton; "are you not bringing the enemy nigher to us instead of avoiding it?"



FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE.





“Do you scorch so easily? But we shall live to see; we shall all live to see.”

The experience of the trapper was in the right. As the fire gained strength and heat, it began to spread on three sides, dying of itself on the fourth for want of food. As it increased, and the sullen roaring announced its power, it cleared everything before it, leaving the black and smoking soil far more naked than if the scythe had swept the place.

The situation of the fugitives would have still been hazardous had not the area enlarged as the flame encircled them. But by advancing to the spot where the trapper had kindled the grass, they avoided the heat, and in a very few moments the flames began to recede in every quarter, leaving them enveloped in a cloud of smoke, but perfectly safe from the torrent of fire that was still furiously rolling onward.

“Now look off yonder to the east,” said the old man, as he began to lead the way across the murky and still smoking plain; “little fear of cold feet in journeying such a path as this: but look you off to the east, and if you see a sheet of shining white, glistening like a plate of beaten silver through the openings of the smoke, why, that is water. A noble stream is running thereaway, and I thought I got a glimpse of it a while since; but other thoughts came, and I lost it. It is a broad and swift river, such as the Lord has made many of its fellows in this desert. Now watch, all of you, with open eyes, for that strip of glittering water; we

shall not be safe until it is flowing between our trail and these sharp-sighted Dacotahs."

This latter declaration was enough to insure a vigilant lookout for the desired stream on the part of all the trapper's followers. With this object in view, the party proceeded in profound silence, the old man having warned them of the necessity of caution as they entered the clouds of smoke, which were rolling like masses of fog along the plain, more particularly over those spots where the fire had met with occasional pools of stagnant water.

Finally they emerged from the area which had been ravaged by fire, and as they drew near a mass of thicket, Hector, the trapper's old hound, showed signs of uneasiness. "This is foolish, Hector," said the old trapper, "more like an untamed pup than a sensible hound; one who has got his education by hard experience, and not by nosing over the trails of other dogs. Well, friend," he said to Dr. Bat, "you who can do so much, are you equal to looking into the thicket; or must I go in myself?"

The doctor assumed an air of resolution, and without further words proceeded to do as desired. The dogs were so far restrained by the remonstrances of the old man as to confine their noise to low but often-repeated whinings. When they saw the naturalist advance, however, the pup broke through all restraint and made a swift circuit around his person, scenting the earth as he proceeded; and, returning to his companion, he howled aloud.

"The squatter and his brood have left a strong

scent on the earth," said the old man, watching as he spoke for some signal from his learned pioneer to follow; "I hope yonder school-bred man knows enough to remember the errand on which I have sent him."

Dr. Bat had already disappeared in the bushes, and the trapper was beginning to show additional evidences of impatience, when the person of the former was seen retiring from the thicket backward, with his face fastened on the place he had just left, as if his look was bound in the thralldom of some charm. He had found what he took for some strange animal, but it proved to be an Indian who was hiding.

"Is the animal human?" demanded the doctor, "of the *genus homo*?\* I had fancied it a non-descript."

"It's as human, and as mortal, too, as a warrior of these prairies is ever known to be. It will be well to speak to the imp, and to let him know he deals with men whose beards are grown. Come forth from your cover, friend," he continued, in the language of the extensive tribes of the Dakotahs; "there is room on the prairie for another warrior."

The eyes appeared to glare more fiercely than before; but the mass which, according to the trapper's opinion, was neither more nor less than a human head, shorn, as usual among the warriors of the West, of its hair, still continued without motion or any other sign of life.

\* Latin for "the human race."

The trapper very deliberately examined the priming of his rifle, taking care to make as great a parade as possible of his hostile intentions, in going through the necessary movements with the weapon. When he thought the stranger began to apprehend some danger, he very deliberately presented the piece, and called aloud:

“Now, friend, I am all for peace, or all for war, as you may say. No! well, it *is* no man, as the wiser one here says, and there can be no harm in just firing into a bunch of leaves.”

The muzzle of the rifle fell as he concluded, and the weapon was gradually settling into a steady, and what would easily have proved a fatal, aim, when a tall Indian sprang from beneath that bed of leaves and brush which he had collected about his person at the approach of the party, and stood upright, uttering the exclamation:

“Wagh!”

The trapper who had intended no violence, dropped his rifle again, and laughing at the success of his experiment, with great seeming self-satisfaction, he drew the astounded gaze of the naturalist from the person of the savage to himself by saying:

“The imps will lie for hours, like sleeping alligators, brooding their deviltries, in dreams and other craftiness, until such time as they see some real danger is at hand, and then they look to themselves the same as other mortals. But this is a scouter in his war-paint. There should be more of his tribe at no great distance. Let us draw the

truth out of him; for an unlucky war party may prove more dangerous to us than a visit from the whole family of the squatter.”

The old man cast a keen eye on every side of him, to ascertain the important particular whether the stranger was supported by any associates, and then making the usual signs of peace, by exhibiting the palm of his naked hand, he boldly advanced. In the meantime, the Indian betrayed no evidence of uneasiness. He suffered the trapper to draw nigh, maintaining by his own mien and attitude a striking air of dignity and fearlessness.

The Indian in question was in every particular a warrior of fine stature and admirable proportions. As he cast aside his mask, composed of such party-colored leaves as he had hurriedly collected, his countenance appeared in all the gravity, the dignity, and, it may be added, the terror, of his profession.

The outlines of his features were strikingly noble. The peculiar tint of the skin, which in itself it so well designed to aid the effect of a warlike expression, had received an additional aspect of wild ferocity from the colors of the war-paint.

His head was, as usual, shaved to the crown, where a large and gallant scalp-lock seemed to challenge the grasp of his enemies.

His body, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, was nearly naked, and the portion which was clad bore a vestment no warmer than a light robe of the finest dressed deer-skin, beautifully stained with the rude design of some daring ex-

plot, and which was carelessly worn, as if more in pride than from any unmanly regard to comfort. His leggings were of bright scarlet cloth, the only evidence about his person that he had held communion with the traders of the palefaces.

But they were fearfully fringed, from the gartered knee to the bottom of the moccasin, with the hair of human scalps. He leaned lightly with one hand on a short hickory bow, while the other rather touched than sought support from the long, delicate handle of an ashen lance. A quiver made of the cougar-skin, from which the tail of the animal depended, was slung at his back; and a shield of hides, quaintly decorated with another of his warlike deeds, was hung from his neck by a thong of sinews.

As the trapper approached, this warrior maintained his calm, upright attitude, discovering neither an eagerness to ascertain the character of those who advanced upon him, nor the smallest wish to avoid a scrutiny in his own person. An eye that was darker and more shining than that of the stag was incessantly glancing, however, from one to another of the stranger party, seemingly never knowing rest for an instant.

“Is my brother far from his village?” demanded the old man in the Pawnee language, after examining the paint and those other little signs by which a practised eye knows the tribe of the warrior he encounters in the American deserts.

“It is farther to the town of the Bigknives,” was the laconic reply.

“Why is a Pawnee-Loup so far from the fork of

his own river, without a horse to journey on, and in a spot empty as this?"

"Can the women and children of a paleface live without the meat of the bison? There was hunger in my lodge."

"My brother is very young to be already the master of a lodge," returned the trapper, looking steadily into the unmoved countenance of the youthful warrior; "but I dare say he is brave, and that many a chief has offered him his daughters for wives. But he is mistaken," pointing to the arrow which was dangling from the hand that held the bow, "in bringing a loose and barbed arrow-head to kill the buffalo. Do the Pawnees wish the wounds they give their game to rankle?"

"It is good to be ready for the Sioux. Though not in sight, a bush may hide him."

"The man is a living proof of the truth of his words," muttered the trapper in English, "and a close-jointed and gallant-looking lad he is, but far too young for a chief of any importance. He is scouting on the track of the Sioux—you may see it by his arrow-heads and his paint; ay, and by his eye, too, for redskin lets his natur' follow the business he is on, be it for peace or be it for war. Quiet, Hector, quiet! Have you never scented a Pawnee afore, pup? Keep down, dog, keep down. My brother is right. The Sioux are thieves. Men of all colors and nations say it of them, and truly."

"The Sioux is a dog. When the Pawnee war-whoop is in their ears the whole nation howls.

"It is true. The imps are on our trail, and I am

glad to meet a warrior with the tomahawk in his hand who does not love them. Will my brother lead my children to his village? If the Sioux follow on our path my young men shall help him to strike them."

The young Pawnee turned his face from one to another of the strangers in a keen scrutiny before he saw fit to answer. Then he modestly answered:

"My father shall be welcome. The young men of my nation shall hunt with his sons; the chiefs shall hunt with the grayhead. The Pawnee girls will sing in the ears of his daughters."

"And if we meet the Sioux?" demanded the trapper, who wished to understand thoroughly the more important conditions of this new alliance.

"The enemy of the Bigknives shall feel the blow of the Pawnee."

"It is well. Now let my brother and me meet in council, that we may not go on a crooked path, but that our road to his village may be like the flight of the pigeons."

The young Pawnee made a significant gesture of agreement, and followed the other a little apart, in order to be removed from all danger of interruption from the reckless Paul or the abstracted naturalist. Their conference was short, but, as it was conducted in the brief manner of the natives, it served to make each of the parties acquainted with all the necessary information of the other. When they rejoined their associates the old man saw fit to explain a portion of what had passed between them, as follows:



“Ay, I was not mistaken,” he said. “It is as I said; this good-looking young warrior—for good-looking and noble-looking he is, though a little horrified perhaps with paint—this good-looking youth, tells me he is out on the scout for these very Sioux. His party was not strong enough to strike the rascals, who are down from their towns in great numbers to hunt the buffalo, and runners have gone to the Pawnee villages for aid. It would seem that this lad is a fearless boy, for he has been hanging on their skirts alone, until, like ourselves, he was driven to the grass for a cover. But he tells me more, my men, and what I am mainly sorry to hear, which is, that the cunning Mahtoree, instead of going to blows with the squatter, has become his friend, and that both broods, red and white, are on our heels, and outlying around this very plain to circumvent us to our destruction.”

Assured of the truth of the Indian's statement and awake to their double danger from Dacotah and from the squatter, the fugitives pressed on until they came to the banks of a river.

This they must cross. But how? How could the two girls get over?

“It is a matter of invention,” the old trapper declared. “Somehow the river will be crossed.” Then he turned to the Pawnee, and explained to him the difficulty which existed in relation to the women. The young warrior listened gravely, and throwing the buffalo skin from his shoulder, he immediately commenced, assisted by the occasional aid of the understanding old man, the

preparations necessary to effect this desirable object.

The hide was soon drawn into the shape of an umbrella top, or an inverted parachute, by thongs of deerskin, with which both the laborers were well provided. A few light sticks served to keep the parts from collapsing or falling in. When this simple and natural expedient was arranged, it was placed on the water, the Indian making a sign that it was ready to receive its freight. Both Inez and Ellen hesitated to trust themselves in a bark of so frail a construction, nor would Middleton or Paul consent that they should do so until each had assured himself by actual experiment that the vessel was capable of sustaining a load much heavier than it was destined to receive. Then, indeed, their objections were reluctantly overcome, and the skin was made to receive its precious burden.

“Now leave the Pawnee to be the pilot,” said the trapper; “my hand is not so steady as it used to be; but he has limbs like toughened hickory.”

The husband and lover could not well do otherwise, and they were fain to become deeply interested, it is true, but passive spectators of this primitive species of ferrying. The Pawnee selected a beast from among the three horses with a readiness that proved he was far from being ignorant of the properties of that noble animal, and throwing himself upon its back, he rode into the margin of the river. Thrusting an end of his lance into the hide, he bore the light vessel up against the stream, and, giving his steed the rein, they pushed boldly

into the current. Middleton and Paul followed, pressing as nigh the bark as prudence would at all warrant. In this manner the young warrior bore his precious cargo to the opposite bank in perfect safety, without the slightest inconvenience to the passengers, and with a steadiness and quickness which proved that both horse and rider were not unused to the operation. When the shore was gained, the young Indian undid his work, threw the skin over his shoulder, placed the sticks under his arm, and returned, without speaking, to transfer the remainder of the party in a similar manner to what was very justly considered the safer side of the river.

“Now, friend Doctor,” said the old man, when he saw the Indian plunging into the river a second time, “do I know there is faith in yonder redskin. He is a good-looking, ay, and an honest-looking youth, but the winds of heaven are not more deceitful than these savages, when mischief has fairly beset them. Had the Pawnee been a Sioux, or one of them heartless Mingos that used to be prowling through the woods of York a time back—that is, some sixty years ago—we should have seen his back and not his face turned toward us. But you can see for yourself the boy is true. Once make a redskin your friend, and he is yours as long as you deal honestly by him.”

So Dr. Bat and the trapper stepped into the frail craft, to follow their companions across. But even as they did so, a cry rose on the bank, and the brutal Dacotah warrior, Weucha, confronted them.

The eyes of the Dacotah and those of the fugitives met. The former raised a long, loud, and piercing yell, in which the notes of exultation were fearfully blended with those of warning. In another instant the steed of the young Pawnee was struggling with the torrent.

The utmost strength of the horse was needed to urge the fugitives beyond the flight of arrows that came sailing through the air at the next moment. The cry of Weucha had brought fifty of his comrades to the shore, but fortunately, among them all there was not one of a rank sufficient to entitle him to the privilege of bearing a gun. One-half the stream, however, was not passed, before the form of Mahtoree himself was seen on its bank, and an ineffectual discharge of firearms announced the rage and disappointment of the chief.

In the meantime the vessel of skin had reached the land, and the fugitives were once more united on the margin of the river.

“Now, mount you with the tender ones, and ride for yonder hillock,” said the trapper; “beyond it you will find another stream, into which you must enter, and, turning to the sun, follow its bed for a mile, until you reach a high and sandy plain; there will I meet you. Go; mount; this Pawnee youth and I, and my stout friend, the physician, who is a desperate warrior, are men enough to keep the bank, seeing that show and not use is all that is needed.”

Middleton and Paul saw no use in wasting their breath in remonstrances against this proposal.

Glad to know that their rear was to be covered even in this imperfect manner, they hastily got their horses in motion, and soon disappeared on the required route. Some twenty or thirty minutes succeeded this movement before the Dacotahs on the opposite shore seemed inclined to enter on any new enterprise. Mahtoree was distinctly visible, in the midst of his warriors, issuing his commands, and betraying his desire for vengeance by occasionally shaking an arm in the direction of the fugitives; but no step was taken which appeared to threaten any further act of immediate hostility. At length a yell arose among the savages which announced the occurrence of some fresh event. Then Ishmael and his sluggish sons were seen in the distance, and soon the whole of the united force moved down to the very limits of the stream. The squatter proceeded to examine the position of his enemies with his usual coolness, and, as if to try the power of his rifle, he sent a bullet among them, with a force sufficient to do execution even at the distance at which he stood.

“Now let us depart!” exclaimed Dr. Bat, endeavoring to catch a furtive glimpse of the lead, which he fancied whizzing at his very ear; “we have maintained the bank in a gallant manner for a sufficient length of time.

The old man cast a look behind him, and seeing that the horsemen had reached the cover of the hill, he made no objections to the proposal. Soon all the fugitives were again assembled.

The trapper now looked about him for some

convenient spot where the whole party might halt, as he expressed it, for some five or six hours. The trapper showed them that they must hide until night and not journey, as their route could easily be discovered in the daylight.

Inez and Ellen were quickly bestowed beneath the warm and not uncomfortable shelter of the buffalo skins, which formed a thick covering, and tall grass was drawn over the place in such a manner as to evade any examination from a common eye. Paul and the Pawnee fettered the beasts and cast them to the earth, where, after supplying them with food, they were also left concealed in the fog of the prairie. No time was lost when these several arrangements were completed before each of the others sought a place of rest and concealment and then the plain appeared again deserted in its solitude.

The old man had advised his companions of the absolute necessity of their continuing for hours in this concealment. All their hopes of escape depended on the success of the plan. If they might elude the cunning of their pursuers by this simple and therefore less suspected expedient, they could renew their flight as the evening approached, and, by changing their course, the chance of final success would be greatly increased. Influenced by these momentous considerations, the whole party lay musing on their situation until thoughts grew weary, and sleep finally settled on them all, one after another.

The deepest silence had prevailed for hours,

when the quick ears of the trapper and the Pawnee were startled by a faint cry of surprise from Inez. Springing to their feet, they found the vast plain, the rolling swells, the little hillock, and the scattered thickets, covered alike in one white, dazzling sheet of snow.

“The Lord have mercy on ye all!” exclaimed the old man, regarding the prospect with a rueful eye. “It is too late; it is too late! A squirrel would leave his trail on this light coating of the ’arth. Ha! there comes the imps to a certainty. Down with ye all, down with ye; your chance is but small, and yet it must not be wilfully cast away.”

The whole party was instantly concealed again, though many an anxious and stolen glance was directed through the tops of the grass on the movements of their enemies. At the distance of half a mile the Sioux band was seen riding in a circuit, which was gradually contracting itself, and evidently closing upon the very spot where the fugitives lay. There was but little difficulty in solving the mystery of this movement. The snow had fallen in time to assure them that those they sought were in the rear, and they were now employed, with the unwearied perseverance and patience of Indian warriors, in circling the certain boundaries of their place of concealment.

Each minute added to the danger of the fugitives. Mahtoree came at length within fifty feet of them.

“Enough,” said the old man, rising with dig-

nity; "Now let us meet our fates like men. Cringing and complaining find no favor in Indian eyes."

His appearance was greeted by a yell that spread far and wide over the plain, and in a moment a hundred savages were seen riding madly to the spot. Mahtoree received his prisoners with great self-restraint, though a single gleam of fierce joy broke through his clouded brow.

The exultation of receiving the white captives was so great as for a time to throw the dark and immovable form of their young Indian companion entirely out of view. But when a little time had passed, even this secondary object attracted the attention of the Dacotahs. Then it was that the trapper first learned, by the shout of triumph and long-drawn yell of delight which burst at once from a hundred throats, as well as by the terrible name which filled the air, that his youthful friend was no other than a redoubtable and hitherto invincible warrior, the open and dreaded foeman of the Dacotahs—the Pawnee chieftain, Hard Heart.

You will remember that Mahtoree, the Dacotah, had peeped into the tent in which the squatter had imprisoned Inez. Now that the chief had her in his power he wished her for his own wife.

But the trapper by his wise and shrewd ways kept the chief from taking Inez away from the other captives, and the attention of the Indians was directed especially toward the torture of the captive Pawnee.

Weucha, the wily Sioux, who had long stood watching the countenance of the chief, bounded



forward at the signal like a bloodhound loosened from the leash. Forcing his way into the center of the old squaws, who were already proceeding from abuse to violence, he reproved their impatience, and bade them wait until a warrior had begun to torment, and then they should see their victim shed tears like a woman.

The heartless savage commenced his efforts by flourishing his tomahawk about the head of the captive, in such a manner as to give reason to suppose that each blow would bury the weapon in the flesh, while it was so governed as not to touch the skin. To this customary expedient Hard Heart was perfectly insensible. His eye kept the same steady, riveted look on the air, though the glittering ax described in its movements a bright circle of light before his countenance. Frustrated in this attempt, the callous Sioux laid the cold edge on the naked head of his victim, and began to describe the different manners in which a prisoner might be flayed.

“Hard Heart!” shouted the Sioux, turning in his fury and aiming a deadly blow at the head of his victim. His weapon fell into the hollow of the captive’s hand. For a single moment the two stood, as if entranced, in that attitude, the one paralyzed by so unexpected a resistance, and the other bending his head, not to meet his death, but in the act of the most intense attention. The women screamed with triumph, for they thought the nerves of the captive had at length failed him. The trapper trembled for his friend; and Hector,

as if conscious of what was passing, raised his nose in the air and uttered a piteous howl.

But the Pawnee hesitated only for that moment. Raising the other hand like lightning, the tomahawk flashed in the air, and Weucha sank at his feet, brained to the eye. Then cutting a way with the bloody weapon, he darted through the opening left by the frightened women, and seemed to descend the declivity at a single bound.

Had a bolt from heaven fallen in the midst of the Dacotah band it would not have occasioned greater terror than this act of desperate hardihood. A shrill, plaintive cry burst from the lips of all the women, and there was a moment when even the oldest warriors appeared to have lost their faculties. This stupor endured only for the instant. It was succeeded by a yell of revenge that burst from a hundred throats, while as many warriors started forward at the cry, bent on the most bloody revenge. But a powerful and authoritative call from Mahtoree arrested every foot. The chief, in whose countenance disappointment and rage were struggling, with the affected composure of his nation, extended an arm toward the river, and the whole mystery was explained.

Hard Heart had already crossed half the bottom which lay between the hill and the water. At this precise moment a band of armed and mounted Pawnees turned a swell, and galloped to the margin of the stream, into which the plunge of the fugitive was distinctly heard. A few minutes sufficed for his vigorous arm to conquer the passage, and then

the shout from the opposite shore told the humbled Dacotahs the whole extent of the triumph of their adversaries.

Then the surprised Dacotahs, gathering quickly, prepared for the battle. But it became a single combat between the two chiefs. For when Hard Heart had joined his tribesmen and was again armed for the fight, he challenged Mahtoree to single combat upon an island in the river and in full view of both parties. The battle between them was long uncertain, but in the end Mahtoree was slain.

In the meantime the sands became a scene of bloodshed and violence. Better mounted and perhaps more ardent, the Pawnees had, however, reached the spot in sufficient numbers to force their enemies to retire. The visitors pushed their success to the opposite shore, and gained the solid ground in the confused mass of the fight. Here they were met by all the unmounted Dacotahs, and, in their turn, they were forced to give way.

In this manner the contest continued with varied success, and without much loss. The Sioux had succeeded in forcing themselves into a thick growth of rank grass, where the horses of their enemies could not enter, or where, when entered, they were worse than useless. It became necessary to dislodge the Dacotahs from this cover, or the object of the combat must be abandoned. Several desperate efforts had been repulsed, and the disheartened Pawnees were beginning to think of a retreat, when the well-known war-cry of Hard

Heart was heard at hand, and the next instant the chief appeared in their center, flourishing the scalp of the great Sioux, as a banner that would lead to victory.

He was greeted by a shout of delight, and followed into the cover with an impetuosity that for the moment drove all before it. But the bloody trophy in the hand of the chief served as an incentive to the attacked as well as to the assailants. Mahtoree had left many a daring brave behind him in his band who now exhibited the most generous self-devotion in order to wrest the memorial of their chief from the hands of the avowed enemies of their people.

The result was in favor of numbers. After a severe struggle, in which the finest displays of personal daring were exhibited by all the chiefs, the Pawnees were compelled to retire upon the open bottom, closely pressed by the Sioux, who failed not to seize each foot of ground yielded by their enemies.

The fate of Hard Heart and his companions, would have been quickly sealed but for a powerful and unlooked-for interposition in their favor. A shout was heard from a little brake on the left, and a volley from the fatal Western rifle immediately succeeded. Some five or six Sioux leaped forward in the death agony, and every arm among them was as suddenly suspended as if the lightning had flashed from the clouds to aid the cause of the Loups. Then came Ishmael and his stout sons in open view, bearing down upon their late treach-

erous allies with looks and voices that proclaimed the character of the help.

The shock was too much for the fortitude of the Dacotahs. Several of their bravest chiefs had already fallen, and those that remained were instantly abandoned by the whole of the inferior herd. A few of the most desperate braves still lingered nigh, and there nobly met their deaths, under the blows of the re-encouraged Pawnees. A second discharge from the rifles of the squatter and his party completed the victory.

The knife and the lance cut short the retreat of the larger portion of the vanquished. The sun had long sunk behind the rolling outline of the western horizon before that disastrous defeat was entirely ended.

The battle was over; but Ishmael, because of his assistance, claimed the captives of the Sioux—Ellen, his niece, Inez, his captive, and the old trapper, who, he believed, had murdered Asa, his son.

“I am called upon this day,” said he, “to fill the office which in the settlements you give unto judges, who are set apart to decide on matters that arise between man and man. Therefore it ar’ a solemn fact that this day shall I give unto all and each that which is his due and no more.”

When Ishmael had delivered his mind thus far, he paused and looked about him, as if he would trace the effects in the faces of his hearers. When his eye met that of Middleton, he was answered by the latter:

“If the evil-doer is to be punished, and he that

has offended none to be left to go at large, you must change situations with me, and become a prisoner instead of a judge."

"You mean to say that I have done you wrong in taking the lady from her father's house, and leading her so far against her will into these wild districts," returned the unmoved squatter. "I shall not put the lie on the back of an evil deed, and deny your words. I have mainly concluded that it was a mistake to take a child from its parent, and the lady shall be returned whence she has been brought, as tenderly and as safely as man can do it."

"The matter is settled between us," he continued, turning to Middleton; "you and your wife are free to go and come, when and how you please. Abner, set the captain at liberty."

"I will never forget your honesty, however slow it has been in showing itself," cried Middleton, hastening to the side of the weeping Inez the instant he was released; "and, friend, I pledge you the honor of a soldier that your own part of this transaction shall be forgotten."

The dull smile with which the squatter answered to this assurance, proved how little he valued the pledge that the youth, in the first excitement of his feelings, was so free to make.

"And now, young man; you who have so often come into my clearing under the pretense of lining the bee into his hole," resumed Ishmael, after a momentary pause, as if to recover the balance of his mind, "with you there is a heavier account to settle. Not satisfied with rummaging my camp,

you have stolen a girl who is akin to my wife, and who I had calculated to make one day a daughter of my own."

All the young men bent their curious eyes on Paul and Ellen, the former of whom seemed in no small mental confusion, while the latter bent her face on her bosom in shame.

"Harkee, friend Ishmael Bush," returned the bee-hunter, who found that he was expected to answer to the charge of robbery as well as to that of kidnapping; "that I did not give the most civil treatment to your pots and pails I am not going to gainsay. If you will name the price you put upon the articles, it is possible the damage may be quietly settled between us, and all hard feelings forgotten. As to the matter of Ellen Wade here, it may not be got over so easily. I think that where a young woman's mind is fairly bent on going in a certain direction, it will be quite as prudent to let her body follow.

"Nelly," resumed the squatter, who paid very little attention to what Paul had said, "Nelly, this is a wide and a wicked world on which you have been in such a hurry to cast yourself. You have fed and you have slept in my camp for a year, and I did hope that you had found the free air of the borders enough to your mind to wish to remain among us."

"Let the girl have her will," muttered Esther from the rear; "he who might have persuaded her to stay is sleeping in the cold and naked prairie, and little hope is left of changing her humor."

“I am not about to set myself up as a ruler of inclinations,” observed the squatter. “If the heart of the child is truly in the settlements, let her declare it; she shall have no hindrance from me. Speak, Nelly, and let what you say come from your wishes, without fear or favor. Would you leave us to go with this young man into the settled countries, or will you tarry and share the little we have to give, but which to you we give so freely?”

Thus called upon to decide, Ellen could no longer hesitate. The glance of her eye was at first timid and fearful. But as the color flushed her features, and her breathing became quick and excited, it was apparent that the native spirit of the girl was gaining the ascendancy over the bashfulness of sex.

“You took me a fatherless, poverty-stricken, and friendless orphan,” she said, struggling to command her voice, “when others, who live in what may be called riches compared to your state, chose to forget me; and may Heaven in its goodness bless you for it! The little I have done will never pay you for that one act of kindness. I like not your manner of life; it is different from the ways of my childhood, and it is different from my wishes; still, had you not led this sweet and unoffending lady from her friends, I should never have quitted you until you yourself had said, ‘Go, and the blessing of God go with you!’”

“I have promised the lady,” said Ellen, dropping her eyes again to the earth, “not to leave her; and after she has received so much wrong from our



hands, she may have a right to claim that I keep my word."

"Take the cords from the young man," said Ishmael. When the order was obeyed, he motioned for all his sons to advance, and he placed them in a row before the eyes of Ellen. "Now, let there be no trifling, but open your heart. Here ar' all I have to offer besides a hearty welcome."

The distressed girl turned her abashed look from the countenance of one of the young men to that of another until her eye met the troubled and working features of Paul. Then nature got the better of forms. She threw herself into the arms of the bee-hunter, and sufficiently proclaimed her choice by sobbing aloud. Ishmael signed to his sons to fall back, and, evidently displeased, though perhaps not disappointed by the result, he no longer hesitated.

"Take her," he said, "and deal honestly and kindly by her. The girl has that in her which should make her welcome in any man's house, and I should be loth to hear she ever came to harm."

And when he learned, too, that not the old trapper but his own brother-in-law, Abram White, was the murderer of Asa, Ishmael released the old man and worked his revenge on the criminal Abram.

Released thus from all their troubles, the captives went with Hard Heart and the friendly Pawnees to their distant village.

Then, with words of friendship and of farewell,

they left Hard Heart and his band. The soldiers of Captain Middleton joined him, and the white travelers embarked to go down the river.

“They are a valiant and an honest tribe,” said the old trapper, as he looked back at his Pawnee friends; “that will I say boldly in their favor; and second only do I take them to be to that once mighty but now scattered people, the Delawares of the Hills. Ah’s me, Captain, if you had seen as much good and evil as I have seen in these nations of redskins you would know of how much value was a brave and simple-minded warrior. I know that some are to be found who both think and say that an Indian is but little better than the beasts of these naked plains. But it is needful to be honest in one’s self to be a fitting judge of honesty in others.

“Now, friend steersman, just give the boat a sheer toward yonder low sandy point, and a favor will be granted at a short asking.”

The steersman did so, and then, much against the wishes of the rest, the old trapper parted from them.

The old man whistled his dogs to the land, and then he proceeded to the final adieux. Little was said on either side. The trapper took each person solemnly by the hand, and uttered something friendly and kind to all. Middleton was perfectly speechless, and was driven to make believe busying himself among the baggage. Paul whistled with all his might, and even Dr. Bat took his leave with an effort that bore the appearance of desperate

resolution. When he had made the circuit of the whole, the old trapper with his own hands shoved the boat into the current, wishing God to speed them. Not a word was spoken, nor a stroke of the oar given, until the travelers had floated past a knoll that hid the trapper from their view. He was last seen standing on the low point, leaning on his rifle, with Hector crouched at his feet and the younger dog frisking along the sands in the playfulness of youth and vigor.

The very next year Captain Middleton was again called to the West by his military duties.

These concluded, he and Paul Hover determined to cross the country to visit the Pawnee, Hard Heart, and to inquire into the fate of his friend the trapper. When within a proper distance, he dispatched an Indian runner belonging to a friendly tribe to announce the approach of himself and party, continuing his route at a deliberate pace in order that the news might, as was customary, precede his arrival. The sun was beginning to fall, and a sheet of golden light was spread over the placid plain, lending to its even surface. Suddenly Paul said; "See! we are not altogether slighted, for here comes a party at last to meet us, though it is a little pitiful as to show and numbers."

A group of horsemen were at length seen wheeling around a little copse and advancing across the plain directly toward them. The advance of this party was slow and dignified. As it drew nigh, the chieftain of the Pawnees was seen at its head,

followed by a dozen younger warriors of his tribe. They were all unarmed, nor did they even wear any of those ornaments or feathers which are considered testimonials of respect to the guest an Indian receives, as well as evidence of his own importance.

The meeting was friendly, and soon, in silence, they entered the town. Its inhabitants were seen collected in an open space, where they were arranged with the customary deference to age and rank. The whole formed a large circle, in the center of which were perhaps a dozen of the principal chiefs. Hard Heart waved his hand as he approached, and, as the mass of bodies opened, he rode through, followed by his companions. Here they dismounted; and as the beasts were led apart, the strangers found themselves surrounded by a thousand grave, composed, but solicitous faces.

Middleton gazed about him in growing concern, for no cry, no song, no shout, welcomed him among a people from whom he had so lately parted with regret. But there was no symptom of hostility on the part of their hosts. Hard Heart beckoned for Middleton and Paul to follow, leading the way toward the cluster of forms that occupied the center of the circle. Here the visitors found the cause of all this silence and ceremony—the old trapper was dying.

He was placed on a rude seat, which had been made with studied care to support his frame in an upright and easy attitude. His eye was glazed, and apparently as devoid of sight as of

expression. His features were a little more sunken and strongly marked than formerly; but there all change, so far as exterior was concerned, might be said to have ceased. His approaching end was not to be ascribed to any positive disease, but had been a gradual and mild sinking away.

His body was placed so as to let the light of the setting sun fall full upon the solemn features. His head was bare, the long, thin locks of gray fluttering lightly in the evening breeze. His rifle lay upon his knee, and the other weapons of the chase were placed at his side, within reach of his hand. Between his feet lay the figure of a hound, with its head crouching to the earth, as if it slumbered; and so perfectly easy and natural was its position that a second glance was necessary to tell Middleton he saw only the skin of Hector, stuffed, by Indian tenderness and ingenuity, in a manner to represent the living animal. The younger dog was playing at a distance. Near at hand stood the wife of Hard Heart, holding in her arms a little child. The rest of those immediately in the center were aged men, who had apparently drawn near in order to observe the manner in which a just and fearless warrior would depart on the greatest of his journeys.

The old trapper was reaping the reward of a life remarkable for temperance and activity, in a tranquil and placid death. His vigor in a manner endured to the very last. He had hunted with the tribe in the spring, and even throughout most of the summer, when his limbs suddenly refused to

perform their customary offices. A sympathizing weakness took possession of all his powers of mind, and the Pawnees believed that they were going to lose, in this unexpected manner, a sage and counselor whom they had begun both to love and respect.

When he had placed his guests in front of the dying man, Hard Heart, after a pause leaned a little forward and demanded:

“Does my father hear the words of his son?”

“Speak,” returned the trapper, in tones that issued from his chest, but which were rendered awfully distinct by the stillness that reigned in the place. “I am about to depart from the village of the Pawnees, and shortly shall be beyond the reach of your voice.”

“See, here is a friend,” said the chief, beckoning to Middleton to approach. Middleton took one of the thin hands of the trapper, and struggling to command his voice, he succeeded in announcing his presence.

The old man listened like one whose thoughts were dwelling on a very different subject; but, when the other had succeeded in making him understand that he was present, an expression of joyful recognition passed over his faded features.

“I hope you have not so soon forgotten those whom you so greatly served,” said Middleton. “It would pain me to think my hold on your memory was so light,”

“Little that I have ever seen is forgotten,” returned the trapper: “I am at the close of many

wearry days, but there is not one among them all I could wish to overlook. I remember you, with the whole of your company; ay, and your gran'ther, that went before you. I am glad that you have come back upon these plains, for I had need of one who speaks English, since little faith can be put in the traders of these regions. Will you do a favor to an old and dying man?"

"Name it," said Middleton; "it shall be done."

"It is a far journey to send such trifles," resumed the old man, who spoke at short intervals, as strength and breath permitted; "a far and weary journey is the same; but kindnesses and friendships are things not to be forgotten. There is a settlement among the Ostego hills—"

"I know the place," interrupted Middleton, observing that he spoke with increasing difficulty; "proceed to tell me what you would have done."

"Take this rifle, pouch, and horn, and send them to the person whose name is graven on the plates of the stock,—a trader cut the letters with his knife,—for it is long that I have intended to send him such a token of my love!"

"It shall be so. Is there more that you could wish?"

"Little else have I to bestow. My traps I give to Hard Heart, my Indian son; for honestly and kindly has he kept his faith. Let him stand before me."

Middleton explained to the chief what the trapper had said, and relinquished his own place to the other.

“Pawnee,” continued the old man, always changing his language to suit the person he addressed, and not infrequently according to the ideas he expressed, “it is a custom of my people for the father to leave his blessing with the son before he shuts his eyes forever. This blessing I give to you; take it, for the prayers of a Christian man will never make the path of a just warrior to the blessed prairies either longer or more tangled. May the God of a white man look on your deeds with friendly eyes, and may you never commit an act that shall cause Him to darken His face. I know not whether we shall ever meet again. You believe in the blessed prairies, and I have faith in the sayings of my fathers. If it should prove that the same meaning is hid under different words, we shall yet stand together, Pawnee, before the face of your Great Spirit, who will then be no other than my God.

The old man made a long and apparently a thoughtful pause. At times he raised his eyes wistfully, as if he would again address Middleton, but some innate feeling appeared always to suppress his words. The other, who observed his hesitation, inquired, in a way most likely to encourage him to proceed, whether there was aught else that he could wish to have done.

“I am without kith or kin in the wide world,” the trapper answered; “when I am gone there will be an end of my race. We have never been chiefs; but honest, and useful in our way I hope it can not be denied, we have always proved our-



selves. My father lies buried near the sea, and the bones of his son will whiten on the prairies—”

“Name the spot, and your remains shall be placed by the side of your father,” interrupted Middleton.

“Not so, not so, Captain. Let me sleep where I have lived—beyond the din of the settlements! Still I see no need why the grave of an honest man should be hid, like a redskin in his ambushment. I paid a man in the settlements to make and put a graven stone at the head of my father’s resting-place. It was of the value of twelve beaver-skins, and cunningly and curiously was it carved. Then it told to all comers that the body of a Christian lay beneath; and it spoke of his manner of life, of his years, and of his honesty. When we had done with the Frenchers in the old war I made a journey to the spot, in order to see that all was rightly performed, and glad I am to say, the workman had not forgotten his faith.”

“And such a stone you would have at your grave!”

“I? No, no; I have no son but Hard Heart, and it is little that an Indian knows of white fashions and usages. Besides, I am his debtor already, seeing it is so little I have done since I have lived in his tribe. The rifle might bring the value of such a thing—but then I know it will give the boy pleasure to hang the piece in his hall, for many is the deer and the bird that he has seen it destroy. No, no; the gun must be sent to him whose name is graven on the stock.”

“But there is one who would gladly prove his affection in the way you wish; he owes you not only his own deliverance from so many dangers, but who inherits a heavy debt of gratitude from his ancestors. The stone shall be put at the head of your grave.”

The old man extended his wasted hand, and gave the other a squeeze of thanks.

“I thought you might be willing to do it, but I was backward in asking the favor,” he said, “seeing that you are not of my kin. Put no boastful words on the same, but just the name, the age, and the time of the death, with something from the Holy Book; no more, no more. My name will then not be altogether lost on 'arth; I need no more.”

Middleton intimated his assent, and then followed a pause that was broken only by distant and broken sentences from the dying man. He appeared now to have closed his accounts with the world, and to wait merely for the final summons to quit it. Middleton and Hard Heart placed themselves on the opposite sides of his seat, and watched with melancholy anxiety the changes of his countenance. For two hours there was no very sensible alteration. The expression of his faded and time-worn features was that of a calm and dignified repose. Then he turned quietly, gave one last look at the glorious sunset across the prairies, half-raised himself, and dropped back. When Middleton and Hard Heart, each of whom had involuntarily extended a hand to support the

form of the old man, turned to him again they found that the subject of their interest was removed forever beyond the necessity of their care. They mournfully placed the body in its seat, and the oldest chief of the Pawnees arose to announce the end of the scene to the tribe. The voice of the old Indian seemed a sort of echo from that invisible world to which the meek spirit of the trapper had just departed.

“A valiant, a just, and a wise warrior, has gone on the path which will lead him to the blessed grounds of his people!” he said. “When the voice of the Great Spirit called him, he was ready to answer. Go, my children; remember the just chief of the palefaces, and clear your own tracks from briars!”

The grave was made beneath the shade of some noble oaks. It was long and carefully watched by the Pawnees of the Loups, and was often shown to the traveler and the trader as a spot where a just white man slept. In due time the stone was placed at its head, with the simple inscription which the trapper had himself requested. The only liberty taken by Middleton was to add: “May no wanton hand ever disturb his remains.”

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