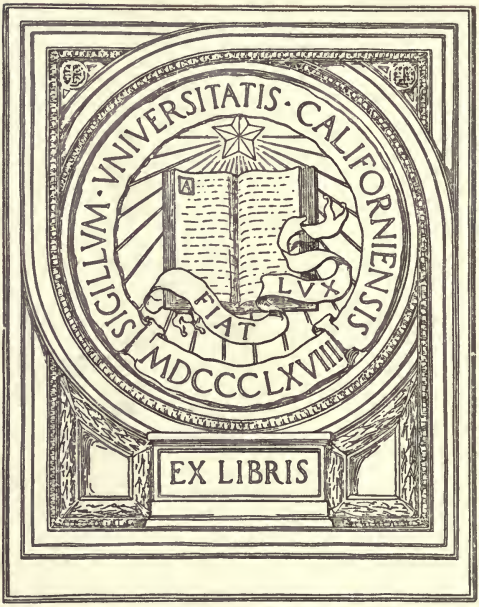

GREYSLAER:

A ROMANCE OF THE MOHAWK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A WINTER IN THE WEST," AND "WILD SCENES IN THE FOREST AND PRAIRIE."

Charles Fenno Hoffman

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1840.

ERRATA TO VOL. II.

Page 61, in the "Song of Balt the Hunter," last stanza, line 1, for

"He whistled his dog," &c.,

read,

"*But* he whistled his dog," &c.

Page 99, in the song, "Our Country's Call," stanza 2, line 5, for

"Wave, thou ensign glorious,"

read,

"Wave, thou *lofty* ensign glorious."

Page 113, stanza 1, line 3, for

"I saw not her eyes, and but one teardrop stealing,"

read,

"I saw not her eyes, and but one teardrop *starting*."

BOOK FIRST.

THE BORDER RISING.

"Why, peers of England,
We'll lead 'em on courageously. I read
A triumph over tyranny upon
Their several foreheads." FORD.

"'Tis a generous mind
That led his disposition to the war;
For gentle love and noble courage are
So near allied, that one begets another."
CYRIL TOURNEUR.

"This lady in the blossom of my youth,
When my first fires knew no adulterate incense,
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,
In the best language my true tongue could utter,
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,
I sued and served. Long did I love this lady."
MASSINGER.

TO

WILLIAM DUER,

OF OSWEGO,

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED

BY HIS EARLY FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

GREYSLAER;

A ROMANCE OF THE MOHAWK.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

FOREST HAUNTS AND SYLVAN COMPANY.

"Away, away, to forest glades,
Fly, fly with me the haunts of men,
I would not give my sunlit glades,
My talking stream, and silent glen,
For all the pageantry of slaves,
Their fettered lives and trampled graves."
The Indian, by J. LAWRENCE.

OUR story opens amid the depths of an American forest. It was midsummer; the bright green of June had departed from lea and meadow, and the brooks, even where their course lay through some grassy orchard, half sheltered by the spreading fruit-trees, had shrunk and dwindled in their channels; but here, amid the dank shadows of primeval woods, their currents still danced along with all the freshness of springtime. Here, too, the shrubs upon their banks still wore the delicate tints of early summer; for the canopy of dense foliage above them shut out the scorching heat. The birds of song, which, in the opening and closing year, are seldom heard in our deep forests, had now left the clearings, which they delight with their warbling

in the mating season, and flitted through the cool and verdurous aisles that opened around on every side; now glancing sportively around the seamed and columnar trunks of the mossed trees, and now skimming high in air, but still sheltered by the cloistering architrave of interlacing boughs above them. It was noontide, but the freshness of early dawn and the mellow gloom of deepening twilight were commingled in those forest glades.

By the foot of an ancient tulip-tree, where a spring bubbled from beneath a rock, which its gnarled roots entwined, sat two men, who seemed the fitting tenants of a spot so wild. The one, a military veteran of about fifty, brawny and broad-shouldered, with freckled face and sandy hair, was dressed in the full garb of a Scottish Highlander, save that a jacket of green cloth, laced and guarded with bars of silver, like the uniform of a modern European trooper, was superadded to the tartan drapery that marks the ancient costume of his country. His companion, who wore a similar uniform jacket, was, in the fashion of his other garments, apparelled not unlike him; if a belted hunting-shirt of dressed deerskin, with fringed leggins of the same, and a scarlet blanket richly embroidered at the corners with porcupine quills, may be supposed to bear any resemblance to the kilt, hose, and plaid of the Scotchman, whose *skene dhu* was imitated by the terrible leg-knife, worn beneath the beaded garters of his companion. With the exception of a tomahawk secured in the wampum sash of the latter, both were in other respects similarly armed with pistols and yæger.

But the accidental resemblance in the fashion of their equipments, which extended even to the ornamented tobacco-pouch worn at the belt of either, ceased altogether with a full survey of their persons, when contrasting these men together. There was

nothing of the Celt or Goth in the swarthy lineaments of the American forester. Rising to his feet, while his blanket, dropping from one shoulder, set forth a chest of the finest proportions, he stood at least three inches taller than the European; while his lithe and well-rounded limbs fell at each motion into those easy attitudes which, among those who call themselves civilized, are seldom exhibited in their full grace by any but mere children, and which were in striking contrast with the angular movements of his sturdy and soldier-like companion.

"Well, Sachem, what see you now?" said the Highlander, as the Indian, lightly planting one foot on a mossed root that pushed through the rotten sod, stood, with keen eye and dilated nostril, gazing intently into a deep glade of the forest.

"I looked for the return of one of my runners, but it was only a moose which stirred the leaves," he replied, quietly resuming his seat.

"A moose? ah! I've heard of that kind of deer. They tell me that they are famous fellows when at bay. But you should hunt a stag among old Scotia's mountains to know what sport is, Sachem. You never got as far, though, as our heathery hills, when you visited King George."

"There was game afoot here that would not have let me linger in the Highlands, even had I reached them."

"Ah! but even to have set foot upon the bonny purple heather, though but for once in your life, would have been something; and yet, perhaps, 'twere better not; it might have made you discontented with these gloomy forests that cover up your whole country."

"I saw many bald men among the counsellers of my British father; but the naked crowns of the Sagernash did not put me out of conceit of the long locks of an Iroquois," replied the forester, dryly.

And then, continuing in a more animated strain, "I have not always, even in my own land, dwelt among these forests, which you think so gloomy. I have wandered for months over meadows laughing with sunshine and flowers, where the purple heather of which you speak, unless it outbloom in richness all that I have seen in an English garden, were but a dull garniture for the delicious fields. And yet, though the prairies seemed so fascinating, when in early youth I followed over them the war-path of the great Pontiac, their charms appear to me now but as the feeble and holyday work of Nature, when compared with a temple like that in which we stand. Look there," he cried, pointing upward to the sweeping cone of a pine that towered some two hundred feet towards the heavens, upon the lowest branch of which, still a hundred feet above the soil, an eagle was at the moment lighting, while the frayed bark, slipping from beneath his talons, floated long in air before reaching the ground. "Look at yon royal pine, Major MacDonald; such trees as that will grow but once in any soil! they are the production only of Nature in her prime; and, as one of her doomed children that must soon pass away, I would fain linger near them with my people until the last is gone."

"*Doomed*, Sachem? tut, tut, not a bit of doom about the matter; we'll soon drive the rebels from the ancient seats of your tribe; or, should the worst come to the worst, why not leave this wild land? You have the king's commission in your pocket, and can still follow his majesty's banner wherever a trumpet shall sound."

"Never, never!" rejoined the Indian, mournfully; "I have been tutored in your schools; I have worshipped in your churches; I have feasted and slept in your dwellings; I have fought side by side with your warriors in the field; I have mingled with your

courtiers in the palace, and your counsellers in the cabinet: but, my ways are still not your ways, nor has the heart of Thayendanagea been ever for a moment estranged from his tribe."

"Why, then, did you lead them to take a part with us in this quarrel, which, you told me but yesterday, must eventuate in the ultimate success of the rebel arms?"

"Why? why did not my countrymen accept the overtures of the French king, when Frontenac made his descent upon the cantons with a powerful army, and our allies, the Hollanders, at whom, through us, Ononthio struck the blow, were too feeble to aid us save with their wishes? why, until your countrymen, by their acquisition of this province, became heirs of the friendship we had sworn to the Dutch, did we stand by Quidar in his quarrel with England to the last? Why? why did you, Major MacDonald, who have now, with hundreds like yourself, taken up arms for King George, why did you become an exile by fighting against him when a stripling?"

The Scotchman sprang to his feet, and paced the turf in agitation for a moment; then, turning short in front of the other, exclaimed, as he clasped the hand of the noble Mohawk in both of his own and wrung it cordially,

"Captain Brant, you are a true and loyal gentleman, every inch of you; worthy to have been out in the Forty-five with the best of us; and if—"

"Hist—crouch," interrupted the Sachem, lightly pressing the shoulder of MacDonald, who, obedient to the motion, sank on one knee beside him.

"I see him," whispered the Highlander, glancing in the direction whither his companion pointed; "a sable roan! A most noble charger; his rider must be near."

"*Yo-hah!* a horse of eighteen hands! there are not

many such in the depths of an American forest. Look again, brother soldier."

"Jesu Maria!" ejaculated the European, in a tone that might be thought to partake as much of alarm as of wonder, if the suspicion had not been belied by the flashing eye with which he instantly brought his yæger to his shoulder, while the muzzle was as quickly averted by the hand of the Mohawk striking up the barrel.

"An old hunter looks at his range as well as at his mark," said Brant, in reply to an inquiring glance of the other; and the hasty Scot, looking again beyond his quarry, saw, for the first time, a half-naked Indian standing immediately in his line of fire.

"I must have those antlers to match a pair from the peat-moss in my brother's hall," he murmured, in a tone of disappointment.

"They shall be yours, but we must not wake these echoes with our firearms. Leave my runner yonder to deal with the moose, and we shall be certain of a savoury broil this evening."

The deer-stalker, or *still-hunter*, as we would term him in this country, seemed to be fully aware of the neighbourhood of his chief, and the precise point where he lay; for, gliding now like a shadow from tree to tree, and more than once fitting an arrow to his bow, as if about to shoot, while continually approaching the moose, he managed to place himself so that the two witnesses of the sport could not be harmed by the shot. The animal, in the mean time, pestered by the August flies that are so annoying to the larger tenants of the forest at this season, kept moving hither and thither within a small circle, pausing ever and anon to browse for a moment; and still, while feeding, making the dry branches crackle with his incessant trampling.

At last he seemed to be more contented, as he got his feet into a marshy piece of ground, from

which the discoloured water bubbled up gratefully about his legs, as his hoofs broke the yielding soil. The Scotchman, who now, for the first time, had a full view of his huge uncouth form, could not sufficiently admire the ease with which the moose used his ungainly but flexile snout, to twist off the branches near him, while lazily catching at those within his reach.

But now the movements of the still-hunter equally claimed the attention of the lookers-on of this quiet but exciting kind of woodland sport. The stealthy savage, by flitting from tree to tree in the manner we have described, occasionally drawing his body, like a wounded snake, along the ground, had gained a fallen and decayed trunk within twenty paces of the moose, and, lying concealed behind this natural rampart, was watching, with keen eye, the fitting moment to launch his fatal shaft.

At last the moose, having stripped the boughs immediately in front of him, yet unwilling to change his position, threw back his broad antlers upon his shoulders, and, twisting his neck obliquely as he caught at a weeping birch that drooped over his left shoulder within reach of his uplifted muzzle, presented his throat as a fair mark for the arrow of the hunter. The bow twanged, and the barbed flint was driven, with unerring aim, through the neck, severing the swollen artery, and burying itself deep in the vertebræ at the base of the scull. The stricken animal uttered a terrific snort of rage and agony, plunged, reared, and, wheeling on his hind legs, made a desperate charge at his assailant, but fell dead at the feet of the Indian, just as the undismayed fellow was in the act of bounding forward to encounter him with his tomahawk.

"A good shot, Harrowah," cried Brant, moving leisurely from his covert; while the more ardent Scot rushed, with drawn dirk, towards the fallen

moose, as if still hoping to have a hand in the death of so noble a quarry. But the bright eye was already fixed in death, though a muscular motion in the long and drooping muzzle made the Highlander quickly withdraw the hand which he had placed on that uncouth appendage.

"By Saint Andrew," he cried, "but you have an ugly face to claim kindred with the dun deer of my own heather."

"Yet, major, we foresters think that the woods afford no choicer morsel than a moose's muzzle; and your Frenchman of Canada will serve you up a stew of it that will shame the mock-turtle of a London coffee-house."

"Eat that hideous black thing?" said the Scot, with no feeble signs of aversion; "I've dined often upon horseflesh while serving in Tartary, but I'd as soon sup upon the trunk of an elephant as make a meal off that frightful big lip. Zounds! the thing quivers as if it were still alive; like the tail of one of your American serpents, which, they tell me, never dies till sunset."

The still-hunter stood, in the mean time, with folded arms, gazing listlessly upon the scene, until, giving a sort of grunt in reply to an order from his chief, delivered in his own language, he addressed himself to the care of the carcass. Selecting a smooth-barked beech for the operation, he prepared one of the lower limbs, by the aid of props, to sustain the weight of the animal. But the sleight of the slim hunter, and the united strength of his two stalwart companions, were all put in requisition to trice up the ponderous carcass, after the splinters, by which it was suspended, had been passed through the tough sinews of the gambles. The head was then severed from the trunk, and swung by the palmated antlers to the crooked arm of an ancient oak; and the body, after being flayed to the loins, and re-

lieved of all superfluities, was wrapped in its own hide, and raised still higher from the ground, to be out of the reach of beasts of prey, until otherwise disposed of.

"I will send some of my people to bring the meat to camp before nightfall; and now, Major MacDonald, let us learn what tidings the runner brings us."

With these words the Sachem moved to the spot where the reader was first introduced to him and his companion, and where blanket and tartan, lying where they had been dropped by the roots of the shadowy tulip-tree, offered inviting seats for the councils of this sylvan triumvirate.

CHAPTER II.

FRONTIER FACTIONS.

"They left the ploughshare in the mould,
Their flocks and herds without a fold,
The sickle in the unshorn grain,
The corn half garnered on the plain,
And mustered in their simple dress,
For wrongs to seek a stern redress;
To right those wrongs, come weal, come wo,
To perish or o'ercome their foe."—M'Lellan.

The information brought to his chieftain by the Mohawk runner, though of deep import to more than one actor in the scenes we are about to describe, will hardly be intelligible to the reader, unless he revives his historical recollection of the political intrigues that distracted the important province of New-York, as the drama of the Revolution was gradually unfolded along her far-spreading borders.

The long possession of the fur-trade, and the frequent Indian wars incident to the pursuit of this hardy and precarious branch of commerce, had at an early day given an adventurous and enterprising character to the population of this province. Their military spirit had been well tested in the arduous campaigns of the old French war; they had borne no feeble part in the conquest of Canada; and when the fall of Quebec, in consummating the glory of Wolfe, brought peace to the land, it found almost every man capable of bearing arms a soldier. While, therefore, the different parties of Whig and Tory were almost equally balanced in the province of New-York throughout the Revolution, that memorable political struggle found fewer neutrals here than in any state of the Union; all men were eager to bear arms on one side or the other, and it is this circumstance only which will account for the great numbers that fell in battle, when the inferior degree of population, as compared with that of several of the other colonies, is considered.

But, bitter as were the political animosities existing in every part of this province, both before and after a recourse was had to arms, yet the spirit of faction called out in no district the same stormy feelings as now distracted the valley of the Mohawk. The elements of civil dissension had been long brewing in this beautiful region, where such a diversity of origin, of interest, and, we may add, of religion, existed among the heterogeneous population, that the soul of Discord might well have been roused even in times the most peaceable.

Here had been the ancient seat of the most powerful and civilized, yet most warlike nation of aborigines, upon the northern part of this hemisphere, a large remnant of which still retained their possessions in the immediate neighbourhood of the European settlements. Here the sturdy and ad-

venturous Dutch trader had at an early day been tempted to abandon his precarious means of livelihood, and sit down to cultivate the rich alluvial lands that had been readily granted to him by the grateful Mohawks, who had ever been treated as brothers by his countrymen during their sway over the province. Hither the German soldiers of Queen Anne's Protestant allies had in large bodies followed their European neighbours to settle upon the extensive tracts, granted to them when New-York first took its modern name in passing to the British crown. Here, side by side with these brave mercenaries, or perched, rather, upon the northern hills that overlooked their fertile meadows, hundreds of Catholic Scotch Highlanders, with many Irish soldiers of fortune, the exiled followers of the last Stuart, had established themselves; while successive families of the Cameronian countrymen of the former had found their frugal homes upon the uplands south of the river, whose cultivation had been rejected by those who preceded them in gaining an interest in the soil.

The diversity of feeling which this difference of origin, of language, and of religion may be presumed to have created, was still farther enhanced in its effects by the difference in tenure through which the broad domains of the valley were held. For while the majority of the old "residenters" were freeholders, constituting a large and independent yeomanry, yet among those of British descent there were extensive feudal proprietors, holding their patents immediately from the crown, who could number a powerful array of dependants; and some of whom (as was actually the case with Colonels Butler and Johnson both before and during the war) commanded regiments of militia, raised exclusively among their own tenantry.

There was one feature common to this heteroge-

neous people, which will hardly be thought to have reconciled the jarring elements of strife, though capacitating them for acting in unison under some circumstances; and this was that, throughout the valley, there was scarcely an individual who had not been in some way trained to the use of arms.

The threatening storm of civil war had at an early day found both patriot and loyalist upon the alert to enlist the principles, the prejudices, or affections of their neighbours upon the side that either was determined to espouse. The leading gentlemen of Tryon county, whether Whig or Tory, kept up indeed for a long time the most friendly relations towards each other, so far as outward seeming was concerned. Both parties affected to be actuated by the greatest zeal in preserving the peace of the country, and particularly in all their public conferences agreed to act in unison in preventing the Indians from taking any part in the impending controversy, should a fatal issue be ultimately joined between them. But the acts of either faction seem sufficiently to have belied their words from the first.

Secret clubs and committees were organized upon the one side; and many of the wealthy upon the other, keeping open house for their partisans, made their hospitality a cloak for the dangerous councils that were rife at the festive board. The country was traversed by mounted men, bearing tokens from one disaffected family to another. Travellers upon the highways were stopped by the myrmidons of either party, and their papers examined by these border regulators with the coolest assumption of authority; and as, on the one side, the great landed proprietors soon commenced fortifying their houses and arming and drilling their tenantry, so, among the smaller freeholders on the other, several of the influential Whigs ventured to reorganize the militia in their own districts, and officers were de-

posed and others appointed, according to the peculiar tenets and wishes of the people.

This last innovation had been attended with some danger; though in one instance, Sir John Johnson, the leading magistrate of the county, met with a signal discomfiture when rashly intruding upon a party of villagers whom a lieutenant, elected by themselves, was engaged in drilling. The baronet chanced to be taking a drive with his lady when he came upon this squad of young soldiers; and incensed at seeing a man in the uniform of an officer who he knew did not hold the king's commission, leaped from his barouche, and advancing upon the patriot lieutenant, rebuked his presumption with great insolence, and called upon his comrades instantly to disperse. Swords were drawn, and Sir John, being the more skilful fencer of the two, disarmed his youthful opponent, but was ultimately compelled to retire from the levelled muskets which were instantly presented at his life, when he attempted to push his advantage, by seizing the young man and securing him as a traitor to the king taken in open arms.

Convinced, by this and similar scenes, of the unpopularity in that part of the province of the cause which he had espoused, the zealous baronet addressed himself to the promotion of his royal master's interest in another quarter; and, in defiance of the implied stipulation existing between both parties of the whites, that the Indians should not be permitted to take a part in the family quarrel, as it was called, he proceeded to avail himself of his connexion with the tribes, to influence them to raise the tomahawk against his political opponents. His brother-in-law, Col. Guy Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs for all the provinces of British America, readily lent his powerful aid to the furtherance of these intrigues; and the vigilant Whigs,

while keeping a wary eye upon the powerful Tory families in their neighbourhood, soon became aware that Indian runners were continually passing and repassing between the settlements and the straggling troops of warriors that hovered on their border. The moose-hunter was one of a hundred similar agents of frontier diplomacy, that were continually traversing the country between Guy Park, the seat of the Indian agency, and the different council-fires, or outlying bands of the Six Nations.

Sir John Johnson's numerous tenantry of Scotch Highlanders were already in arms at Johnstown, where the baronet had fortified his large mansion with several brass fieldpieces; and the different cantons of the Iroquois, with the single exception of the Oneidas, were known to be so favourably disposed toward the royal cause, that the only question was now, how to unite the whole force, both European and aboriginal, so as to make it most effective, and overwhelm at its first outbreak the least movement of rebellion; this, however, required no feeble energies to accomplish.

The yeomanry of the valley had long regarded Sir John Johnson with a suspicious eye; alike from the baronial state that he affected upon his princely domains, and the insolent and dictatorial assumption with which he more than once intruded upon their popular assemblies. Colonel Guy Johnson, the superintendent of the Indian department, was held in hardly less aversion than his kinsman, and the celebrated Joseph Brant, or Thayendanagea, as he called himself, who filled the important post of secretary of that department for "all his majesty's provinces in North America," had, from his political connexions, lost much of the confidence of his old friends. Brant, indeed, though living upon the most intimate terms with many of the leading Whigs of Tryon county, was always

suspected to hold himself in readiness for employment more congenial to the tastes of an Indian warrior, who, amid all the allurements of a European court, and when surrounded by every luxury and embellishment of civilized life, had made it his pride and his boast that he was a "full-blooded Mohawk."

That haughty chief, who, whether at the entertainments of princes and nobles, in the saloons of fashion, or the palaces of royalty, had always persisted in presenting himself in the peculiar costume of his people, seemed to have brought home but little from his European intercourse with the learned and the polite, save a strong feeling of attachment to the British crown: a sentiment of feudal loyalty, which, notwithstanding his early New-England education, had become strangely grafted upon the peculiar love which he bore to the ancient republican institutions of the Five Nations. He seemed to regard England as the only muniment of their freedom, and was willing to render a cordial allegiance to her as the price of the protection; and while, in his intercourse with the whites, arrogating to himself a full share of that assumption which induced his semi-barbarous countrymen to call themselves the *Ongi-honwe*, or "men who surpassed all others," he was still willing to look up to the head of the British empire both as the fountain of public honours and the guardian of his country's welfare.

But while this aspiring and sagacious sachem saw that the safety of his people and his own pre-eminence as a chieftain depended upon their siding with the royal cause—for at a very early day he foretold the blighting influence which this great overshadowing republic would bring upon the aborigines when its independence was fully established—yet his private partialities were from the first at war with the dictates of his ambition and his policy. He had

been educated in one of the leading Whig families of Connecticut; he had fought side by side with the colonial troops in "the old French war;" and though he had derived preferment, fortune, and influence from his connexion with the officers of the crown, yet his old friends and neighbours in the valley of the Mohawk were adherents of the popular cause; and, save among the powerful family of the Johnsons, his nearest and dearest friends, the comrades of his hunts, the companions of his youth, were banded together against the party which he had joined. What wonder, then, that when the storm of revolution was about to burst upon his native valley, Brant should shrink from imbruing his hands in the blood of its inhabitants, sprung from the same soil, though of a different lineage from himself?

These considerations will sufficiently account for the noble Mohawk so long endeavouring to temporize with the patriot party; and, when finally taking up arms with the loyalists, presenting himself with a few followers, instead of bringing his whole power into the field, after having already made a proud display of his warriors in his celebrated pacific interview with the republican general, Herkimer. It would appear, however, from some of his numerous letters still extant, that true Indian policy was not a little mingled with the unwillingness he showed to procure the gathering of the tribes, when all of the Iroquois confederates, with the exception of the single canton already mentioned, were eager to lift the hatchet for the mother country.

Brant thought that the family quarrel was of doubtful duration, and he was unwilling that the brunt of it should fall upon his people until England had tried what she could do to repress the rebellion in the province of New-York, without having recourse to the aid of the Indians. He left it, there-

fore, for Col. Guy Johnson to collect the warriors of the Six Nations, while he, with a chosen band of his own Mohawks, hovered near the border, watching the turn events might take, and still secure in the deep forests where we have first introduced him to the reader.

These mountain wilds, which are now chiefly embraced in the counties of Montgomery, Herkimer, and Hamilton, still preserve much of their savage and romantic character; but, at the day of which we write, they were almost inaccessible to any but an Indian or a hunter of the border. Here the chieftain held his woodland court, until the issue should be fairly joined between the high parties that now so threateningly lowered upon each other; and here he awaited the fitting moment, when the contest should be fairly begun, to make the most advantageous descent upon the lower country, and, by some brilliant exploit at the first outbreak of Indian hostilities, make good his haughty claim to be considered as the great captain of all the Indian nations that should take up arms on the side of the crown.

In the mean time, however, Sir John Johnson had assiduously kept up his influence with the wary but aspiring sachem; not only by a constant correspondence; not only through the various Indian runners who were continually bearing messages between himself and Brant,* but also by placing near him a zealous and sagacious Scotch officer, who, being made the bearer of a commission of captain in the royal army, which had been politically bestowed upon Brant, made his way to the camp of the gratified Mohawk, and remained among his people un-

* "The Indians conveyed letters in the heads of their tomahawks and the ornaments worn about their persons."—*Campbell's Annals of Tryon County.*

der the easy pretence of wishing to become initiated in the wild sports of the aborigines.

Leaving these two partisans of the royal faction to discuss the tidings which had just been brought them by the moose-hunter, let us now learn their nature by shifting the scene to the valley of the Mohawk, and proceed with the action of our story.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIBERTY-TREE.

"Deep in the west, as Independence roves,
His banners planting round the land he loves,
Where Nature sleeps in Eden's infant grace,
In Time's full hour shall spring a glorious race."—SPRAGUE.

RUMOURS of the first blood shed at Lexington had reached the valley of the Mohawk; but the length of time it required in those days to traverse the intervening country, prevented the story from being soon confirmed in all its particulars; when, one afternoon, it was noised abroad that a messenger, direct from the scene of action, would address the friends of liberty at a meeting to be held in front of the stone church at German Flats. The occasion was deemed a good one, by the leading Whigs of the neighbourhood, for carrying into effect a favourite political ceremony of the day, which should at once mark their own adherence to the popular cause, and, by its boldness, encourage and confirm their wavering friends. To further which intention, placards and notices were industriously circulated, inviting the people to "assemble unarmed, for the purpose of peaceable deliberation, and also *to erect a liberty-pole!*"

The yeomanry of the valley had been frequently thus convened of late, to pass some vote of censure upon the acts of the British *ministry* (for here, as elsewhere throughout the provinces, during the early stages of the Revolution, the name of the king was studiously omitted in all the attacks upon his government); and, like well-schooled fencers closely practised in mock-combat, the thoroughly organized community was versed in political discussion and habituated to public business, long before its ability for self-government was tested in a real struggle with established power. But the measure now in contemplation was a direct assault upon the dignity of the crown; and the call "to assemble *unarmed* for the purpose of *peaceable deliberation*," was too flimsy a covering for the treasonable deed to which it was meant only as a precursor—the raising openly the great emblem of rebellion.

Many, therefore, shook their heads, and stood aloof from those who, they thought, were rashly precipitating matters to a crisis. Some doubted whether an immediate revulsion of public feeling might not result from carrying proceedings at once so far. Some actually felt this revulsion, and stood prepared to co-operate with the Tory magistracy in crushing so daring an outbreak of faction. But others, who, from the first, had counselled more daring measures, and had lately hung back in disgust at the cautious, and, apparently, reluctant movements with which they thought their leaders had impelled the ball of revolution, were now emulous to spring forward and take their place among the most active in hurrying it onward. While others, again, knowing no other principle than the love of change, no impulse save that of curiosity, were urged, by the novelty of the occasion, to be spectators of a scene, where, if sympathetic excitement should impel them

to become actors, circumstances would determine the part they should play.

Such an assemblage was the true field for a popular orator to prove his powers; and tradition still tells of the eloquence which wrought upon those materials, and moulded and moved the mass as one man, on that day. Tradition, too, tells especially of one speaker—a youth of scarce twenty summers—a shy student from Schenectady, who, fired by the impassioned appeals of older and more practised orators, burst through the bashfulness of inexperienced youth, and, leaping upon the rostrum, poured forth a flood of eloquence that hurried along the most sluggish natures upon its irresistible tide.

"Who," said a by-stander to a sturdy hunter, who, with mouth agape, and eyes riveted, as if by magic, upon the speaker, stood leaning upon his rifle near, "who in all natur is that springald with sich a tongue?"

"Why, Adam, is it you, man, that axes me who young GREYSLAER, of Hawksnest, is? You've seen me teaching the boy afore now, when he came up to Johnstown in his hollowdays, and, thof he be grown a bit, you ought to know my old scholard."

"Lor! Balt, that ain't the bookish chap that you larnt the rifle to? The bold younker that stood the brunt, when scapegrace Dirk de Roos got into that scrape in old Sir William's time?"

"I tell you it is, though," said the woodsman, proudly; "and a right proper shot I made of him. You see, now, how he plumps his argerments right into the bull's-eye of the matter."

"Sarting! he does make a clean go-ahead of it. But when did he come up here to mix in our doings?"

"He? why, man, he's been here this four week, and came up too with the Congress's commission in his pocket, to raise a company. Who but him

was it that Sir John raised a rumpus with at the training last week? Ah! if the boy only had as good larning with the sword as he has with the rifle, the baronet could never have filliped it out of his hands so sarcily as he did."

"Oh! yes, I heerd of that, Balt, as also how you came near having your heels lifted higher than your head, for threatning to blow Sir John clean through if he did not let the stripling go."

"I'd like to see the day when any of Sir John's folks would try to back that brag of his'n. I'd a mounted him upon the spot only for making it, but the people said 'twas only words, and I must not mind sich, and go and make further fuss, seeing we had got young Max out o' his hands. But hist! what's the lad saying now?"

"I mistrust that that's the Yankee messenger he's introducing to the people," said Adam, in a modest whisper; for the hunter had gained tenfold in the respect of the simple yeoman since this popular display of his pupil.

"Behold," cried the speaker, interrupting himself in the midst of a bold apostrophe to Liberty, whom he pictured as hovering over the land with wings that shadowed it but for a moment, until she could alight in peace and safety: "Behold the harbinger of her first triumph! fevered with haste, worn with impatient travel, he comes, like the victorious courier from Marathon of old, to tell of Freedom's bloody dawn at Lexington. Up, man, up, and tell a tale that never can grow old, but freshens from the frequent telling;" and, suiting the action to the word, the youth, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, seized the courier by the wrist, and dragged the embarrassed man forward.

"Now that awkward loon, Adam," said the hunter, "will make a botch of the hull business. A murrain on the Bosting folks that sent a critter what couldn't speak."

"Why, Balt, I guess they want all their speakers to hum, and raaly I don't see but this chap has done all in natur that was required of him, in coming here so quick. It wan't judgmatical in young Max to expect more from him, and pull the fellow up there to gape about like a treed 'possum."

The orator appeared himself to be instantly aware of his error, and, even while the worthy Adam was commenting upon it, had, with ready tact, turned the poor fellow's confusion to advantage. "What!" he cried, "bewildered, my friend, by the crowd of heads you see below? This stout array of gallant yeomen, the bone and sinew of our land, numbers not half of those devoted to our cause, that will soon pour from every glen and mountain near; men with tongues as slow as yours to boast their deeds, but having still the iron will to work them; men with arms as strong as yours to raise the tree of Liberty, and hearts as true to guard it."

A deafening shout of applause burst from the multitude almost before the last words had passed the speaker's lips. The stout-limbed New-Englander, changed at once from a shamefaced rustic into the hero of the scene, threw up his head, broadened his chest, and displayed his stalwart frame with honest vanity. Then, as if wit had been suddenly born of praise so well applied, he leaped from the scaffold, and seizing a tall hickory, which, freshly deracinated, was held erect by some labourers near, he bore it, amid the plaudits of the crowd, to a hole that had been previously prepared, and, spurning the aid of some tackle erected upon the spot, tossed the heavy sapling from his shoulders, and planted it pointing to the skies.

The centre of attraction was now changed, as the crowd collected around the spot, while those who stood nearest were active in throwing earth and stones around the roots, to secure the tree in

its position. The preconcerted act of rebellion for which they had chiefly met was fully and successfully consummated, but any farther measures which might have been contemplated by the leaders of the assemblage, were at this moment summarily discomfited.

The trampling of hoofs, and the dust arising from a large body of horsemen at a turning of the road, gave the first intimation of the approach of the royalists, while proclaiming that they came in sufficient force to crush any violent outbreak of insurrection. There was a momentary panic in the assemblage, and, before they could recover from the surprise, Sir John Johnson, with a large body of retainers armed with sword and pistol, rode into the midst of the unarmed multitude. He was followed by Colonels Claus, Butler, and Guy Johnson, a civil magistrate by the name of Fenton, and other Tory gentlemen of the county, each backed by a strong party of followers similarly armed, who successively drew up in military array so as nearly to encircle the astounded Whigs.

"What mummery is this?" demanded the haughty baronet, glancing round fiercely at those who stood near the Liberty-tree, while more than one, overawed by his bearing, attempted to slink away in the crowd. A stout Whig, by the name of Sammons, stepped boldly forward to make reply; but, before he could ascend the stage to place himself upon a level with his mounted adversaries, Sir John had thrown himself from his horse, and occupied the place from which Greyslaer and the Boston emissary had descended a few moments before. Without noticing the movement of Sammons, he at once commenced haranguing the people with great vehemence. He appealed to the ancient love they had borne his family, rehearsed the virtues of his father, once so popular throughout the valley,

and exhorted them still to sustain the established magistracy, which had ever kept their best interests at heart. Finding, then, that the attempt to address their affections and rekindle the faded ashes of loyalty met with no response, he endeavoured to awaken their fears. He dwelt upon the strength and power of the king, and painted in strong colours the folly of opposing his officers and revolting against the crown. But the assemblage was still mute; the approving plaudits of his own partisans called forth no echo from the moody and stubborn Whigs.

Irritated at their sullen obstinacy, Johnson now turned disdainfully from the "motley crew of would-be patriots," as he in derision termed the multitude generally, and poured out his invective upon their leaders. The shrewd New-England features of the Bostonian next caught his attention, and the sharp eye of Sir John instantly detected something in the man's air or apparel which might have escaped any gentleman but the owner of beeves and hemlock forests, whose revenue depends so much upon the trade of a tanner.

"Who," he asked, scornfully levelling his finger at the stout yeoman, "who are the real leaders of your mongrel crew, the vultures that ye bring hither to hatch the egg of treason, that creatures as foul and contemptible have thrust into our nest of peace and loyalty? An itinerant New-England leather-dresser! a vagrant pedler of rebellion! that could only retail his wares to such offscourings of society as many I see around me, if men whose education should teach them better, had not misled the gallant yeomanry, that I grieve to find in such disgraceful company. You have had your musters, too, your military gatherings, your array of fools, that would fain play the soldier, with such a beardless stripling as that to lead them. I know

the boy!" cried he, with a smile of scorn, pointing to Greyslaer, who stood with folded arms and compressed lips, as if with difficulty restraining the ire that boiled within him. "I know the boy; I knew him in old Sir William's time, who was once dear to all of you; he was whipped then by my father's overseer for plundering an orchard! Pity that the lash had not—"

"Liar and villain!" shouted Greyslaer, springing forward toward the stage.

"Seize the traitor!" cried Sir John, striking at the youth with the butt of a loaded whip. Actively evading the blow, Greyslaer succeeded in getting one foot on the scaffold, but the next instant the sturdy baronet had fastened a grip upon his throat, and flung him backward into the arms of one of his myrmidons, who quickly placed himself astride the prostrate stripling.

"She must keep quiet now, or te tirk will pin her," said the brawny Highlander, who held him thus in durance, smiling grimly the while at the ineffectual efforts of Greyslaer to free himself, in spite of the drawn dagger that flashed before his eyes. The trusty Gael, in the mean time, might have felt less comfortable in his position, had he known that he was covered by the deadly aim of the hunter Balt, whose cool discretion prevented him from firing, save in the last extremity.

The benignant Mr. Fenton pressed near to Sir John, as if about to intercede in some way, but the arrogant soldier heeded not his well-meant offices. An indignant murmur arose among the Whigs at witnessing this scene; and, upon a slight movement made among them, weapons were drawn, and a low-browed, lank-haired, saturnine man, whose age might be somewhere about thirty, a trooper in Colonel Butler's train, spurring to the front, snapped

his pistol in the face of a bystander. He was instantly reprimanded in sharp terms by his superior.

"What! fire on an unarmed man, Walter? Shame on ye for one wearing the king's livery! May I eat hay with a horse, if I suffer such a thing among my riders, Watty."

"We shall have to cut these rebel throats sooner or later," replied the man, doggedly, "and it matters not when the business is begun."

"Shame, shame," cried Mr. Fenton.

"Walter Bradshawe," said Greyslaer, without making an effort to rise or gain any advantage to protect himself from the consequences of what he was about to say, "you, though so much my senior, were for months my mate at school. I knew you, too, as an aspiring attorney's clerk in my first years at college; your political career has since made your name common in the mouths of all men, and there must be others here who know you full as well as I; and when I say that, as boy and man, you were ever a brute and a ruffian, there's not a man present that can gainsay my words."

"Tut, tut, boys," cried Colonel Butler, restraining a fierce movement of his subaltern, "may I eat hay with a horse, but this is a foolish pair on ye here. There's trouble enough without your brawling, and you may soon have an opportunity of fighting out your quarrel in the name of king and country, without troubling older people with your capers."

A glance of deadly hatred from Bradshawe, which was returned with one of utter scorn from his quondam schoolmate, was all the reply the young men made to this speech. In the mean time, notwithstanding the dismay which the sudden appearance of the armed royalists had inspired, there were no signs of dispersion among the patriot assemblage.

A few craven spirits had, indeed, slunk away, but their absence was more than supplied by a number of sturdy countrymen, in the guise of hunters, who, with rifle on shoulder, came straggling into the scene of action, as if brought thither only by accident or curiosity. The Tories, who had trusted only to their arms to give them a superiority over the party, which from the first outnumbered them, began soon to be aware that they were fast losing their only advantage; and Colonel Guy Johnson, acting in his capacity of a county magistrate, saw that it was true policy to close by an act of civil authority the duties which had been entered upon with a less peaceful mission. He therefore addressed the people anew, but in terms more soothing than those which had been adopted by his kinsman the baronet; though, like him, he commenced by trying to awaken their old feelings of feudal attachment to his family.

He spoke of the affection which they had always borne to his father-in-law, Sir William Johnson, now but a few months deceased, and who was believed to have been brought to his grave from anxiety of spirit at the perturbation of the times, and the struggle between loyalty and patriotism, as the crisis approached when he should be compelled to decide between his king and his country. He said that he saw many around him who were the old friends and playmates of his youth, and who, till the last, had always been cherished guests at his table. And he appealed particularly to the influential families of the Fondas, the Harpers, the Campbells, and the Sammonses, several members of which were afterward so distinguished in the border war of Tryon county, to unite with him in his exertions to prevent the effusion of blood among their mutual kindred and neighbours. Finally, after regretting the

necessity of placing young Greyslaer in the custody of the sheriff until he could be tried by his country in fair proceedings at law, he made a signal to Sir John, who had already placed the prisoner on horseback in the midst of his retainers, and bowing politely to the company, the complaisant colonel moved off in the rear of his retiring party.

The people, in the mean time, either too much confused by the unexpected events which had succeeded each other, or confounded by the fair and polite words which had last been addressed to them, made no movement to the rescue. But the sound of the retiring troopers had scarcely died upon the ear, before a deep murmur of disapprobation pervaded the assemblage. Some reproached each other with pusillanimity in having looked so calmly upon the scene which had just been enacted before them. Those who were armed were told that they should never have permitted one of their friends to be thus torn from among them. And those who had been instrumental in getting up the meeting without providing for such an exigency, were rebuked by the riflemen, who had come last upon the scene of action, because they did not direct them what part to take when the difficulty came on, of whose origin the new-comers were themselves ignorant. These mutual bickerings and recriminations, however, which only temporarily suspended the unanimity of council, resulted at last in a general call for immediate action. Every one agreed that young Greyslaer must be at once delivered from the hands of the Johnsons, who, notwithstanding their promises, would doubtless seize the first opportunity of transporting the youth to Canada, where, if his fate were a no more cruel one than perpetual imprisonment, he would be at least utterly lost to the cause.

The hunter Balt, who had stood moodily looking on without taking any share in these discussions, seemed to catch new life from the determination, when announced.

"I don't know," said he, looking round, "whether or not ye all mean to stick to what you say; though I hope so, raaly. But I do know, that if young Max Greyslaer be not as free as any man here, afore one wilted leaf of this tree falls to the ground, I'll water it with the best blood of the best Tory in the county! That's right, Adam, jist empty another gourd upon the roots, the poor thing looks thirsty."

How the hunter's vow, and the resolve of his excited compatriots, were carried into effect, may be best told in another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST SHOT.

"From man to man and house to house, like fire
The kindling impulse flew; till every hind,
Scarce conscious why, handles his targe and bow,
Still talks of change."

HILLHOUSE.

It was the middle watch of a summer's night. The shadows lay deep on fell and forest; but above, the waning moon shone bravely out in the blue heavens. The night was calm; so calm, so still, that the murmur of myriads of insects grating their wings amid the leaves, made, as it were, "a silence audible." As the moon gradually approached the horizon, leaving the stars only to gladden the welkin, this creeping symphony appeared gradually to have its concord broken in upon by sounds which, though similar in character, did not completely harmonize with the others. A humming noise, like that of a huge beetle booming through the air, first broke the tiny chorus. It was answered by the harsh discord of a locust, who seemed to rap his wings with angry impatience, like some old fellow jostled by his mate in the midst of a nap. His ire was reproved by a pert young katydid, whose shrill tones indicated that her wings were only half grown, and that the froward thing must be the earliest of the season. Then followed sundry orchestral croaks of a tree-toad, which in turn were replied to by the deep diapason of some sturdy bullfrog. At last the feathered tribe seemed preparing to join

in this nocturnal concert. The timid and delicate note of the night-sparrow, rising distinctly fine from a clump of maples, was answered by the shrill and petulant cry of the whippoorwill from the lower boughs of a broad-armed oak, that stood singly in an open glade of the forest.

With the last call the woods became suddenly mute, but the next moment the spot was alive with a dozen dusky figures that glided from the adjacent thickets towards the trysting-tree.

"Well answered, my mates," cried an active woodsman, leaping from the oak into the midst of them; "are we all together? I see nothing around me but hunting-shirts. Ah! all right," he added, as some thirty men, in parties of three each, came cautiously forward from blind by-path and tangled forest lair, where the hunters had answered each other's signals while guiding the rest to the place of rendezvous.

One of the last comers, who were all in the ordinary dress of citizens or plain farmers, now advanced to the first speaker, and, catching his hand, said, while wringing it cordially, "Most neatly managed, my sturdy Balt. You have brought us safely and quietly together when I apprehended the worst from the outlying spies of Sir John's Indian rabble. And now, gentlemen, as you have chosen me your leader in this business, I pledge my life to its accomplishment under the present auspices."

"Why, you see I told you, Major Sammons, that we hunters didn't live among the Injuns for nothin', for where'd be the use of consorting with the redskins if you didn't catch some of their edication from the cunning varmints? And you've all seen tonight that the woods afford calls, jist as many and as good calls as a bugle has, for making men act in concort, where they can't see a signal no how. But

now my say's over; and let's hear the crowing of the game-cock of Caughnawaugha—axing your pardon, major, for the freedom."

"Are we all armed?" said Sammons, glancing around the group; "Colonel Fonda, you and young Derrick de Roos have, of course, your side-arms with you."

"Ay, ay, sword and pistol both for me. But carry on, carry on, major, we are all ready, man, and up to anything; carry on, carry on." The gay youth who thus spoke with so little show of deference to his seniors, was a curly-headed, fair-faced gallant of about three and twenty. His features were frank and good-humoured, and certainly prepossessing in the main, though something of sensuality, if not of dissoluteness, in their cast, slightly vulgarized by broadening their natural recklessness of expression.

"Peace for the nonce, mad Dirk," cried Sammons, somewhat impatiently. "Kit Lansingh," he continued, turning to a tall and modest-looking young hunter in a green rifle frock, "you are a model for such younkers to dress their manners by. Captain Vischer, Helmer, Veeder, I see you are prepared. Ah! Adam, that was well thought; you are not used to a sword, and your pitchfork may do good service. Bleecker, you must lay aside that fusee, or draw the charge; not a shot must be fired unless Balt and his hunters, who are to cover *our* retreat, should find it necessary to use their rifles. Doctor, we'll trust you with your pistols; but, remember, they must remain in your belt. Clyde, your axe is well thought of; but where's Wentz with his crowbar?"

"Black Jake has the crow, and I've brought along this suckling trip-hammer with me."

As the brawny blacksmith answered thus, he

raised a ponderous sledge from the sod upon which it rested, and threw it into the hollow of his arm as carelessly as if it were some light bawble he was handling.

With these, and a few more brief and rapidly given directions, the Whig leader soon marshalled his zealous forces, a large proportion of which had come a day's journey or more through the woods to the place of rendezvous, some two miles west of Johnstown.

A short walk of a few minutes found the party in the immediate neighbourhood of Sir John Johnson's fortified mansion, when a halt was ordered for the purpose of adopting some new precautions in making the circuit of the building.

"Now, major," whispered Balt, approaching the ear of the leader, "if you'll only say the word, we'll make a clean business of it at once. Here are fifty as good fellows as you'll find in old Tryon. Sir John has but a hundred of his Highlanders with him; and when I pick off that sentinel whose blunderbuss gleams agin the casement yonder, you've only to dash right into the hall and take the bloody Tory, with all his papish crew."

"The time is not yet come for that, my worthy fellow," answered Col. Fonda, who overheard the request; "Sir John is an old neighbour of many of us. His father was the friend of my father; he was born here in the valley among us; his mother was one of our own people; he may yet think better of his course, and determine to act with his countrymen against the tyrannical ministry."

"The colonel says right," rejoined Sammons. "And though Sir John has already dealt harshly with me and my brothers during the troubles, yet I am not the man to hurry him on to his fate, and make him irretrievably commit himself on the wrong side

of the quarrel. No; let us pass on, my friend; we came only to rescue Max Greyslaer, and we will harm no one save those who interfere in the attempt to liberate him."

And adding aloud some words, which were intended as much to regulate the over-excited zeal of his younger followers as to repress that of the daring woodsman, he dismissed the subject by giving the order to advance. Throwing, then, the old mill that was in use in Sir William's time, between themselves and the hall, the party followed down the rivulet north of the house, till they reached the little bridge, memorable for Sir John's horse having fallen dead upon it while spurring vainly to reach the bedside of his dying father, a few years before the period of our story; and shortly after the whole band entered the village of Johnstown.

The slumbering inhabitants little dreamed of the bold deed that was meditated in the midst of them, as the conspirators glided through their silent streets. The party reached the jail, which stood in rather an isolated position near the southeastern corner of the town, and no one was yet disturbed. They drew up in the shadow of the building, stationing themselves before an iron wicket within a few yards of the main entrance; the hunter Balt, at the instance of his leader, advanced to the outer door to try the effect of a parley with the jailer. A rap with his ponderous knuckles upon the oaken door brought only a hollow echo from within; and Balt, after vainly waiting a moment or two for a more satisfactory answer, applied his lips to the keyhole.

"Mike, Michael," he cried; "Michael, I say! the blasted paddy's asleep. Jake, move hither with your crowbar—softly though—he hears."

"I hear ye, ye loon ye; what the de'il d'ye want

with Mike at this hour of the night; a murrain upon ye!"

"Mike, my good fellow, I come with a message from the hall, and you must let me in instantly."

"From the hall, eh? ye landloper; I'll hall ye, if I get hold of your ugly self the morrow. Sir John doesn't often send midnight messages to old Mike in these times; you've come on a fool's business, and that's your own, misther."

"I know, I know you, foolish Mike; but there's been a rising below of the Whi—, I mean the rebels. Yorpy, the half-breed, has just brought the news from Caughnawaugha, and Sir John wishes to move young Greyslaer to the hall for safer keeping."

"Let him send the sheriff, then, or a sargeant's guard of his Scotchmen; the lazy loons have nothing better to do than play sodger there from one week's end to the other. Deil a bit will Michael open jail till he does. So clear out wi' ye, or I'll unchain the dog through the wicket."

As the sturdy jailer pronounced these words, a deep-mouthed mastiff, who had hitherto been snuffing impatiently beneath the door, uttered a fierce growl, and seeing, with the sagacity of his race, that no exit was to be had this way, ran round to the wicket and commenced barking furiously at the party which was crowded near it.

"Curse the brute," said Balt; "will no one stop his mouth with a pitchfork?"

"Balt, your profanity would bring a blight on the most righteous cause," said the leader, sternly; "stand back, and let Jake heave the door at once with his crow; no time is to be lost."

A sinewy mulatto, whose muscles, long exercised in the toil of a journeyman blacksmith, seemed to have assimilated to the tough material in which he worked, moved to the spot and struck the crowbar

between the door and the lintel. But the blow, though repeated for the second and third time, seemed to produce but little effect, until his master, rushing forward, threw his whole weight into his gigantic sledge-hammer, in the same moment that the mulatto summoned all his force for one more effort. The door went down crashing inward, while poor Jake, who pitched himself fairly within the entrance, was saluted on his sconce by the jailer with a huge bunch of keys, which would have crushed the scull of any other than a negro, and which made Jake measure his length upon the floor.

"Harm not the faithful Irishman," cried Colonel Fonda, arresting with his hand the uplifted hammer of the blacksmith; "the brave fellow has only done his duty."

"Thank yere honour," answered Mike, making a reverence as he felt his heart touched in the right place, and quietly submitting to be secured by the overwhelming force which surrounded him; "thank yere honour kindly; rebel or no rebel, ye're jist the gintleman that Mike would take service under, if Sir John was not a kind of third part countryman, and me beholden to him upon the top o' that, yere honour," added he, raising his voice, as the colonel, who had seized the jailer's lantern, now gained the top of the staircase.

"Max, my boy, Max Greyslaer, where are you?" shouted Balt; "whistle but once from your perch, my young hawk o' the mountain, and—ah, Jake, your toothpick's the thing;" and, interrupting himself, as he suddenly clutched the crowbar from the negro, he dashed in a panel of the first door near him, and the liberated young patriot was the next moment overwhelmed with the congratulations of his friends.

Elated with their success, but still conscious that these lawless proceedings might recoil severely

upon themselves, the band of Whigs unanimously determined to seize the sheriff, who had been the willing instrument of the Johnsons in depriving Greyslaer of his liberty, and hold him as an hostage for their own safety. This gentleman, a brave and zealous loyalist, chanced to be absent from home, passing the night with his friends at the hall. But his house was left in charge of one of his myrmidons, equally determined in character with the sheriff himself.

This redoubtable fellow, of German parentage, and who, under the name of Wolfert Valtmeyer, or Red Wolfert, as he was more generally called, became afterward the terror of the border, was a hunter by profession; and, though impatient of restraint, reckless of temper, and wholly undisciplined in character for the ordinary purposes of social life, he was well suited, not less by his remarkable strength and activity, than by his hardihood and love of daring enterprise, to fill the station of a bailiff among the frontier community around him. In this capacity he had, in former years, been frequently retained upon an emergency, when his services were temporarily in demand; but the life of a free hunter was so dear to him that he could never be persuaded to undertake the permanent duties of a sheriff's officer. Indeed, the love of his personal liberty and freedom from all responsibility was so strong in Valtmeyer's bosom, that it seemed to leave room for one only other sentiment—a grasping desire after gold to procure him immunity from labour, and the free indulgence of his lawless pleasures.

Wolfert Valtmeyer, being such as we have described him, was not long in making up his mind which of the two contending civil factions to side with. For, while property, and the consequent

means of rewarding his services, was in his county chiefly on the side of the Tories, he was already indebted to some leading individuals among this party for rescuing him from punishment as a felon, and conniving at his escape to a distant part of the country. Rumours of his death were subsequently put in circulation, while all legal investigation gradually died away so completely, that Valtmeyer now ventured, amid the confusion of the times, to steal back to his old haunts, and even offer his secret services to the magistracy of the county. Though the difficulties with the crown had so lately commenced, yet he had already given signal proofs of his zeal in sustaining the royal cause; nor was he wanting in courage and conduct upon the present occasion.

The house of his principal being sufficiently far from the jail for Valtmeyer not to overhear the commotion that had already taken place, he was awakened in the dead of the night by the angry shouts and imprecations of the crowd that rushed thither, and called from beneath the windows for the sheriff; but, undismayed equally by the suddenness of the attack and the strength of those who came in such force to assail the person whom he represented, Valtmeyer only greeted the uproar with a muttered oath or two, as he prepared to meet the occasion.

"*Heilege Kreuz Donnerwetter!* but I will make the hide of one hound smoke for it;" and, growling thus, he leaped half naked from his bed, snatched a loaded pistol from its case, and threw open the window-sash. "Now, *verfluchter kerl*, look well to thyself," muttered the ruffian, as he singled out for his aim the leader of the party, who was standing in the porch apart from his followers. Raising his voice then, and at the same time imitating, as nearly as possible, that of the absent sheriff,

"Is that you, Sammons?" he cried.

"Yes," was the prompt reply.

"Then take that for a d—d burglarious rebel."

A ball whizzed past the head of the sturdy Whig, and buried itself in the doorpost beside him. "This," says the historian, "was the first shot fired in the Revolution west of the Hudson."

Though happily uninjured by the bullet, yet it glanced so near that the patriot leader recoiled as it grazed his temples, and his followers, thinking that he was about to fall, forgot, in the quick thirst of vengeance, the order they had received from his lips an hour before. A dozen rifles were instantly discharged into the open window, but a scornful shout from the bold Tory within told that their fire was ineffectual. A tumultuous rush at the door was the next movement of the infuriated crowd. It was quickly burst open, and the fate of Valtmeyer turned upon a single cast. The foremost of the assailing party were already upon the staircase, and making their way to his bedroom, when the report of a distant cannon proclaimed that their volley of firearms had been heard beyond the precincts of the village, and that the Tories would soon be upon them.

"Back men, back; heard ye not our signal for retiring? 'Tis the alarm gun fired at the Hall by Sir John. Balt, Adam, down with ye at once! Lansingh, Greyslaer, call off our friends, or we shall have the bluff Highlanders upon us to spoil our night's work before we regain the woods."

"Don't ye hear the major, Squire Dirk?" cried Balt, throwing his arms around that rash youth, who still attempted to push through the crowd and mount the stairs in the very teeth of the order that had just been given by his leader; and lifting young De Roos fairly from his feet, the stalwart hunter urged the others before him through the door, and was himself the last to retire from the scene.

CHAPTER V.

EVENING VISITERS.

"Our fortress is the good green wood,
Our tent the cypress-tree,
We know the forest round us
As seamen know the sea;
We know its walls of thorny vines,
Its glades of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands
Within the deep morass."—BRYANT.

"I RAYTHER guess," quoth Balt, when the party had all, by different routes, arrived at last at their place of rendezvous in a moonlit glade of the forest, "I raythergueess that we've stirred the game right in airnest this night, and the best thing we can do to-morrow is to commence running balls for a good long hunt."

"Our sturdy friend speaks truly, gentlemen," said the leader of the party, gravely, "and Heaven only knows how the 'long hunt,' as he terms it, may terminate."

"Be the issue what it may," exclaimed Greyslaer, in tones of deep fervour, while his earnest eye kindled with enthusiasm, "the game's afoot, and whether it lead to freedom or the grave, we must henceforth follow the chase."

"Why the devil, Max, do you put on the phiz of a parson when using the lingo of a sportsman?" cried the gay Derrick de Roos. "It becomes the old cocks, who have drawn apart to prose under the tree yonder, to look sermons, as well as preach them; but for us, man, for mettlesome chaps like us, why,

'We hunters who follow the chase, the chase
Ride ever with Care a race, a race,
And we reck not,'" &c., &c.

And the rattling youngster, to the great delight of old Balt and some of the juniors, and the equal annoyance of Greyslaer and other more thoughtful members of the party, ran through a verse or two of a popular hunting song, long since forgotten.

"Well, Mr. de Roos," said Col. Fonda, coming forward from the group, in whose councils Greyslaer seemed to be taking an active part, from the impatient glances he from time to time cast over his shoulder at the singer, from whose side he had in the mean time withdrawn; "well, sir, we have determined to take decided measures for ascertaining the real state of the county, and putting our friends upon their guard, and your father's house is spoken of as the place of our next meeting on Thursday night."

"The old man will be proud to entertain your friends and mine, Col. Fonda; and yet," added the young man, with a degree of hesitation that showed more considerateness than might have been expected from his conduct a moment before; "Hawksnest is the property of my father's ward, Max Greyslaer there; and, after what has passed this night, an overt act of rebellion by the present tenant, in harbouring traitors, as the Tories call us, might make poor Max forfeit his acres, in case the ministry get the better in this family quarrel; some of the grasping rogues begin already to talk of sequestrations and such matters, you know."

Greyslaer, upon overhearing these remarks, advanced, and whispered to his friend, "If you be not quizzing, according to your wont, Dirk, I congratulate you upon the seasonable return to gravity which your speech evinces. But, gentlemen," he

continued, raising his voice as he turned to his other compatriots, "I shall consider your confidence withdrawn from me, as one unworthy to share it, if the hint suggested by my friend De Roos—I doubt not in all kindness—be allowed to have a moment's weight with you. My honour is already committed in the cause you have espoused; my life I here pledge to it, and he can be no friend to Max Greyslaer who holds his fortune dearer than his life or his honour!"

These words, not less than the spirited tone in which they were pronounced, terminated at once all doubts as to the propriety of the step that was meditated; and the discussion, as well as the events of the evening, seemed at an end. The hunter Balt, who had lounged about the while, without venturing to intrude his advice upon those more fitted by education than himself for council, now brightened up, and shook off the air of listlessness that had crept over him. He struck the butt of his rifle smartly upon the sod, and surveying it affectionately for a moment, as he held it thus at arm's length perpendicular to the ground, as if to catch inspiration from the gaze, he with becoming gravity thus delivered himself: "Well, I only wanted to see folks get through with their parrorching, for you see I'm no great hand at making a speech; I've been here to your public meetings and there to your public meetings, and I never felt in my heart as if natur called upon me to say anything; for when natur does call, and right in airnest, she speaks out of the mouths of hunters as well as of babes and sucklings. She doesn't care, I say, much, when she's right in airnest, what sort o' tool she works with; jist as I've seen a good hunter, who had got out of powder when ravin distracted hungry, bring down a buck as slick with a bow and arrow as if it had been his own rifle, and that, too, when he

had never used the ridiculous thing in his life afore. Well, as I said, I'm tired of this etarnal parrorching about the country's troubles; I only wanted to see folks begin to make a raal thing of it, and then Tender-Tavy—I call the iron crittur after this fashion, gentlemen, partly out o' respect to Miss Octavia, old Deacon Wingear, the tavern-keeper's darter, and partly because the barrel is of so soft a natur that I can chip it with my hunting knife. I say, that when once there was a raal rising of the Whigs, then this here rifle—" interrupting himself at the word, Balt clapped to his shoulder the reputable weapon of which he spake, and glancing along the barrel as it gleamed in the moonlight, beckoned with his forefinger to a shadowy figure that stood motionless beneath a spreading chestnut within the range of his fire, " Come in, ye varmint, come in, ye lurching mouser from old Nick's pantry, ye pisoned scum of the devil's copper caldron; come in, ye scouting redskin, or Tender-Tavy shall blow a hole through ye."

" Fire not, Balt," cried Greyslaer and De Roos, both leaping at the same moment before the levelled gun; " 'tis the noble Oneida Teondetha." And the two young men bounded forward with outstretched arms to greet their Indian friend.

" Bah! only an Oneida," said the rifleman, dropping his piece in a tone of sullen disappointment; " I wouldn't harm the boy, pervided he comes as a friend; but, youngsters, though you seem to be so mighty fond of him, when you know as much of the woods as old Balt, you'll larn that the less one has to do with an Injun the better. Let every man stick to his colour, is my motto."

The momentary flash of anger that distorted the smooth and bland features of the Indian, showed that he partially understood the disparaging words of the

white hunter; but the disturbed expression passed away as the gentlemen of the party, unheeding the rude remarks of Balt, advanced with eager cordiality successively, and gave their hands to the newcomer.

"And what news brings my young brother from his people?" said Greyslaer, addressing the Oneida in his own language.

"The song of evil birds has been heard in the lodges of the Ongwi-Honwi. The Oneidas only, of all the Six Nations, have shut their ears against it. Their hearts bleed to know that the rest of their countrymen are bent upon rooting out the sons of Corlaer from the land. The Oneidas will not help to destroy a people born on the same soil with themselves. Their wise men say, it were better at once to extinguish the great council fire that has burned for centuries at Onondaga, and thus dissolve the league of the Aganuschion. The Oneidas are unwilling to take up the hatchet against their former brothers, whether red or white; but they warn you that Thayendanagea has sold the Mohawks to the Sagernash king, and that they now walk with your enemies."

"What! Brant actually up in arms!" exclaimed a dozen voices, when Greyslaer had interpreted the information to his friends.

"He flits along the border like a foul bird in scent of carrion. He watches the smoke of your lodges; and, if their hearth-fires be unguarded, he will swoop like that night-hawk upon your women and little ones," replied the Indian, as a dusky bird pounced greedily upon a swarm of gnats that hovered near.

"The wily knave must be looked after instantly, gentlemen; we must lose no time in collecting information respecting his movements, and determine

upon active measures at the next meeting of our friends. But as yet we are all in the dark. If you, Mr. de Roos, will take a scout of a dozen men with you, and bring us some tidings of this dangerous chieftain, it will give more shape to our proceedings. This friendly Oneida will doubtless, with Balt and some of his comrades, volunteer—"

"Axing your pardon, colonel, Balt don't go scouting with an Injun in the party. Tender-Tavy doesn't know much difference atwixt one copper face and another, and she'd be jist as like as not, in a dark swamp, to mistake that sleek chap for one of Brant's people, and go off of herself. So there's an eend o' the matter." And the woodsman, crossing his legs, leaned moodily upon his rifle, with an air of dogged determination to which there was no reply.

"If Balt chooses," said Greyslaer, "I would rather have him with me, as I shall find difficulty in getting my company together without assistance in time for the meeting."

"I don't see that, capting, as folks are now engaged in harvesting, and you'll find them pretty much, here and there, in bunches, holping one another. But I feel sarcy-able in persuading some of your wild chaps to come along, that I guess won't move from their homes at this season for your order, no how."

"For God's sake, then, go with Greyslaer, you self-willed old bear. Let's to other matters, gentlemen," cried De Roos, impatiently.

"If I am an old bear, I never hugged you to harm you, young squire, when I used to carry you as a petted brat to see me shoot pigeons from a bough-house; besides lots of dandling in other ways that you've had in these old—paws!"

"True, true, my excellent friend," answered De

Roos, good humouredly, while with difficulty restraining a laugh at the ludicrous words and accompanying gesture with which the stout-fisted woodsman concluded his mortified appeal to the better feelings of the other. "I spoke but in jest, Balt, or, at least, too hastily. And now, carry on, boys, carry on; Kit Lansingh, Helmer, Bleecker, Conyne, which of you lads are ready to take duty under my command, for twenty-four hours, while we look after Brant up by the Garoga lakes?"

Twenty voices instantly replied, all expressing their readiness to go upon the scout; and De Roos's only difficulty was, to select from the number those best suited to such an expedition.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Sammons, who was only the temporary leader of the party, and whom we ought, perhaps, according to the worshipful custom of our country, still to distinguish by his militia title of major, "I believe we now all understand each other, and had better disperse to our houses; those of us who live near will see if they cannot furnish a bed to our friends who have come from a distance on the good errand of this night. Perhaps, though, Mr. de Roos proposes a night march with some of you?"

The young partisan needed not the hint to spur his zeal, but, warmly seconded by his followers, he drew off at once, and took his way through the woods with his party, trolling as he went a voyageur's song of the Mohawk boatmen, in which his favourite slang phrase seemed to make the burden of the chorus:

"Carry on, carry on, 'tis the word that will bear,
From one bright moment pass'd to another as fair,
So lift the canoe, lads, and traverse the brake,
Though we're leaving the river we'll launch on the lake;
The portage is made, boys, the forest is gone,
Now bend to your oars, carry on, carry on."

The low-voiced chant of the retiring party soon died away in the distance, and their departure was the signal for breaking up the assemblage, and the other patriots soon dispersed, the majority taking their route rowards Caughnawaugha, and others moving off in different directions, two and three together, until Balt and Greyslaer were soon left the only tenants of the spot.

"It wants yet some hours of the dawn, capting, and I propose sleeping them off in the woods, because it's the best way of getting an airly start in the morning. And we may perhaps have a good deal of footing to do about among the farms on the off settlements to-morrow, afore we can get your men together. But this here is no sort of place to camp in, with the trails of fifty men leading to it on all sides. There's a dry swale on the other side of yon hill, where one of my old shanties is probably yet standing, and we'll jist take ourselves there as soon as may be.

"I used to have shanties like this all about among these hills wherever my traps were set, though none so near the settlements as this," continued the hunter, when they had gained a rocky dell, where the frame of a wretched wigwam, partially covered with birch bark, was discernible to Greyslaer after he got within a few feet of it. "You see, now, capting, the comfort to a man who shanties out as much as I do, of having a home all fixed and ready for you. Here, now, is dried venison in my katchy (caché), under those leaves, if the woodmice haven't got at it. There, too, I've laid away some—but darn those gnats, I must make a smudge afore we do anything else."

With these words, Balt proceeded to strike a light; and kindling first some dry leaves, he scraped the moss from a moist stump near, and cov-

ering up the flame with the damp material, the thick fumes of his "smudge" soon caused the insects to disappear. Greyslaer, in the mean time, had stretched himself upon some hemlock boughs, spread out beneath the shed of bark, which was barely ample enough to keep off the dews of night; and having refreshed himself upon the fare which the hunter drew from his caché, he observed to Balt, as the latter threw a fresh handful of leaves upon the smouldering flame, "That a hunter's fire was a sort of company for him, when passing a night in the solitudes of the wilderness."

"Jist the best sort of company a man can have, capting, if he would exercise a free and independent privilege of choosing his own. They say, you know, that the devil hates all flames save those that are kindled by himself; and in my hunts among the wild hills away to the north of us, I never shanty out without a large fire, even in midsummer. I may be kind o' particular in this matter, but ever since I got so terribly scared five years ago, I always love the light of a big fire to sleep by."

Greyslaer, instantly suspecting that the bluff woodsman, like many a man equally bold, was the victim of superstitious terrors, asked, with some curiosity, what it was that had thus inspired him with a fear of sleeping in darkness, when Balt, after a preliminary hem or two, thus told his story.

"Why, you see, I had gone clean up to Racket Lake to make out a pack of deer-skins for a Scotch trader at Schenectady, hoping to get a few beaver, at the same time, on my own account. Well, I might ha' been in the woods a week or more, engaged about my consarns, when, one day, after trampoosing over a pretty smart space of country, looking after my different traps, and, not having seen a single deer through the livelong day, I came,

about nightfall, to a bark shanty, where some hunter had made a pretty good camp for the night, and left it standing. I was tired and disappinted; and, as I hadn't spirit enough left in me even to skin a chipmunk, if I hadn't a' found this lodge I should have laid myself down, like a tired hound, and slept anywhere.

"But now I began to think that all sorts of luck hadn't left me, and I spunked up and looked about to see how I could best make myself comfortable for the night. I had shot a brace of ducks during the day, and the first thing to do was to build a fire and cook 'em. But, as I had left my hatchet at the camp from which I started in the morning, thinking to return there and sleep, it cost me a heap of trouble collecting such dead branches as I could lay my hands upon, and dragging 'em together before the shanty. And here was a pretty how-de-do when I got 'em there; the man that built the shed must have been a born nateral to choose such a place for it. For, instead of picking out a patch of firm airth whereon he might build a fire judgmatically, he had laid the logs right down on a piece of deep, mucky soil, made up of old roots, rotten leaves, and sich things as go to make up a soil only fit to raise toadstools, ghost moccasins, or timber so spongy and good for nothing, no one can tell why natur produces it. Well, true enough, his fire had burned right down four feet deep into the ground, through such truck as that; and I, of consekins, must either remove the shanty, or go to work to get rid of the hole, before building my fire, if I expected to get any heat from it; and the night was pison cold, I tell ye. So, having no shovel to fill up the pit with airth, and ne'er an axe to fell a tree across it, I goes mousing about, in the dark, after old rotten stumps and fallen trunks, whose mossy wrappings keep them

damp through and through the year round, and slimy roots, which, if they hadn't snakes under them to nibble my fingers while tearing them up in the dark, yet felt, for all the world, like raal sarpents in the handling. All sich like truck that I could lay my hands upon, I managed, with pretty hard work, to drag together, so as nearly to fill up the hole, and, placing my dry wood upon it, I lit my fire.

"Well, after eating one of my ducks, I dressed and roasted the other, so as to have him ready for my breakfast in the morning; and then, as I put my feet to the fire and laid myself down to sleep, I felt right comfortable. I slept and I slept, and I don't know for how long, but it must have been a pretty likely nap, howsomdever. Long enough for my fire to burn so low as to get pretty deep down the hole. But the first thing that I remember, before I waked and diskivered that, was my dreaming of being chased by wild Injuns, who came whooping and yelling after me as if crazy to get my scalp. '*Howh*,' '*howh*,' '*howh*,' the sound went clean down into my ears; and, waking with a start, I saw a pair of bright black eyes glaring at me. Had I used my own judgmatically, I might have diskivered that these belonged to a great antlered buck that was standing with his fore feet fairly upon the ashes of my fire, which made his eyes gleam unnaterally as he looked straight into mine. But, half awake, and flurried as I was, I snatched up a brand and flung it, with all my might, into his face; and then, as the poor brute scoured off, '*howh*,' '*howh*,' '*howh*,' a pack of wolves came ravening on his track; tramp, tramp, I heard them, nearer and nearer, until, fifty in number, they dashed furiously by my fire, making the bushes fairly *winkle* as their black troop swept howling on.

"Sarting, capting! I trembled like a leaf that time, I did, until the opposite mountain threw back

the last shrieking echo from its side. I don't think I ever knew exactly what a raal scaring was afore that night; but, since then, I always keep up light enough to let inquiring varmint see that it's Balt the hunter who is sleeping in the neighbourhood, with Tender-Tavy by his side. What, capting, snoring already! Well, if my story has put the lad to sleep, it hasn't been wasted to no purpose, howsomdever."

And with these last muttered words, after mending his "smudge" with a few handfuls of fresh moss, the good-natured hunter lay down, and was soon dreaming with his comrade.

CHAPTER VI.

PREPARATIONS FOR A FORAY.

"Fiercely they trim their crested hair,
The sanguine battle stains prepare,
And martial gear, while over all
Proud waves the feathery coronal.
Their peäg belts are girt for fight,
Their loaded pouches slung aright,
The musket's tube is bright and true,
The tomahawk is sharped anew,
And counsels stern and flashing eyes
Betoken dangerous enterprise."

YAMOYDEN.

LET us now return to the wild-wood scenery of our opening chapter. The events recorded in those which have followed it, were, as the reader will readily imagine, the tidings which had been brought to Thayendanagea by the Indian runner. The daring acts of the Whigs had equally awakened the indignation and the alarm of the royalist, and the message from Sir John declared the country to be in a state of actual revolution, and called upon Brant, as an adherent to the government, to move at once with his power to its support. It conveyed, too, some slight reproach for the coolness with which he had hitherto held himself aloof from the troubles which an armed force might have awed into quiet; and hinted that the best service that the chief could now render to approve his loyalty, would be to seize upon some prominent disaffected persons of the county, and hand them over to the king's magistrates as hostages for the conduct of their friends

and kindred. The heir of Hawksnest, especially, was mentioned as a fierce zealot and turbulent young demagogue, whom it was well to remove from his present sphere of mischief as soon as possible.

The task thus enjoined upon Brant was a favourite proceeding with the Tories throughout the war of the Revolution, and was often but too successful in its results. In the province of New-York, hundreds were, from time to time, suddenly and secretly torn from among their friends, and carried away to captivity or death. Nor was there any feature of the civil war, during that painful seven years' struggle, more appalling than this. The boldness of the act—for it was frequently practised in the most populous districts, in an armed neighbourhood, in the very capital of the province itself—struck dismay into the families of those who were thus abducted, and the cruel doubt and mystery which shrouded their fate was not less frightful; for while some, with shattered constitutions and spirits broken by confinement, returned from the prisons of Canada after the war was over, yet many were never heard of by their friends from the moment of their disappearance, and their destiny is enigmatical to this day. Nor was it only the influential partisan or his active adherent that was thus subjected to this hideous, because secret, danger. The hostages, as they were called—the victims, as they were in reality—were taken, like those of the secret tribunal in Germany, from either sex and from any class of society. The homes of the aged and infirm—of the young and the lovely, were alike subject to the terrible visitation. The gay guest, who waved a blithe adieu to the friends who were but now planning some merry-meeting for the morrow, was seen to mount his horse and turn some angle of the road in safety, but the steed and his rider were never traced after-

ward. The hospitable, festive host, who left the revel for a moment to cool his temples in the evening air, and whose careless jest, as he passed to the porch without, still rung in the ears of his impatient friends, never again touched with his lips the glass that had been filled for him in his absence. The waking infant cried vainly for the nursing mother, who had left it to be watched by another for a moment. The distracted bridegroom and fierce brother sought vainly for the maid, whose bridal toilet seemed just to have been completed, when, by invisible hands, she was spirited away from her father's halls.

"We begin our career of arms together with a painful duty, Captain Brant," said MacDonald, after the chief had expressed his determination to move instantly upon the settlements in the direction of the Hawksnest. "I think I have heard you speak of having been upon friendly terms with the present tenant of this property, who, if I mistake not, was one of your nearest neighbours upon the river side."

"I mean not in any way to harm old Mr. de Roos; but this mettlesome young Greyslaer must be removed, or he will only qualify his neck for the halter by stirring up more treason. I shall attempt to decoy him from the house, or, failing in that, will surprise it with so strong a party as to make resistance hopeless; and we shall merely ruffle the nerves of his friends a little in seizing the springald," replied Brant, coolly.

"Are there no females in the family?" asked the European, with some anxiety.

"Yes; there are two, a pair of sisters, mated in love as closely as the kissing blossoms that tuft a single twig in April; but no more matched in character than is the oriole, whose lazy nest swings from

the bough beneath him, with the eagle, whose majestic wing is circling yonder mountain. Yet the pale girl, whom they call Tyntie, is a fair and gentle lady, and her kindness has been owned by more than one woman of my own kindred. But Alida, that queenly, stag-eyed creature—surely, captain, you have heard of the beautiful and haughty Alida de Roos; she for whom my madcap son has conceived so strange a hatred."

"Of which of his sons speaks the noble Thayendanagea?"

"Of that dark and dangerous boy whom Bradshawe has spoiled by encouraging in his wild doings; of him who nearly compromised his father's honour and a chieftain's name by consorting with the ruffian Valtmeyer."

"Valtmeyer? surely, this is not the lady whom Valtmeyer wronged so deeply, when Bradshawe saved his neck from the gallows?"

"The same."

"I have heard the story," said the Scotchman, musingly; "I have heard the dreadful tale. But, after being outraged so cruelly, I should have looked rather for her resemblance in the fragile, fading girl of whom you first spoke, than in the blooming creature you describe as her sister."

"Miss de Roos was scarcely more than a child when the affair happened. Years have passed since then. Time will do much with sorrow, pride, perhaps, more. But, if you had ever marked the bright and glassy glare of Alida's eyes, you would have thought of those whom we Indians believe have become the tabernacles of another spirit than that which first possessed the body; and such a spirit, 'tis said, no mortal grief can overshadow."

"A beautiful superstition to assuage the horrors of lunacy, but too fanciful for truth. I have heard,

indeed, of men with souls so haughty that they would never entertain a grief, if its memory were linked with shame to themselves or lineage, especially if the consciousness of unmerited obloquy or the keen hope of ultimate revenge buoyed up their sanguine nature. But with a woman of blighted honour—"

"You may hold there, MacDonald. That proud girl could never be made to believe that aught of reproach has assailed her name; though her slim sister, they say, faints at the sound of Valtmeyer's name, and has pined away from the moment the ruthless villain crossed Alida's path."

"Good God! was there no brother, no kinsman to look after this horrible business?"

"Not one save the old father, who lived so retired that the story never reached his ears; for Alida was off on a visit to some friends in a distant settlement when the abduction took place. Her brother, young Derrick, then but a child, was with Greyslaer, his father's ward, at school at Albany. And he has turned out such a fiery fellow since he came to man's estate, that no one now would dare to hint the matter to him."

"And had the family not one friend to lift an arm in such a quarrel? and yet indeed it were a delicate business to meddle with," said MacDonald, doubtingly.

"They had two," answered Brant, with some hesitation; "two friends to whom the country people looked for dragging the offender to justice. One of them, Walter Bradshawe, who was said to be wooing the young lady at the time. But he never moved in the matter, save secretly, to use his influence in Valtmeyer's favour."

"The base mongrel! And what said men of such a recreant?"

"His conduct was known but to few, and those

said it sprung from a mean spirit of vengeance for having been rejected by the lady. But this may have been mere calumny, for parties were running high at the time; Bradshawe was never popular, and being a candidate for public office, his character was roughly handled."

"You have said the De Roos family had two friends they might have looked to. Had the other one, then, no influence with the magistracy of the country?"

"He had," said Brant, again hesitating, with some emotion, before he made his reply; "he was connected with them both by alliance, by political position, and by official station; and were not the honour of his blood involved in the inquiry, no feeling of paternal tenderness would have prevented him from cutting off his misbegotten offspring with his own hand. And yet the Spirit above us knows I love that wayward boy." The chieftain seemed now deeply agitated for a moment, and then turning suddenly, so as to fix his eagle glance full upon the eye of his companion, he added, in a stern and almost fierce tone, "I have answered your inquiries, sir, from no mere prating spirit that feeds an idle curiosity. You have formed a sudden intimacy with Au-neh-yesh; I would warn you, as a gallant soldier of the king and a friend of the Mohawk, against the son of my own bosom. But though the unnatural boy has twice attempted his father's life, yet one whisper that attaches infamy to the blood of Thayendanagea will bring veng—"

"Spare the threat, noble Sachem; your secret is ever safe with me. I cannot be too grateful for the confidence you have this day reposed in me; yet I cannot think there is anything of malignancy, much less of meanness, in the character of Isaac Brant, or Au-neh-yesh, as you prefer calling him. God forbid that I should attempt to palliate his un-

natural conduct towards his father. But phrensied as are the passions of youth, yet—"

"Enough!" said the chief, in a tone so emphatic as at once to cut short the discussion; and then striding forward impatiently, as if to get beyond the reach of a reply from his companion, he added, in a low and tremulous, but still distinct voice: "The friend of Thayendanagea will bury this subject for ever in his own bosom."

A few moments afterward the two partisans reached the clearing upon the Sacondaga, where the principal warriors of Brant had taken up a strong position in an elbow of the river, fortifying their camp with mounds and palisades after the military custom of the Six Nations.

The day was now long past the meridian, and the chieftain lost no time in making his preparations for a movement upon the settlements of the "German Flats" on the morrow. After a brief harangue to his followers, he drew out a select band of warriors, his son Au-neh-yesh being one of the number, for the proposed expedition; and straightway commenced the fantastic pageant incident to the setting out of a war-party at the commencement of an Indian compaign; while MacDonald, surveying the spectacle with a curious eye, was not a little surprised to witness the almost childish zeal with which Thayendanagea took his full part in the savage mummery. A strange and bombastic metamorphosis seemed to have come over the reasoning companion with whom he had hitherto been acquainted; so changed, indeed, did the whole man seem within one brief hour, that the wondering Scot could scarcely recognise in him the person with whom he had lately walked conversing.

"This Mohawk," said MacDonald, mentally,

"with all his talents and attainments, can never be given as an instance of the capacity of his race for civilization. The man seems to have two natures; or, rather, the artificial character, produced by education, is as distinct from his Indian nature as if it belonged to another person. And if they do ever mingle, it is only as I have sometimes seen the blood of a European veining, without suffusing, the cheek of a half-breed."

This opinion of the shrewd Scotchman seems to have been subsequently borne out by the singular incongruities which characterized the career of the remarkable person of whom it was pronounced; and the historian of the times still hesitates in what light to regard him who is described by many of his contemporaries "as a mere cruel, coarse-minded savage," at the very time when the chief enjoyed the friendship of some of the most chivalric hearts, and could boast an intimate correspondence with some of the most polished minds of Europe.

The sun had got low in the heavens by the time the warriors were all arrayed for battle, and the important task of putting on the war-paint concluded. His level beams shot through the tree-tops on the opposite shore, and glancing luridly upon the broad stream that flowed in front of the Iroquois camp, lighted up a grotesque array of forms and faces, mirrored in every variety of attitude in the tranquil river.

"Good!" said an Indian, who had just completed his barbaric toilet, and still lingered, surveying the result, with childish gratification, in the tide that rolled at his feet, "very good; Squinandosh is a great man. The Sacondaga is a happy stream, to reflect a face so terrible as his. Go, river, and bear his image in thy current while men tremble along thy shores as they see it float by. Go, river,

and tell the great lake into which thou pourest, that thou hast seen Squinandosh."

"Who is greater than Kan-au-gou?" cried another, rising with solemn gravity from the position in which he had crouched, "the bravest of the men who surpass all others. He paints not, he, to make his features terrible, but to hide the countenance, from which, if seen, his enemies would fly so fast his bullets would never overtake them."

"Behold, Au-neh-yesh! look well upon the tall one," said a third warrior, with the same Homeric diffidence of self-praise. "It is the blood of fifty white warriors that sprinkles his forehead. I hear their widows and children howling after their scalps, which shall dry in the smoke of his lodge; but what hand shall ever reach up to the scalp of him who walks with his head among the clouds?"

One youth, more sentimentally given, seemed to regret only that there were no fair ones present to yield their admiration to the gallant figure that he made in his own eyes. Rejoicing in the possession of a bit of broken looking-glass, this animated personage paused ever and anon to elaborate his toilet with some additional grace, as he strutted about like a bantom cock, exclaiming: "Where are the maids of the Mohawk, who love to look upon such a man as '*Le-petit-soldat?*' Where is Tze-gwinda, the fawn-eyed girl of the Unadilla, and she whose feet move like a tripping brook, when the hawks-bells tinkle around her slender ankles in the dance, the laughing Ivalette? Where Waneka, of the willowy form, and 'Cherie,' whose eyes outsparkled those of Ononthio's daughters at Montreal? Where is she whose footfalls leave no print behind them on the greensward or snowdrift; she who steals upon men's hearts they know not whence or how, where is 'The Spreading Dew?' Let each of

them come, look upon '*Le-petit-soldat*,' and sigh to be the squaw of such a warrior."

"The Little Opossum is a great painter," added yet another of these heroic worthies; "none but a medicine can find out his secret for mixing colours. Owaneyo has not yet breathed in the nostrils of the man that is meant to kill him. This island has but one such warrior. Who but 'The Little Opossum' can kill 'The Little Opossum?'"

As the night closed in they lighted their torches, formed of the pitchy knots of the yellow pine; and their barbaric boasting grew still more extravagant as they tossed them wildly in the war-dance. But here the demoniac forms, the distorted features, and ferocious gesticulations, as they moved in savage measure to the deep roll of the Indian drum, gave at least a fiendish dignity to the scene in the eyes of the European. It seemed as if the yawning earth had released a troop of demons from below to practise for a while their mad antics in the upper air; and the Briton shuddered as he thought of such a hellish crew being let loose to work their will upon his rebellious countrymen.

There was a heavy rain during the night, and many of these gallantly-apparelled warriors, who slept in their war-dresses, looked sadly bedraggled, after an hour's march through the dripping forest the next morning; but their appearance was still sufficiently formidable to awaken the admiration of the martial Scotchman; and their military order, their silence, and precision of movement, in obedience to each command of their leader, when they were once fairly started upon the war-path, struck him as characterizing a race who were soldiers, both by nature and education.

But among no martial people of whom history preserves a record were there severer disciplinari-

ans than among those semi-civilized tribes which are known by the generic name of the Iroquois; a stern and stoical people, whose peculiar institutions and Spartan-like character—for their discipline extended to all the relations of life—have been so ignorantly confounded with the loose customs of the more mercurial races, the mere barbaric tribes that are still scattered over the northern and western parts of this continent. Many, indeed, have denied the superiority of the Six Nations over other aboriginal races, and questioned the degree of civilization which they had reached, because it was not progressive; because the era of the Revolution found them with the same social habits that are ascribed to them by the earliest writers who make mention of the Iroquois. But if that anomalous and remarkable feature of the respect paid to women* among them were wanting to confute this position, how, it might be asked, how can that nation be progressive in civilization which makes war the end of all its efforts for improvement, instead of keeping prepared for it merely as the means of preserving the blessings of peace? which encourages agriculture, and builds granaries, only for the supply of armies, and explores the navigable waters of a vast continent, not for the purposes of trade, but to secure the transportation of those munitions which may enable its forces to keep the field through a succession of campaigns? Yet such was the policy which enabled the Six Nations to carry their conquering arms through every region that is now comprehended in this wide-spread Union; and which made them formidable, not only to the wild tribes far west of the Mississippi, but to the Frenchman of

* The written treaties of the Five Nations, preserved among the government archives, always open with, "We, the Sachems and principal *women* of the Five Nations," &c.

the St. Lawrence, the Englishman of the Chesapeake, and the Spaniard of Mexico.

The Scottish soldier listened with thrilling interest to the wild and warlike tales of distant forays, as Thayendanagea beguiled the march by dwelling upon the former glories of his people. Their religion and laws were frequently the subject of his inquiries; and, strange and uncouth as many of their observances appeared to him, he had travelled too widely over the earth to judge peculiar usages by the narrow standard of his own national customs. The partisans talked next of the civil war, whose outbreak, so long threatening, seemed now at hand; and the sagacious and comprehensive views of the chieftain were not thrown away upon his experienced companion, though more than once a strange discord was struck in the bosom of the latter by the ferocious sentiments that gleamed through the polished language of his Indian comrade.

MacDonald, though a soldier of fortune, had never been engaged in quite so disagreeable a business before. For, though upon the same side with a majority of his Catholic countrymen, yet there were great numbers of Cameronian Scotch acting with the Whigs; and, Jacobite as he was, he felt that there was a difference between battling with an opposite faction at Culloden and cutting the throats of countrymen who, like himself, had come to find a peaceful home in a strange land. This not unnatural feeling of compunction was brought out more strongly by a fierce reply which Brant made to some observation of his about the relations of friendship in which the chieftain had recently stood towards those with whom he must now come in immediate collision.

"And what," said the Mohawk, "what are private ties in times like these, when those of nations

are so rudely severed? Do you expect an Indian to play the woman, when you white men have forgotten all the claims of blood and kindred in this strange quarrel with each other? If the wolf devour his own whelps, why should the panther spare them, merely because they are tenants of the same forest with himself?"

But the night has again closed in around us, and the prowling Indian has reached the fold he would plunder.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIFLING OF THE HAWKSNEST.

"A crash! They've forced the door, and then
One long, long shrill and piercing scream
Comes thrilling through the growl of men.
'Tis hers!"

DANA.

THE Farmer's Homestead, from which the estate of Greyslaer took its name, lay upon the banks of the Mohawk, immediately at the mouth of one of those wooded gorges through which the tributaries of the river descend from the mountains of Montgomery to unite with the parent stream. The broad, low-eaved mansion reposed in a rich alluvial meadow, amid a clump of weeping elms; the luxuriancy of whose foliage betrayed the neighbourhood of the brook that watered their roots; and which, descending impatiently amid the copses of hazel and wild cherry, from the upland in the rear of the house, glided slowly and noiselessly through the green pastures, as if unwilling at the last to merge its current into the broader stream beyond.

"Here," said Thayendagea to his European friend, when, having stationed his band in the underwood that lined the sides of the gorge, he began to move cautiously toward the house, accompanied only by MacDonald; "here is the Hawksnest of which I have spoken, and within an hour we will clip the wings of the wildest of the falcon brood."

The two royalists now approached the house with the most stealthy caution, and by glancing from one

outbuilding to another, keeping always within their shadow, they at last attained a position in which, screened behind a trellice covered by gourds and hop-vines, that sheltered the cottage-like porch, they could easily look into the low windows of the mansion.

The scene thus witnessed brought so vividly to mind the recollections of his early home, that the British officer again shrunk from the stern task in which he had consented to share. The window opened into a large room wainscoted with black walnut, whose dusky panels were relieved here and there by the glimmer of a brass-mounted press, or an antique beaufet with its attendant service of painted china, and other furniture of European manufacture, which had probably been brought from his fatherland by the first owner of the dwelling. There was no carpet upon the floor of the apartment, which seemed to be a sort of hall, or common sitting-room of the family, and a large ducking-gun supported upon a magnificent pair of antlers over the fireplace, with other appointments and trophies of the chase, indicated the predominant tastes of its customary male occupants.

But there were traces also of the presence of woman in this rural household, in the framed needle-work that adorned the walls, the vase of freshly-gathered flowers upon the mantelpiece, and, above all, in the general air of neatness that pervaded its simple arrangements. Nor did MacDonald long doubt to whom these slight but indubitable evidences of feminine taste were owing, when he gazed upon the occupants of the apartment. These were an aged man and his two daughters. A white-haired patriarch, who sat a little aloof from the table, at which a slight-made, invalid-looking girl was seated, reading aloud, while the other, a dark-eyed, luxuriant beauty, stood

reeling some coloured worsted from the back of a chair. The glow of health, the purple light of youth, the pride of rich, resistless womanhood, seemed all mantling in the cheek and animating the person of the latter; and when the European gazed upon her haughty, intellectual brow, her mouth, whose ripe and melting softness was still redeemed from all weakness of expression by something wayward and aspiring even in its smiles; when glancing from her white and exquisitely turned shoulders, just touched by the light which polished her velvet bodice, he looked to the noble contour of her person, brought out as it was by the position in which she stood, with one fairy foot upraised upon the lower rung of the chair before her, the portrait of more than one proud dame of princely courts rose freshly radiant to his view; while the pale, passionless-looking girl, upon whom the old father gazed with eyes of such affectionate interest, seemed the far fitter tenant of an abode so obscure.

"It is, indeed, a cruel duty, Sachem, to disturb such a home as that," he whispered to his companion.

"Yes, but still it is a duty," muttered the Indian, sternly.

"And yet not necessarily ours to-night; the young man whom you seek is evidently not at home; for see, now, the tall girl has laid aside her work; they are preparing for family prayers, yet Greyslaer is still absent."

"Speak lower," said Brant, in a suppressed tone, which sounded like the hissing of a serpent in the ear of the other; "that tall girl could wield the souls of a hundred rebels with her eyes! She must be placed out of the way till these fanatic boys of the same traitorous household recover their senses. Nay! murmur not at this decision; a hair of her head shall not be injured. But, hist, what noise is

that?" he added, turning round as he retired a few paces from the trellice, which interposed its leafy curtain between him and the window.

"It is only some of your followers; you told them to approach for the seizure, the moment that the rising moon should cast her first beam above yon clump of maples."

"Yes, but she yet lacks a hand's breadth of gaining the top of the sugar-bush, and that tramp is never made by an Indian moccasin."

As the chieftain spoke, the sharp crack of a rifle, followed instantly by the wild whoop of Indian warfare, rang out on the night air, while a young warrior, whose approach had been hitherto unobserved by Thayendanagea himself, stood suddenly before them.

"A party of Corlaer's fighting men! but we outnumber them. Our warriors sent me to ask leave to fight, but the foe has stirred their covert before the message could reach my father."

"And where was Au-neh-yesh, not to know of their approach?" fiercely asked the chief of his son, in their own language.

"Au-neh-yesh watched upon the hills above the waterfall; Kan-au-gou in the fields below. The sons of Corlaer came up the bed of the running water, and Kan-au-gou must have mistaken the plashing of footsteps on one side for the ripple of waters on the other."

"It is well; let our people stand fast till they hear my signal from the hill behind them, and then disperse as best they may."

The chieftain spoke, and Au-neh-yesh disappeared on the instant. "And now, Captain MacDonald," said Brant, "we have not a moment to lose in securing our captive, while my young men keep the rebels at bay. Nay, I pledge myself to the girl's

safety," he added, with a jesture of impatience, observing still symptoms of reluctance in his coadjutor.

But the feat, so often afterward, during the war, accomplished by Brant with such consummate address, was fated, in the present instance, to a more serious result than could have been anticipated.

Of the different parties of Whigs, who, according to previous concert, were to rendezvous at the Hawksnest this evening, that of Greyslaer was the only one which, for reasons that will be hereafter mentioned, moved to the proposed conference. It was well that the band was better armed and better ordered than were most yeomanry corps at the commencement of our civil struggle, and that they were commanded by one who, on this night, gave as signal proofs of his quickness of resource and ability as a partisan soldier, as he had formerly shown evidence of high moral courage upon the occasions we have already noticed. The twenty-four hours which had elapsed since his deliverance from the myrmidons of Sir John Johnson, Greyslaer knew afforded sufficient time for that vigilant loyalist to obtain information of the proceedings of the patriot party, and to adopt measures to prevent the proposed meeting. This, in the excited state of popular feeling, could scarcely be effected by an open exercise of his authority as a magistrate. A stroke of address in seizing the rebel ringleaders, or the cutting off the different parties in detail, by waylaying them on their approach to the rendezvous, seemed the only movement that could serve his purpose. Fearful, therefore, of an ambuscade, Greyslaer had exercised the greatest caution in approaching the scene of danger.

Marching warily along the banks of the river, until he came within half a mile of his destination, he

had turned aside upon reaching the mouth of the tributary before mentioned; and, making the bed of the smaller stream his highway, had struck inland towards the hill, so as, by a serpentine course, to approach the house from the rear. These precautions, however, would only have served to throw him into the midst of Brant's party, which, intent upon the operation which had brought their chief to the spot, lay concealed upon the banks of the brook where it first descended to the lowlands, if the military foresight of the young partisan had not added another safeguard to his march by throwing out a picket upon either side of the stream.

The worthy Balt, who chanced to be one of the two persons detailed upon this duty, used always to quote his deeds of this night in illustration of a favourite assertion of his, that a true woodsman always knew, by instinct, when an Indian was within fifty yards of him. Certain it is, that he had not proceeded in advance of his comrades a hundred yards up the stream, when a faint whistle, like that of a woodcock settling in a cornfield when a summer shower has lured him from his favourite morass, caused an instant halt of his party. The call was answered by an Indian, who, rising slowly from a brake, showed his shaven crown, for a moment, in the moonlight, and then slunk back to his cover, as if having, for the instant, mistaken the call of a real bird for the signal of some comrade come to relieve him at his post.

Some three minutes were now passed by Greyslaer's party in breathless attention for another signal. These were so skilfully employed by the woodsman in gliding towards his foe, that they measured the mortal existence of the unhappy Indian. A short and desperate struggle, a smothered cry, and the crashing of branches, as a heavy body

rolled through the thicket into the water, finished the career of the warrior Kan-au-gou.

"Thank your stars, boys, that your lives are not trusted to such a stupid lout as that," whispered Balt, joining his party the next instant. "Capting, that chap was painted for a war-party, and you may depend there is more vermilion in the neighbourhood. The red devils must be beyond the rifts upon the hill above us; God knows how many of 'em; but the best thing we can do is to change our course, and strike straight through the fields to the homestead, where we can stand a siege, if the worst come to the worst."

Greyslaer nodded approval, and instantly gave the necessary order; while his men silently deployed from the bed of the stream, and ascended the bank, preparatory to making a swift movement across the meadows to the house. Two fields, separated by a high rail-fence, laid "worm-fashion," intervened between them and the homestead, and it was the sound of their feet, in running across the first field, which caught the quick ear of Thayendanagea, and in the same moment alarmed his ambushed followers. Au-neh-yesh, by the order of one of the chiefs, had bounded off, on the instant, to communicate with the Sachem, and had nearly reached the house, when, casting his eyes behind him, he beheld Greyslaer's party in the act of surmounting the division-fence we have mentioned. Without waiting to select his man, he instantly fired upon them, and the shot produced at once the effect intended by the keen-witted savage. The whites, finding themselves thus attacked in the direction of the house, deemed that it was already in possession of the enemy. They faltered in their advance, and then, as a tumultuous yell burst from the thickets on their flank, they formed in the angles of the serpentine fence, as the

nearest cover at hand, and poured their fire upon the advancing foe. The Mohawks recoiled on the instant, and both parties lay now protected by their cover, with a broad strip of moonlit meadow between them, into which both were afraid to venture, contenting themselves with keeping up a dropping fire upon each other, as the gleam of weapons betrayed here and there an object to aim at.

The situation of Greyslaer's party seemed now precarious in the extreme.

"The Redskins are surrounding us, captain," said one of the brave but undisciplined yeomanry. "We had better back out by crawling, in the shadow of the fence, to the bushes on the river-side in our rear."

"Raythe," said another, "let us go ahead, and make a clean thing of it, by charging through the varmint in front, and gain the heavy timber in *their* rear."

"Now my say is, boys," quoth Balt, "just to do neither one nor t'other."

"What, then, do you counsel, Balt? for we cannot long maintain ourselves where we lie, if the Indians are in any strength," said Greyslaer.

"Why, the bizness is a bad one, anyhow you can fix it, capting; but I think I understand the caper on't. Don't you see—sarve you right, Bill; I told you they'd spile that hat afore the night was over, if you would pop up your head above the rider instead of firing atween the rails—don't you see that we've only had one shot from the house, while the old fence is already pretty well riddled from the hillside? Well—elevate a little lower, Adam, if it's that skulking fellow by the big elm you're trying for—well, then, as I was saying, it's pretty easy to guess where the strength of the redskins must lie; and I don't see that we can do better than streak it right

ahead for the house, and trust to legs and luck for getting safe into it."

The suggestion was too much in accordance with Greyslaer's feelings not to be eagerly caught at by him. Indeed, so overpowering was his anxiety for the beloved inmates of the mansion, that nothing but considerations of duty toward the party who had trusted themselves to his guidance, had hitherto prevented him from dashing forward to his destination at all hazards. But if he had still hesitated as to the course to adopt in the present exigency, all doubt as to his movements was at once dispelled in the moment that Balt finished speaking.

A sound of terror, the shriek of woman in distress, with the hoarse cry of age imploring mercy and assistance, rose suddenly from the dwelling, chilling the blood of some, and making the pulses of others leap with mad and vengeful impatience. And it was then that, bursting simultaneously from their cover, the red man and the white could be seen urging their way with rival fleetness towards the same goal, for the moment apparently regardless of each other's neighbourhood; pausing not to strike down a competitor in the race, but striving only who first could reach the bourne. The one thirsting to share in the massacre that seemed in the act of perpetration; the other burning with fierce impatience to arrest or avenge the butchery of his friends.

A light and agile youth, a fair-haired boy of sixteen, was the first that gained the door of the mansion; but even as he planted his foot upon the threshold, his head was cloven asunder by an Indian tomahawk, and, with limbs quivering in death, his body rolled down the steps, while the exulting savage who dealt the blow leaped over it brandishing his fatal weapon. But his triumph was short. Greyslaer was close upon him, and, as he strained

every nerve in rushing forward, he came with his drawn rapier so impetuously upon the Indian, that the point was driven through his back deep into the panel of the door, which burst open from the shock.

Leaving his friends for the moment to make good their entrance as best they could, by opposing their hunting-knives and clubbed rifles to the tomahawks and maces of the Indians, who instantly mingled with them in wild melée around the porch, Greyslaer rushed forward to the sitting-room of the family. He shrunk aghast at the sight of horror which told him that he had come too late. The master of the house lay stunned and senseless upon the floor. Alida, the beautiful Alida, had disappeared; but her fair-haired sister lay weltering in her blood, while a gash across her forehead, with the tangled locks drawn backward from her brow and the print of gory fingers fresh upon the golden tissue, called Greyslaer's eye to a savage, who shook his scalping-knife at him with a hideous grin of disappointed malice as he sprang through the open window. But there was no time now for grief to have its way. The din of the conflict still rose fresh behind him, and Greyslaer turned to the succour of his friends whom it might avail.

"Powder, powder, capting!" shouted Balt, who this moment presented himself. "There's a big redskin keeping three of our men at bay with his tomahawk; I must use him up at once, to give the rest an opportunity of making a rush from the out-house; our best men are still outside. Bedlow and Boonhoven are both down; but big Hans, the miller, yet holds the door stoutly, and Bill Stacey has gone up with his axe to drop the gutter from the eaves upon the redskins that are hammering at the windows. Ah! there's the tool for my purpose," he added, seizing the ducking gun from the chimney,

and throwing down his half-loaded rifle; while Greyslaer had, in the mean time, secured the window through which the ferocious Au-neh-yesh had a moment before made his entrance and escape.

Greyslaer now rushed to support the man who was holding the door against odds so stoutly; while Balt ascended the staircase, freshly priming the ducking gun, and adding a handful of buckshot to the already heavily charged piece as he went. He gained a window in the same moment that Greyslaer, sallying out from the house sword in hand, cut down the sturdy warrior for whom Balt had prepared his charge. A dozen Mohawks instantly rushed forward to avenge the fall of their comrade. But the heavy piece of Balt did good service in the moment, or Greyslaer's career would have been cut short for ever. A shower of buckshot drove them quickly to regain their cover.

"Now, boys," shouted the woodsman, "make a rush for the house, while the red devils digest that peppering."

The handful of outlying whites did not wait for the invitation to be repeated, but rushed pellmell within the porch so furiously as to bear down each other in the hall, while the sturdy miller made a liberal use of his foot in pushing aside their bodies while shutting the heavy oaken door.

Furious at being thus foiled, the brave Mohawks made a simultaneous rush towards the entrance, when, at that instant, the rude and ponderous gutter, loosened from the eaves, descended with a crash upon their heads; and, with a wild howl of grief and dismay, the survivers of their party drew off their wounded and disabled comrades, and left the stout yeomen masters of the field.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RUINED HOMESTEAD.

"The father gazed in anguish wild,
He pressed the bosom of his child:
There beat no pulse of life."

YAMOYDEN.

THE human heart has no more bitter grief than that which springs from the recollection of unkindness toward those who, loving us when living, are now, by the barriers of the grave, placed for ever beyond the reach of our remorseful recollection. But love—whether it be the love of kindred, or the wilder, warmer passion, that more generally bears that name—is ever humble and self-chiding when absent from its object. The heart then forgets the frailties that may at times have shaken its esteem; it softens in degree the faults which have so severely tried its regard, that it cannot but remember them; it pardons every offending quality, that may often have tasked its forbearance, and threatened even the continuance of its tenderness; it imputes to itself all the blame that it has ever attached to the beloved object; and finds an excuse for each caprice of the one who may have trifled with it, in its own unworthiness, to inspire true affection.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that the young Greyslaer, when he surveyed the desolation that had come over the home of Alida, and thought of her as torn from that home, a captive, dependant upon the mercies of the half-civilized Mohawk—it was not unnatural that, while every humane and

generous impulse of his heart should be called into action, the more subtile emotions of latent tenderness should also quicken afresh in his bosom.

"She loved me not, she never would have loved me," said the youth, mournfully; "yet, God knows, I would have laid down my life for her. Yes, coldly as she received me the last time I crossed this threshold, and forbidding as I for months have found her whene'er we met, I would give worlds for one haughty and impatient glance, checking my ill-timed assiduities, could she but now sit there in safety to receive them. So noble, so gifted, so gentle, to be torn thus—*gentle?* No, Alida, the word befits not thy proud and aspiring nature! Yet why should I hold her high spirit in reproach, because I may at times have chafed at its imperiousness, and thought that it looked too insolently down upon such a thing as I am? What am *I*, that I should aspire to the love of such a being? What guerdon have I won from glory, what deed of nobleness have I achieved, that I may aspire to mate myself with one, whose queen-like step should be upon the neck of emperors?"

And the young man strode to and fro across the apartment with disordered pace and gesticulations that became the extravagance of his language; while desperate resolves and bitter self-reproaches were so wildly mingled in his speech, that one who had never before witnessed the fantastic mood of a lover, would have deemed that, if not the immediate instrument of the calamity that had overtaken his mistress, yet the preferring of his unwelcome suit must be in some way the cause of her disastrous fortunes. But when was there a lover who was not an egotist, or who did not believe that the dream which wraps his senses must somehow shape the destiny of her who inspires the infatuation; who can

be made to think that the current of his feelings, like the ocean tides, may reflect the image without influencing the actions of their mistress? But Greyslaer, though the first burst of feeling will ever have its way in one so young in years and new to sorrow, was not a man to waste the moments that were precious, in a lover's idle rhapsodies; nor, indeed, had he given way to even this transient weakness, until he had done all that could be at present accomplished for the distressed household.

The bereaved father, when first brought to his senses, and enabled to recall his share in the events of the night, left little doubt, by his testimony, as to the disposal that had been made of Alida. But the narration was so loose and unconnected, as wrung piecemeal from the broken-hearted old man, that we have ventured to enlarge and connect his relation, in order to make it intelligible to the reader.

The shot and shout which heralded the conflict had struck dismay into the family engaged in the peaceful avocations we have described at the opening of the last chapter. The invalid girl had the moment before laid aside the book which she had been engaged in reading aloud; and her sister, taking a Bible from the chimneypiece, handed it to her father to close the evening with the customary religious service before retiring.

"It would be provoking," remarked Alida, while opening the good book on the table before him, "if some of Derrick's rough comrades should not have heard that the night of the rendezvous was changed, and come and rouse us an hour hence from our slumbers! There's one gallant I wot of, Tyntie," added she, passing her hand archly over the head of her sister, "who would not be sorry for the omission, if it but gave him an excuse for showing his new uniform at Hawksnest."

"Pshaw, sister, you know that young Harper is no more to me than any other young man of the valley that comes to our house. But I am sure that to-night I should be glad to see him or any of the bold friends that Dirk has collected around us in these stormy times. Brave as you are, I don't believe you would have been sorry if, instead of the boy they sent with the note, wise Max Greyslaer had been the bearer of it."

"The striplings are alike to me," said Alida, without noticing the faint smile of the invalid. "As for Greyslaer, he had to go south to the Reinhollow Settlement to get his friends together; and they would have eaten us out of house and home, if we had to keep his hungry hunters over the morrow. But, silly one, think you that, if there were danger, Derrick would have kept aloof himself? Father, let me look again at his note! See, there's nothing to alarm us here," pursued she, reading the missive aloud:

"We shall not disturb the repose of your house to-night, my dear father, as the proposed meeting of the *friends of the king and constitution* is deferred. The ministerial malignants are abroad. Johnson, indeed, still lies, with all his power, at the hall; but his tool, Joseph Brant, has got together some vagabond Mohawks at the north, and has prepared to move to-morrow towards the river. He claims that he and his miscreant followers represent the sentiments of the whole Six Nations; and we are going westward to intercept his march, and seize his person, before he can communicate with the other Indians and work us farther mischief. I always told you, honoured sir, that this precious specimen of the civilized savage would go with the British ministers in their tyrannical attempts to en-

slave us, and I will make your quondam friend confess as much before to-morrow night, if—"

The sudden report of firearms, followed immediately by the appalling war-whoop, broke off the farther reading of the note, and struck dismay into the defenceless household. The timid Tyntie, pressing her hands to her temples, as if to shut out the fearful sounds, bent her head down to the table, cowering like a frightened bird, hopeless of escape when the fowler is upon her. The old man clasped his hands, and uplifted his aged and prayerful countenance with a look of mute but anxious pleading. Alida only, of the three, seemed to retain the power of action. Pushing the table impatiently from her, she stood, for a moment, with flashing eye and dilated form, and senses all alert, as if, Penthisalea-like, the sounds of approaching combat were music to her soul. Then, as the turmoil of the strife rose nearer and clearer, she cast a hurried look of anxiety at the helpless beings by her side, and rushed to a window to gain intelligence of the extent of the danger.

It was the same window beside which Brant and his Scottish accomplice had planted themselves; and, as impetuously throwing up the sash, she leaned far out to catch a view of the grounds beyond the end of the house, the sinewy arm of the chieftain encircled her waist in a moment, and, incapacitated from resistance alike by surprise and the position in which she stood, she was lifted from her feet by a power that was equally rapid and resistless, and placed in the arms of MacDonald, who, moved but not melted by her shrieks, hurried from the spot with his captive. As for Brant, he had only delayed for a moment to pinion her arms by securing the ends of his knotted baldrick, which, unobserved by MacDonald, he had thrown over her shoulders in

the moment he seized her person, and then he bounded through the open window into the apartment.

"Joseph Brant!" cried the old man, raising the palms of his hands like one startled by an apparition, and averting his head as if to shut out the conviction of the character in which his former neighbour now presented himself. "Joseph Brant, my enemy!"

"Thayendanagea, your ancient friend," replied the chief, advancing with outstretched hand.

"Off, off, perfidious and ruthless villain. If a father's vengeance could renew the strength in these withered limbs, you durst not—"

"By the eternal spirit of Truth above us, not a hair of your daughter's head, old man, shall come to harm. 'Twas but to prove to you Alida's safety in the hands of Thayendanagea that I have betrayed my share in this night's business; for that, and to assure you of your own, is all—"

"Yes, as the hound protects the hind from the knife of the hunter, when he has driven her into his hands. Off, dog of an Indian, off, wretched mercenary; or, if your power to save be equal to your will to slay, protect yourself at this moment." And seizing a tall andiron from the fireplace, he brandished aloft his awkward weapon, and rushed upon the chieftain. Phrensied with passion, the feeble old man had summoned all his remaining energy to deal a single blow at the spoiler of his household; and as Brant leaped lightly aside from the descending blow, he fell forward, striking his hoary brow with stunning effect against the iron instrument, which came between his head and the floor. At this moment, Alida, escaping from the care of MacDonald, presented herself at the window, with the Indian Au-neh-yesh in close pursuit behind her. The

ferocious young savage had already raised his tomahawk to strike, and it was only the menacing cry of his chieftain and father which saved the life of the maid. A few hurried words from him told Brant that there was now no time to be lost, if he would secure the only prey yet in his power. He tore the shrieking girl from the window-sill, to which she clung; and lifting her like a child in his arms, rushed through the garden and up the wooded hill in the rear of the house.

The young Mohawk turned to bear back the command of his Sachem to his party, but catching a glimpse of Tyntie's prostrate form, who still lay lost in the swoon into which the first alarm had thrown her, he could not resist his ferocious propensities, while the tumult of the strife, which at this moment rose nearer and nearer, urged their gratification. He sprang forward, buried his tomahawk in her brain, and, twisting his fingers in her long tresses, had already drawn the scalping knife from his girdle, when Greyslaer's sudden appearance compelled him to seek safety in flight.

The other incidents of the assault have been already detailed to the reader in the previous chapter. The note we have mentioned, which still lay open upon the table, for the first time acquainted Grayslaer with the altered intentions of his friends. But, under existing circumstances, he determined to remain at the Hawksnest, and await their coming on the following day. An attempt to rescue Alida with his present handful of men would, he soon acknowledged, be worse than vain; but he did not abandon the idea, until, by a close examination of the ground, he had made a tolerably accurate estimation of the number of followers Brant had with him, and his means of securing an escape to the upper country. He was even able to trace the foot-

steeps of Alida herself in several places. But a dog belonging to the household, which had been unchained to assist in the examination, and had proved himself eminently useful in striking the Indian trail in the first instance, and shown his sagacious sympathy in their search by uttering a sharp howl when they first lighted upon the traces of his mistress, disappeared soon afterward amid the darkness of the forest, and the use of the lanterns in groping about added nothing farther to their discoveries when the aid of the animal was withdrawn.

In the mean time, the patriot party took every precaution to secure themselves against a surprise during the night. The windows of the house were strongly barricaded, sentinels were posted, and a shed, with other slight outbuildings, which might cover the approach of an enemy, were levelled with the ground. The body of the unfortunate Tyntie was consigned to the care of a couple of female slaves, whose vociferous grief over the gory remains of their young mistress almost drowned the deep mourning of her stricken-hearted father, who had to be forcibly torn from the body and carried off to another chamber.

After a night made tedious by broken slumbers and harassing dreams, confusedly alternating each other, it was with no slight feeling of relief that Greyslaer hailed the approach of dawn. The summer landscape wore a Sabbath-like stillness, as he gazed upon it from his open window, while inhaling the fresh breeze of morning. The mist-wreaths curling up from the river were the only objects moving, and even these stole off as gently as if fearful of breaking the silence by a more rapid motion; creeping now around some imbowered islet, pausing now to twine for a moment amid the leafy festoons of vines and branching elms upon

some jutting promontory, and now circling the brow of one of those cliffs whose craggy and frowning summits give its only feature of sternness to the soft and lovely vale of the Mohawk, and at once dignify and diversify its exquisite landscape.

The heart of the young patriot bled to think that a scene so fair and smiling must be given up to the cruel ravages of war. Of a war too, which, while presenting itself in the worst form of that scourge of humanity, brought with it the threatening horrors of many a savage massacre, superadded to the dire calamity of armed discord among those who call themselves civilized.

"And what," thought Greyslaer, "what are the private griefs of one solitary being like myself, to the sorrows of the thousands whose fate is wound up in this impending struggle; what weighs the present doom of all of us, when balanced in the scales of Omniscient Benevolence, against the welfare of the millions yet unborn, whose destiny hangs upon the success of our endeavour. God of Heaven! but it is a gallant game, a noble stake we play for. But those that come after us! will they prize it when won, will they cherish the glorious guerdon, and remember the deeds and the men who made it theirs? Will they love each rood and inch of their blood-bought patrimony, where every acre that was sown with the dragon teeth of despotism produced its hero? Will they too rear a race of men, fit to be the second crop of a soil so generous? Will the free-born dames of those days, will the mothers that tutor them—alas! if their mothers were to be such as thee, Alida, who could doubt their high-souled nurture!" But the thoughts of the youthful Greyslaer became less coherent, as they assumed a softer character, nor need we follow the reflections

of the ardent young patriot, as they became merged in the vague musing of the less sanguine lover.

As the day wore on, and the hour of the expected return of the younger De Roos to his father's house drew nigh, Greyslaer shrunk from witnessing the harrowing impression which the desolate household must make upon his friend. Derrick came not, however, in the manner that was painfully anticipated by those who dreaded the shock of surprise that seemed to await him. Ill news flies fast, and the story of his ruined homestead was soon spread over the country; and when the young De Roos, returning from his bootless quest of Brant, first fell in with his friends and neighbours flocking to the scene of disaster, he soon learned the dark story from the agitated females, who were hurrying, in company with their fathers and brothers, toward the Hawksnest. Leaving another to take charge of his own immediate party, the horror-stricken young man threw himself on a fresh horse that was proffered by a kinsman, and, striking the spurs into his flanks, dashed furiously forward.

"Where is she? Where are their bodies?" he exclaimed, foaming with impatience as he leaped from the saddle and rushed into the house, as if the mad energy of his grief could even yet rekindle life in the bosoms of the dead.

"My son, my son!" cried the old man, moving a step toward Derrick, then tottering, and sinking helpless into the chair from which he had risen.

"My father!" screamed the youth, in a wild tone of delight and grief, most strangely mingled. "And did the wretches then spare your gray hairs; are all, then, not gone?"

"All! look there, look there, Derrick! They left my aged blood to chill in my veins through time, if horror might not curdle it; but those young pulses

have ceased to beat for ever." And the frame of the youth trembled like that of a woman as his father pointed to the narrow cot where, stark and stiff, but still composed, in the decent attire of a Christian grave, reposed the remains of Tyntie, his younger sister. His features were as pale as those of the corpse as he advanced to its side and raised the napkin which covered the face. He started. "What, Tyntie, my poor, my gentle girl! And was thy delicate thread of life, that might have snapped so easily—so nearly worn, too, that any moment might have severed it—was that frail thread thus rudely riven asunder?" He spoke mournfully, but there was no bitterness in his grief; and nascent hope and burning anxiety were depicted in his countenance as he turned hastily to his father, in a hoarse and tremulous whisper:

"Alida—Alida, my father?" His agitation was too great to utter more.

"She was borne off by the villain Brant, unharmed as we think and trust," said Greyslaer, advancing. "I waited but your arrival, Derrick, to reinforce my rifles and start in pursuit."

A complete reaction now took place in the feelings of the mercurial young De Roos. Rumour, who flies on magic wings, generally, too, exercises a magical power in exaggerating the tidings that she bears. The dismayed youth had heard in the first instance of the total destruction of his house; indeed, there had been tales of burnings as well as massacres; and when he rode so furiously homeward, it was not until he beheld the quiet smoke ascending from the hall of his infancy that he hoped even to recover the bodies of his kindred for Christian burial. To find his father living, and Alida, his favourite sister, his pride and his delight, still not numbered with the dead, wrought such a change in his

mind, that every object around him wore a new aspect. The world, which a few moments before seemed so drear and gloomy, that the very idea of drawing out his desolate existence for an hour was accompanied by that suffocating sense of pain intolerable, that most men, perhaps, have sometimes known—the world, the young and half-tried world around him, seemed now almost as fresh and fair as ever. With buoyant step he hurried out to meet his approaching friends, and, as the wagons of the gathering yeomanry drove into the courtyard, it would have seemed, from the congratulations that passed among the females, whom sympathy or curiosity had brought to the house of mourning, that every cause of grief were for the moment removed.

All the particulars relating to the last hours of the young girl, who thus far had been the chief sufferer by these events, were now told over and over, amid frequent exclamations among the females, while the incidents of the flight were recounted with not less animation by the men who participated in it, as they clustered around some mounted rangers, who, being among the new-comers, were now engaged in grooming their horses at the stable. The fate of the brave fellows who had fallen, and who, few in number, chanced to be mere hangers-on of the community, with no near kindred to lament them, was by their acquaintances and comrades sincerely deplored. As the evening drew on, many of the party dispersed, some to seek a supper and bed with the nearest neighbours, none of whom dwelt within a mile of the Hawksnest; and others to seek a berth for the night in the barn or some other outbuilding, where they might be ready for attendance upon the funeral on the morrow. Greyslaer, in the mean time, having taken counsel with

the friends of Alida's family, it was agreed that he and Derrick should leave the care of the ceremonial to a near kinsman of the latter, while, selecting a chosen party of followers, they should set out together an hour after midnight to follow up the trail of Brant.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH'S DOINGS.

"And he looks for the print of the ruffian's feet,
Where he bore the maiden away,
And he darts on the fatal path more fleet,
Than the blast that hurries the vapour and sleet
O'er the wild, November day."

BRYANT.

IT was through the lenity of MacDonald, in releasing the bonds of his captive the moment he discovered her arms were pinioned, that Alida had succeeded in making her single attempt at escape, which we have already seen was futile. The worthy Scotchman was deeply chagrined at having in any way participated in the business of the night, which he deemed affected his character both as an officer and as a gentleman; and now, while hurrying toward the Indian station, he did not hesitate to express his regret that the lady had not succeeded in regaining the protection of her friends. Thayendanagea seemed in no wise offended with the bluntness of his language, as the major denounced in no measured terms the Indian system of making war upon women and children, answering only very dryly that that was a question for the moralist, which he would be happy to discuss with his friend when they should be at leisure to talk over the whole subject of war, with Sir John's chaplain to make a third party in the discussion. "But, Major MacDonald," said he, "I could tell you that in regard to the position of this young lady which entirely pre-

vents her case from being included in the question you have raised."

"You have already told me the considerations of policy which prompted the act; but, Sachem, there is but one policy which should ever govern gallant men when the welfare of women is concerned. Our humane civilization teaches us that war—"

"Is an honourable game, at which the noble and the far-descended should play with the lavished lives of their inferiors, the wail of whose desolated kindred can never reach the ears of the upper classes, to whom alone the prize of glory in any event may fall; pardon my interruption, but that, Major MacDonald, is the real purport of what you would say. You would shudder at the bare thought of one of England's high-born dames being torn from her luxurious home to a prisoner's dungeon; and the horror of her being tortured at the stake would darken the recollection of the most brilliant successes in war. But the wretched children, whom you doom to grow up in poverty and contempt by making them fatherless; the lacerated hearts of thousands of widows, whose existence you protract by your reluctant bounty, after rendering that existence miserable; these are never remembered to cast a shade over the tale of a victory. Call you this humanity, which embraces but the welfare of a class within its mercies? Call you this consideration for woman, which regards the rank rather than the sex of the sufferers? The sex? Great Spirit of the universe! have I not read of your gallantry, your *tender mercies* toward them in the storming of towns and castles? *I*, an Indian, a *savage*, have seen your own records, the white man's printed testimony to these abominations of his race; but the breath of life is not in the nostrils of him who has seen a female insulted by her Iroquois captor."

MacDonald listened to the tirade of the chieftain without caring to contradict what he said; and, by way of cutting short the discussion, and changing the subject to one of a less abstract nature, he admitted that if war were an evil, not the least *summary* way of putting an end to it was by the Indian mode of making all who were interested in its result indiscriminate sharers in its horrors. "But I have yet to learn, Sachem," said he, "why the welfare of this young lady is not involved in the question?"

Brant smiled grimly, and pointed to a litter of boughs carried by a couple of Indians, whereon reposed the form of Alida, wrapped in his own mantle. "Could a father," he said, "care more gently for his own daughter than do I for the Lady Alida? Could that feeble old man, with his rash, hot-headed son, have given her the safe shelter she may find, in times like these, beneath the roof of Thayendanagea? The devil is unchained, I tell ye, Major MacDonald, and there are wild men enough beside Indians to do his bidding in these parts."

"Why," said MacDonald, in a tone of surprise and pleasure, "why did you not hint this to me before? You spoke but of taking the lady as an hostage! Had I thought that so generous a concern prompted—"

"Nay, speak not of generosity. Perhaps, after all—though her safety is best secured by the act—it was but as an hostage that I did seize my captive. But I mean her as an hostage to restrain far more dangerous spirits than the mad-cap De Roos, or the dreaming enthusiast Greyslaer. There are men—men bearing the commission of the king, who bring the ferocious nature of outlaws to our cause; men whom you and I would scorn to act with, save in a cause so holy; and in the mad dance of devilish pas-

sions which the convulsion of the times will let loose, they must be restrained by other powers than those of official authority. There is one man who—but this is not the time to speak of him; let us urge onward to our destination."

That time never came with Brant, who seemed to have forgotten the promised solution of his dark and mysterious language when they arrived at the Indian station; nor did MacDonald, who soon after departed with an escort through the woods to Johnstown, understand, till long afterward, the bearing of what the chieftain said upon events disclosed in the sequel; and which may be best unfolded in the regular course of our story, which recurs again to the scene of our last chapter.

It was about the hour of midnight that the younger De Roos, taking Balt to guide him upon the Indian track, quietly withdrew to the hillside with his followers; where, after some ten minutes' impatient waiting for Greyslaer, they took up their line of march through the forest without him.

Greyslaer, in the mean time, rising from the pallet whereon he had snatched a brief repose, descended the staircase, and already had his hand on the outer door, when a deep moaning in the room adjacent to the passage arrested his attention. A feeble light streaming through an aperture showed that the door was ajar, and, with cautious and subdued steps, he hesitated not to enter.

It was the chamber of the dead.

The flickering taper upon the hearth revealed the figure of an old woman in a gray cloak, whose attenuated and sallow features looked still more ghastly from the scarlet hood which was thrown back from her forehead and rested upon her shoulders. She sat upon a low wicker chair, with one of her feet upon a footstool, and the other with the toe

stiffly upturned, and the heel resting on the floor, thrust out so far beyond her dress that its shrivelled proportions showed like the stark limb of a skeleton. Her cheek supported upon her bony fingers, with the closed lids of her sunken eyes, showed that her vigil had been badly kept; and Greyslaer, pained at the thought that the remains of the gentle Tyntie should be left to such a watcher, turned from the forlorn old crone to the coffin in which the body had been laid.

It was empty. But, before he could rally his thoughts to account for a circumstance so astounding, the moaning sounds which had first drawn him to the chamber again caught his ear. He turned, and beheld a sight both piteous and awful.

In a shadowy corner of the room, removed as far as possible from the slumbering guardian of the dead, sat the venerable father of the murdered maiden, folding her stiffened corpse in his arms, and pressing it to his bosom with a tenderness as passionate as if he thought that the pulses of parental affection which beat within could rekindle those of life in his departed daughter. The shroud, with its formal drapery, still veiled the lineaments of her clay-cold form; but the napkin that shielded her throat, and the fillet or muslin band that covered the gash in her forehead, while keeping the long locks smoothly parted beneath it, had escaped from their place; and the golden tresses, floating loose, mingled with the gray hair of the old man, as he madly kissed the frightful wound through which her gentle spirit had been dismissed to heaven.

The agonized parent, who had thus crept, in the dead of the night, to hold this awful communion with his child, seemed wholly unconscious of the presence of Greyslaer, who would fain have slunk away in silence as one who, by unwitting intrusion, pro-

faned some hallowed mystery; but his power of volition seemed taken away, and he still continued to stand, in spite of himself, as it were, with eyes riveted upon the heart-rending spectacle. At length the mute anguish of the old man found vent in words. The colour went and came strangely over his ashen countenance; while his features writhed as if it were difficult for them to assume the new expression of malevolent and vindictive feeling they had now for the first time to wear.

"Brant, cruel Brant," cried the wretched parent, "the God—the Christian's God, whom I aided in teaching thee to worship, may forgive thee this, but I—I never can. A parent's curse—the curse of a bereaved and stricken heart, be, oh God, upon—" A burst of sobs, that for a moment threatened to suffocate him, cut short the blasphemous appeal; but history, in the tragic fate of Brant's own family, has shown how deeply the malediction wrought in after years; and the old man, like one startled by a spell himself had evoked, seemed, with the prophetic eye of approaching dissolution, to foresee the working of his curse. He shivered as with a grave-chill; and, dropping now upon his knees, with the lifeless face of his daughter upturned upon his bosom, mutely pleading toward heaven, he essayed in prayer to beseech a pardon and recall his words. But his quivering lips refused to syllable a sound. A sudden and subtile agony seemed on the instant to travel through his limbs and rack his aged frame; and then, while unresistingly permitting Greyslaer to take the body from his arms, he sank unconscious upon the floor.

Calling the old woman to his aid, Greyslaer, with the tender care of a mother, lifting the fragile form of her child in which life still feebly hovers, again consigned the body to its formal receptacle; and,

while the crone busied herself in readjusting the grave-clothes of the maiden, he turned to raise her wretched father from the ground.

But the sorrows of the old man had ceased for ever; the thread of his feeble existence, protracted only, as it seemed, beyond the usual length, to be interwoven at the last with more than usual misery, had snapped beneath the tension of an agonized spirit. He had been called away—after a long life of blameless benevolence and Christian meekness, he had been mysteriously called away in a moment of contumacy toward Heaven. He departed, indeed, with a prayer upon his lips, but his last-uttered words were those of imprecation. He had been called, though, by a God of mercy!

It was with a sad heart that Greyslaer, after climbing the hills to strike the trail of his friends, succeeded at last in overtaking them after an hour's rapid walk through the forest; nor, for a long time, could he find the heart to break to Derrick de Roos the mournful event which he had just witnessed. The blow was better received than he had anticipated. The grief of the warm-hearted but mercurial young man was indeed, in the first instance, passionate to a degree that was outrageous; but, as it found an immediate outlet in words—for, in the madness of his mood, he poured out such a torrent of curses upon Brant, the author of his sorrows, as to shock the better-disciplined mind of his friend—the first paroxysm soon passed over. When this violent burst of emotion had had its way, he seemed, by a versatility of feeling not uncommon in persons of his keen but transient susceptibility to the impression of the moment, to be almost reconciled to the event. And his words characteristically betrayed this condition of his mind. He stood a few minutes, distracted between the natural wish to re-

turn and aid in the last obsequies to his father, and an eager impatience to hurry on to the rescue of his sister, and, at the same time, strike instant vengeance upon the desolator of his household.

"Yes, I will proceed," cried he, at last; "and now Alida—the only living object that remains for my care—must at once be got out of the clutches of these hell-hounds. Perhaps, too, after all, my dear Max, it is better that the old man departed as he did. There will be wild work doing in the valley for years to come; and the kind heart of my father already bled for the distracted state of the country, as he used to pray that he might never live to witness the scenes of havoc and of bloodshed that must soon ensue. Strange! and I used to think it but an old man's dreaming. Yes, yes, Greyslaer, it was better that he should be removed at the first outbreak of the storm, than that those gray hairs should be left to be still farther bleached by its peltings, and bowed down to the grave at last, without his ever beholding the bright days to come that you and I may yet witness."

And, with the wonted buoyancy of his gay and not wholly unselfish nature, refusing thus to entertain a grief where regret was unavailing—with the sanguine hopes of Youth gilding thus quickly the clouds of a new-sprung sorrow, the young man seemed to dismiss the subject for the present, whatever may have been his after-emotions. Constitutionally reckless and unreflecting as he was, it would be doing injustice to De Roos, however, to say that his step was as buoyant as before, though he again strode stoutly forward with his comrades.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOREST-TRAIL

"He skims the blue tide in his birchen canoe,
Where the foe in the moonbeam his path may descry;
The ball to its scope may speed rapid and true,
And lost in the wave be thy father's death-cry."

SANDS.

"WELL, Squire Dirk," said Balt, breaking a long silence, and speaking for the first time since the party had got fairly on the move once more, "I mistrust that your Injun friend there, Teondetha, or whatever be the chap's name, that you and Capting Greyslaer are so thick with, I mistrust that he didn't help you much, arter all, in finding out old Josie. I'll warrant me, now, the sarpent's one of Brant's own crew, sent out to mislead our people. Whereabouts did the Oneida leave your party?"

"What!" exclaimed Greyslaer; "surely Teondetha did not desert you. I'll answer with my life for the fidelity of that Indian."

"And so, twenty-four hours since, would I with mine," said Derrick, sorrowfully. "I've known Teondetha much longer than you, Max; he was here at Mr. Kirkland's missionary school while you were getting your college-training at the east. With our bows and arrows we used to watch the stone walls for chipmunks when boys together; often have I taken off my stocking for him to bag the flying squirrel, as he climbed to the hollow bough of some tall chestnut, while I thundered with the back of his tomahawk upon the decayed trunk below. And in

later years, when he came down to Guy Park with his tribesmen to receive the government presents, many a hunt have we had in these woods together. But one knows not who to trust in times like these; there's Brant himself was for years my father's friend, though I never liked the haughty Sachem." The last words suggested associations so bitter that the young man was for the moment overcome by his emotions, and then, regaining his composure, he resumed, still in a mournful tone: "Certain it is, Greyslaer, that Teondetha separated from us in the forest, but whether from accident or treachery I am unable to determine."

"Well, a painter is always a painter, an Injun always an Injun, no how you may tame 'em; and I don't quarrel much with the crittur because he chose to sort with his own kind. No man's to be blamed for sticking to his colour, for that's human natur through and through, any way you may fix it. I'm not mad with him for that. I'm only mad with myself that I didn't shoot him down jist by accident, as it might be, afore he got fairly into our councils."

"Balt!" whispered Greyslaer, in a low but stern voice, for he did not wish to mortify the faithful woodsman before his comrades; "to me, Balt, and to our cause—to all whom you call your friends, I believe you to be a good man and true; and, as such, I would peril my life with you or for you; but, Indian or white, by the God that made me, if you ever practise such a piece of treachery upon breathing man, you shall die the death at my hands. I will pistol you upon the spot."

"Wh-eu-gh! and what would old Balt care for that, if, by shooting one of the red devils, he could save your scalp or squire Dirk's! You're boys, both on ye, and don't know the natur of an Injun. But I tell ye, Capting Greyslaer, as I suppose I must

call ye, it isn't fair and comely, it isn't treating me in a likely manner, to use sich hard words to me, considerin its only two days gone that I let ye put down my name on your muster-paper there, as making myself a raal sodger under you; I might better have let the cause go to the devil, or have gone and taken service in Bradshawe's battalion with wild Wolfert Valtmeyer, raythe r than to be spoken to so like a dog—I might. I almost wish I was shut of the business of sodgering altogether, if sich talk as that is to be my wages."

"If those are your sentiments, my good fellow," said Greyslaer, stopping short in his walk, as the two pursued a path together a little apart from the rest of the band, "if you really wish to side with the Tories and shed the blood of your countrymen, I will strike your name off this paper in an instant, and you have full liberty to go where you please." And Greyslaer drew the muster-roll of his company from his bosom, as if about to give his last and most valuable recruit a fair discharge.

"Well, that beats natur; that's raaly the worst thing, arter all. The boy talks jist as if he could get along without me. Ah! ye green springald ye! ye callow fledgling! ye yearling that would gore with your horns yet in the velvet! ye, with yere book-larnin, yere speechifying, yere marchings and counter-marchings, yere shoulder-firelocks, and yere right foot, left foot, ye'd make a pretty how-de-do in times like these, with only sich a mad loon as Squire Dirk to counsel and guide ye! I tell ye what, Capting Max Grayslaer, I've holpen your edication in some things that may cause ye to make a figure in sich times as these, with some one to look after ye; but, though ye want now to get shut of me, as if I was an old granny of a Yankee schoolmaster dogging his urchins in the holydays, I'm d—d

if I give ye up till I've seen the eend of ye. Put that in yere pipe and smoke it, my laddie! and now go ahead as soon as ye choose, for where *your* trail is there old Balt will follow."

"A hopeful subject I have here for a disciplined soldier," said Greyslaer, mentally. Amused, provoked, and, at the same time, touched by the petulant freedom and stanch fidelity of his follower, he silently abandoned the altercation, and pocketing the muster-roll with an emphatic "umph!" that said everything to Balt, once more pursued his way with the doughty hunter.

"How do you know, Balt," said he, after they had walked on for some time in silence, moving through the forest as nearly as possible in a parallel line with the main body of De Roos's band, from which two corresponding flankers had been thrown out upon the opposite side, "how do you know that Valtmeyer has taken up arms with the Tories under Bradshawe?"

"How do I know? why I had it from Red Wolfert himself only the day before yesterday, when I left you to go and look after farmer Stickney's tall sons. Two likely fellows they be, too, those boys, Syl and Marius Stickney, though Bradshawe has got 'em clean safe into his following by this time."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say that Valtmeyer beat me at 'lectioneering, that's all. I could only promise the boys liberty and equality of human rights if they'd turn out with our people, as they promised they would at the last training; but Wolfert promised he'd burn down their barn if they did, and he carried the day arter all."

"The pitiful scoundrels!" exclaimed the young officer, indignantly.

"Yes, capting, seeing as how they promised,

they ought to have come, if it was to a den of rattlesnakes. But the barn is full of grain, and the old man had his say, for Wolfert threatened to return a couple of horses on his hands that he had just bought with some broad pieces for Bradshawe's use ?"

"Do you think that Valtmeyer would really have burned the barn ?"

"*Sarting !* and mayhap the housen too. He hates a white man like pisin, and has jined Bradshawe jist to work out his grudge agin his own kind and colour. *He* burn a farmer's barn ? I'd like to see the day of the week when Red Wolfert Valtmeyer wouldn't like a pretence for doing of that."

"And does Valtmeyer think that these two Stickneys will keep their faith more truly with his people than they have with ours ?" said Greyslaer, not incuriously.

"Sarting they will," replied Balt, shaking his head. "I never knew a Connecticut chap yet but what stuck to his bargain when it was once made clean out and out; the snarl of the thing is to find out what they consider a raal bargain complete. I raythe mistrust it's only when they put their names right down in black and white upon paper. Wolfert, I know, made them do this, he seemed so tarnal sure of his men for ever and aye. But here we are at Damond's run, and the squire had better order a halt, as we must be within half a mile of the Fish-House clearing."

In the moment that Balt spoke, a faint signal from the extreme right, which was repeated by De Roos from the centre, reached the ears of Greyslaer and the flankers at once; closing in, the whole party united upon the banks of the rivulet, at a point where it first commenced its descent from the upland. Taking his orders now from De Roos,

for Greyslaer was only acting as a volunteer upon the expedition, Balt ascended a tall hemlock to reconnoitre the point to which they were approaching, and where it was presumed that Brant lay with his followers.

"How many fires do they count?" cried De Roos from the root of the tree.

"Fires? Devil the one!" muttered the scout, in a tone of sullen surprise and chagrin. "A fool's errand we've come upon. They've shut themselves up in a block-house and stockade upon the banks of the river, and our night's bizness is done for."

"Can we not decoy them from their defences?" asked Greyslaer, anxiously; "it would be madness to assault their palisades without artillery, and it would be folly to wait until cannon can be transported through woods like these we have traversed to-night."

"Easy enough to get some of the critters out, and pepper 'em for the fun of it," said Balt; "but that wouldn't help us in retaking Miss Alida. By the etarnal thunder! but there's some of the varmint now, pushing off in a canoe to gig trout or examine a fish-wier, I don't know which; but I see by the light of the pine knots in the bow that they push along mighty slow, as if looking for something at the bottom of the stream. I have it, I have it, capting; I have it, squire;" and, as if some rare device had struck him on the instant, Balt straightway descended the tree. "We can captivate those chaps complete, I tell ye, if they only move a little further down stream, where yon woody mound shoulders the current. I know the ground here all to pieces. Those maples, whose round tops are just now slicked up by the moon, cover a thick undergrowth that will conceal us in creeping along

the shore, and we can cut off the Injuns from the fort as soon as they turn the pint."

"Ay, but how do you know they will turn the point?" said Greyslaer, who, standing upon a rock round which the runnel gurgled, looked down the defile through which it travelled to the river, and caught a glimpse of the moonlit landscape below.

"Leave that to me, if chance don't fix it," replied the woodsman; "and now, Squire Dirk, as you command here to-night, jist let old Balt order the position of all of us before we move farther."

"If you know the ground, as you say you do, Balt, you are the proper person to guide us in our operations. I give you full power to act, if you will only secure me a chance of trying my yæger upon the miscreants."

"Well, well, that shall be cared for, only don't be too headysome, or you'll spile all. I want to take the Redskins alive, and get some tidings about Miss Alida; and, if one be a chief, we may exchange him. We must divide into three parties to make sure of our object; I want five of our stoutest men to creep with me to the water's side, to the bend south of the mound, where we must secure the canoe-men, if anywhere. You, squire, must throw yourself, with the strength of the party, to the north side, so as to cut off the Injuns from the fort with your rifles if they escape from our hands and attempt to return to it. Capting, I'm sorry I cannot give you more lively work at the outset; but, if the thing comes to a fight, you will have a sodger's share of it where I'm going to place you. We must trust to your spunk and headwork in getting us out of the scrape if my plan fails; and you must take a position, with half a dozen men, where you can see what's going on, and bring us off safely if the worst come to the worst; and if the fire of Squire

Dirk's party draws a sally from the fort, we shall see hot work, I tell ye. There's a ledge of bald rock to the left yonder, that puts out from the ridge we are on, about a hundred yards from this. That cliff commands the whole valley below, and there is a deer runway leading up from the water-side to its base. That way lies our retreat. A half hour hence the moon will touch the cliff, whose edge is still in deep shadow from the hemlock thicket that covers it; so you must gain it at onçt, and lie there close as a hunted opossum to a gray log. If we are pursued, you, capting, know as well as I do what follows; we'll—"

"You will lure the chase to the base of the rock, make a detour to my rear, and leave me to deal with the rascals in front. Exactly, Balt; I comprehend your plan completely; and its details are worthy of a veteran partisan."

"I don't know what sort of a chap that may be; but if it mean an old bushfighter, there's no man in all Tryon county, not even Red Wolfert himself, but must knock under to old Balt in expayrience." And, with this harmless ebullition of vanity on the part of the woodsman, the council of war was broken up. The party was divided agreeably to his suggestions, and the three bands immediately afterward separated, and sped with silent haste to their different destinations. Greyslaer, having but a short distance to move with his handful of followers, soon gained the position indicated by Balt; and throwing himself upon the ground, with his feet hanging over the rocky ledge, he cast a thoughtful eye over the sleeping landscape below.

The moon was in her last quarter, but the atmosphere was so clear that her waning beams lighted up the scene with a splendour that is rarely witnessed in other climes. The Sacondaga, which

near this region, at the present day, winds through green meadows grazed by a thousand cattle, was, at the time of which we write, thickly wooded along its banks. The luxuriant foliage of primeval forests impended in billowy masses over the devious water, which only showed to view in shining intervals, like the broken links of a silver chain. A few cleared acres only, around the Indian stockade, let the moonlight down more broadly upon the stream, where the burned and blackened stumps stood grimly marshalled along the water's edge, like the dwarfish opponents of the girdled trees, whose tall, stark stems, and jagged and verdureless array, bounded the opposite sides of the clearing. The stockade itself lay a deformed and shapeless mass of logs in the midst of this desolate area; and the eyes of Greyslaer, as he watched the twinkling lights which ever and anon revealed the floating canoe upon the river, reverted continually to this sullen den, in which he thought Alida was immured. He imaged to himself the lady of his love as looking out with the cheerless spirit of a captive upon the few dreary acres of the Indian clearing, which could alone meet her eye from her forest-walled prison-yard; he thought of her love of nature and exquisite taste in rural refinement, as seeking vainly for solace in that circumscribed, uncouth, and mutilated landscape; and then he thought—so idly does the mind wander in such a mood—he thought, reverting to the white man's "improvements," characterized by similar features to those of the scene before him, he thought whether utility could not in any way work out her ends, by some less unsightly and devastating process than the ordinary one of clearing a new country.

"And must the prodigal soul of man, too," said he, mentally, "must the primal freshness of all

things earthly be thus wastefully converted to their final ends? Must the soil of virgin nature be thus encumbered with the wreck of its beauty, thus enriched with its own blasted luxuriance, turning again to earth, ere it gather strength to bear things that are truly precious? Must the wild heart of youth, redolent of hope and high affections, moving with each generous impulse like this plumy forest to the breeze, must it also give up its first noble, natural growth of feelings, and become barren and desolate, like yon blackened clearing, before, like that, it can bear fruits fit for the best purposes of social being? * * * The wild Indian, too! Is he subject to the same mysterious law, or has Nature a different dispensation for her own immediate children? Doth *age* alone ripen his mind, and by gradual and kindly means steal from him the pledges of life's morning promise, and lead him to an inviting grave with youth, all glorious, eternal youth, still glowing beyond its portals? or doth he too, like us, grow old before his time, with faculties quickened by suffering and matured by pain? Doth he, bewildered by conflicting passions like ours, and misled by stumbling reason, chase the phantom Hope where'er she leads? or doth rather a narrow but subtle instinct deter him from the vain pursuit, or guide him with unerring finger to fruition?"

"But what boots this vain dreaming?" cried he, interrupting himself impatiently, as a cloud, at that moment obscuring the moon, snatched the scene which had awakened these reflections from his view. "What matters it that our scheme of existence should be as vain and uncertain as the landscape that but now glimmered below me, when death, like yon cloud, may come at any moment and obscure it for ever!"

As the last thought passed through the mind of

Greyslaer, and even before language could have given it shape and utterance, it seemed as if the chilling image of death had but presented itself as the precursor of the reality. A sharp, stunning blow, that came with such force, glancing along his ribs, as to turn his body completely round, drew a sudden exclamation of pain and surprise from him. "Hah! God of Heaven, what's that!" he cried, clapping his hand to the wound as he rolled over upon the rock, struggling to gain his feet. But the effort was vain. He became dizzy on the moment. He tried to shout to his comrades, but the voice seemed drowned in other sounds. A fearful yell, that rung confusedly in his ears, like the spirit call from another world, swallowed up the feeble cry. But still he seemed not dead, for a strange sensation, like that of falling into a fathomless depth, yet called out the exercise of volition. His hands groped about as if clutching at something to hold on by, and then he lay in utter unconsciousness, with the cold moonlight streaming on his motionless form.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HUNTERS' AMBUSCADE.

"Again upon the grass they droop,
When burst the well-known whoop on whoop;
And bounding from the ambush'd gloom,
Like wolves the savage warriors come."

STREET.

THE plans of the hunter Balt, when he was permitted to arrange the movements of his party for the night, were well laid in every respect save one; the omission, on the part of De Roos and his forest counsellor, to keep up a communication with Greyslaer, either by messengers or signals, to be available in case they met with any obstacle to the consummation of their design. The unfortunate issue of the ambuscade was mainly attributable to this oversight. "The attempt," they argued, "must either be fully successful, when we shall rejoin our comrades without molestation, or, if we are interrupted by a sally from the fort or other untoward occurrence, the report of our firearms will soon show Greyslaer how things are going." In guerilla warfare, however, so much often depends upon an instantaneous change of the mode in which you would effect your design when carrying any given piece of stratagie into execution, that the most perfect concert of action should be observed if you would avail yourself of their flexile councils without endangering your brother partisans.

The two parties, led severally by Balt and De Roos, gaining the bottom of the hill upon which

they had left the ill-starred Greyslaer, separated near the base of the promontory before described, and betook themselves to their appointed stations. De Roos posted himself, with his men, in a swamp that fringed a little bay a few hundred yards below the Indian stockade, from which it was divided by the river, which was here about a rifle-shot in breadth. The promontory extended out into the stream upon his right, and the canoe, which was the object of attack, was just turning this headland as he reached his position, and might be said to be thus already cut off from the fort had he dared to fire upon her. But Balt, who gained the shore, amid tangled vines and thickets of elder, upon the lower side of the promontory, awaited there his opportunity to seize the fishermen in a more peaceable manner.

Placing his followers in a copse near the mouth of the brook already mentioned, he proceeded cautiously to a clump of chestnuts near, and selecting one fit for his purpose, he cut off a stick about two feet in length from a green sapling, and, after rolling it between his palms for a few moments, succeeded in drawing out the woody part from its bark casing, forming thus from the latter a hollow tube, which might answer the purpose of a speaking-trumpet. Placing one end of this to his mouth, and bending his body so as to bring the other within an inch of the ground, and partly to smother the sound he intended to produce from the instrument, he drew from it a deep discordant noise, not unlike the distant roaring of a bull. The call almost immediately brought a reply, both from the hill-side and from the water. From the hills it came back in a wild bellowing, that was evidently that of a real animal answering a beast of its own kind. Upon the water it was replied to by the Indians, who, equally deceived by sounds that seemed to indicate their vicinity to a

moose-deer buck, or bull moose as our hunters call it, attempted, by putting their closed fists to their mouths, to mimic the cry and lure the animal to the water-side, where the torches in the bow of the shallop would enable them to fix the buck at gaze, and to approach sufficiently near to destroy him with their fishing-spears.

Guiding their birchen vessel now into an eddy of the stream by a scarcely perceptible motion of the paddle, they approached with care the spot where Balt and his comrades lay. But the next moment, exchanging some words with each other in a low tone, which made them inaudible to those on shore, the steersman gave a flirt of his paddle, and the light bark swung round again to the centre of the stream. Here the Indians paused, as if listening intently; and the wary Balt, fearing, now that their attention was fully awakened, to repeat the same lure, which might fail to deceive them when so near, resorted to another less easy of detection.

He took a cup from his hunting-pouch, and, stooping down to the brook, dipped up the water and let it fall again into the current, to imitate the plashing footsteps of an animal stalking along the bed of the stream. The Indians had drawn out toward the channel of the river, in order to give the supposed moose a wide berth between themselves and the shore, where, as he waded out to lave his flanks, according to the custom of the animal at this season, they would hold him to advantage in the deep water. But as the plashing sounds which they had just heard grew fainter, as if the moose were retiring from the river side, they abandoned this expectation, and, mimicking his bellowing cry once more, they gave the canoe a direction toward the cove, and glided silently into the mouth of the brook. Their glaring torches shone double upon its shallow

and pebbly bottom, and lighted up the overhanging thicket with a ruddy glare.

"Captur, but slay not!" cried Balt, leaping into the frail shallop with a force that drove his feet through the flimsy bottom and anchored it to the spot, at the same moment that an Indian in the bow was vainly attempting, with his long spear, to push back into the parent stream. A blow from the hatchet of the woodsman snapped the shaft, leaving the barbed end quivering in the bank, and the other a harmless weapon in the hands of the Indian, who was instantly secured by his opponent. Not so, however, with his two comrades; one of those, who held the steering-paddle, threw himself backward over the stern, floundered with mad desperation through the shallow water, and, diving like a duck the moment he attained that deep enough for swimming, struck out for the opposite side of the river, which he gained in safety. The remaining Indian was not less successful in his attempt to escape. This man, a warrior of powerful frame and great prowess, deeming himself surrounded, leaped from the canoe at the first alarm, and charged into the midst of his enemies; grasping his fishing-spear by the middle, so as, at the same time, to protect his person and prevent the long shaft from becoming entangled in the underwood, he levelled a yeoman with a blow from either end at the first onset, and, seizing a rifle from one of the men as they fell, bounded off, unharmed, into the forest.

"Old Josey himself, by the Etarnal! there's no Injun breathing but he could have done that," cried Balt; "we have let the head-devil of them all, boys, slip through our fingers, and we shall have the hull kennel of hell-hounds let loose upon us in an instant. We must lose no time in crossing from these parts, or our scalps will fly off like thistle-down; we must

make a divarsion, too, or we'll lose our prisoner." And, binding the hands of his only captive with a tendril of grapevine, the hunter hastily consigned him to the care of his comrades, and told them to move down along the banks of the river as rapidly as possible, without attempting to regain the place first designated as a rendezvous. With these hurried directions, Balt sprang forward to give in person the necessary warning to De Roos, whom he met midway, hurrying with his men to join him.

"Turn, Balt, turn, or the dogs will be on our trail in a moment; I've seen a dripping savage emerge like a musquash from the water on the opposite side, where a dozen canoes are drawn up before the station, and we must put the rapids between them and our party as quickly as possible."

"What, risk our only prisoner, squire? when I've sent my men that way with him, hoping that we could lead off the pursuit toward the cliff, where the capting awaits us."

"It will never do," said De Roos, still keeping his party in motion; "Greyslaer will get sufficient warning to retire in time, seeing the movements around the fort; and as for our joining him, it is too late. My men have already seen one armed Indian skulking between them and the hill, and we may be at this moment surrounded by a hundred."

As these words passed hurriedly between the commander of the expedition and his unlucky adviser, Balt, who had for the moment allowed his course to be turned, and himself borne along with the rapid march of his comrades, stopped short, exclaiming, "On, then; on, Squire Dirk; you may have changed our plans for the better, and the capting, mayhap, would consider your retreat sodger-like, seeing so many lives are at stake; but I cannot leave him

to take his chance of first hearing of it from the Injuns themselves."

With these words, only the first of which were heard by De Roos, Balt broke away from his comrades, and ran back until he reached the brook which the retreating party had crossed a few moments before; turning then, and following up its current as the readiest highway that offered, amid the heavy forests through whose glooms its course occasionally made an opening toward the moonlit sky.

"Tarnal crittur! she's hid her vixen face," he exclaimed, as, looking upward through one of these openings, he saw that the planet was obscured. "Shine out, old lily-white, shine out, for shame, upon the Redskins, or they'll cross the river and be upon the capting afore I can stir his kiver."

The prayer of the woodsman was quickly answered. The moon, indeed, shone out but too soon, for the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by the war-whoop, and answered by a brief and irregular discharge of firearms, showed that her reappearance, instead of being the harbinger of safety, had been but the signal for onslaught. Rushing forward, the hunter gained the top of the hilly ridge whereon he had left Greyslaer, and was moving with hasty but cautious steps toward the shelf of rocks where that luckless officer had taken post with his party.

"The capting, the capting, what have ye done with the capting?" cried Balt, as he met Greyslaer's men in full flight from the spot.

"Run, Balt; for your life, run; it is all up with Captain Max! a rifle from the woods, below the cliff, picked him off the very moment the moon got high enough to bring his body out of shadow. The woods are alive with Redskins, and our legs must save us now if we would live to avenge him."

An incessant whooping, that each moment came

nearer and nearer, seemed to prove the truth of what the man said; and with a light heel but a heavy heart, the sorrowing woodsman turned and fled with the rest; muttering imprecations on himself the while for having left for a moment, amid such scenes, his commander, friend, and protegé.

De Roos, in the mean time, hurrying along with his prisoner, followed the course of the Sacondaga, which here runs in a northeast direction for a few miles, and then, leaving it abruptly, struck due south, making for the nearest settlements upon the Mohawk. The approach of morning found his party in the neighbourhood of Galway; and crossing the highway, or trail as it might rather be called at that day, between Saratoga and Johnstown, he made a sweep to the south of the latter place, and, striking due west, passed Stone Arabia, famous afterward for the gallant fight and subsequent slaughter of the brave Colonel Brown and his regiment, reached the Mohawk at Keeder's Rifts, equally noted in the border-story of after years. The retreat, considering that De Roos had not only to escape from his Indian foes in the first instance, but that he carried his prisoner through a district, the great portion of whose scattered inhabitants were as yet either lukewarm patriots or zealous adherents of the Johnson party, was creditable to his address as a partisan.

Worn down with fatigue and long watching, Derrick and his companions were rejoiced to find shelter and refreshment in the hospitable mansion of Major Jelles Fonda, a faithful officer and confidential friend of the father of Sir John Johnson, but who, having now sided with the patriot party, was exposed to the vengeance of the royalists, which was afterward so terribly wreaked upon his household by the devastating hand of the stern and inexorable son of his friend.

The Mohawk captive, during the route, had borne himself with dogged indifference to his fate, obstinately refusing to answer any of the questions with which De Roos, who spoke his language, plied him, whenever occasion offered, during a brief halt of his party. Refreshments were now placed before him, but he refused to partake of them, replying only to the repeated invitations of his captors by glancing, with a look of mute indignation, from their faces to the bonds by which his right arm was still pinioned, the left having been temporarily released to enable him to feed himself. This silent appeal, however, produced no effect upon his wary captors.

"If the scoundrel is too proud to help himself with one hand, let us see if fasting wo'n't bring humility with it," said one.

"The cunning cat! he only wants to get his claws free to use them," cried another; "but he can't come the mouser over us with his mock dignity."

De Roos, who had been looking at the accommodations of his party for the night, at this moment entered the room, and ordered a guard of three men to repair with the prisoner to the kitchen, which was assigned them as their quarters. He at the same time handed the Indian a blanket, wherewith one of the females of the family had provided him, and, for the first time since his capture, a gleam of pleasure shot athwart the dusky features of the Mohawk as he stretched out his left hand to receive the boon. Indeed, he folded it about his person with as much care as if he took pride as well as comfort in his new acquisition; nor had he completely adjusted its folds to his satisfaction, before a corner of his new mantle had more than once swept the edge of the table, as he brushed along its sides, while making his way out of the apartment.

The kitchen was not entirely vacant when the

prisoner and his guard reached their quarters. For, besides several negro slaves, which at that time formed an essential part of the household of every opulent farmer in the country, there sat in the chimney-corner a shabby-looking wayfarer, who, in those days of infrequent inns and open hospitality, had been allowed a stall for his horse and a shelter for himself during the night.

The dress of this man, which was a sort of greasy doublet, or fustian shooting-jacket, of dingy olive, with breeches of the same; shoes without buckles, and a broad-leaved chip hat, having a broken pipe stuck beneath the band, marked him sufficiently as belonging to the lower order of society. For, while among our wise fathers a man's apparel was always thought more or less to indicate his social position, a traveller's especially, who presumed to take the saddle without being either booted or spurred, would be set down as near akin to a beggar, who had his horse only for some chance hour. Some, however, beneath the neglected beard and generally sordid appearance of this wayfaring horseman, might have detected features which, if not those of a true cavalier, belonged at least to the class which was then generally supposed exclusively to furnish such a character. The man's look was sinister, if not decidedly bad; but there was a degree of haughtiness mingled with his duplicity of expression, and the intelligent and assured air of his countenance was far above the rank which his coarse habiliments would indicate. He started as the Indian entered the apartment; and as the name "Au-neh-yesh!" escaped his lips, the emotion seemed for the instant to be sympathetic with the prisoner. It was so slight, however, upon the part of the Mohawk as not to attract observation. He moved at once toward the kitchen fire, and, though it was a sum-

mer's night, threw himself on the floor with his feet toward the ashes, and, covering up his head in his blanket, seemed soon to be forgetting the cares of captivity in soothing slumber.

Two of the men to whose custody the prisoner had been consigned soon afterward imitated his example, and stretched themselves upon a flock-bed in a corner of the apartment, while the third paced up and down the room, to keep himself awake while acting as sentinel over the prisoner. The slaves, with the exception of a single old negro, had all slunk away, one could hardly tell how; and this worthy, with the sinister-looking traveller, were left as the only waking companions of the sentinel. The traveller, too, at last, after ruminating in a drowsy fashion for some time, expressed his intention of seeking a bed in the haymow, and, procuring a stable-lantern from the negro to look after his horse in the first instance, withdrew from the apartment. In passing through the door, he fixed his eyes earnestly upon the sleeping Indian, and his face being thus averted from the passage-way, he stumbled awkwardly, so as to make his tin lantern clang against the lintel so sharply as to startle both the sentry and his prisoner, though the slight movement which the latter made beneath his blanket was not observed by the soldier, who turned to close the door behind the retreating traveller.

"What tink you of dat trabeller-man, massa?" said the old negro, with a knowing look, as soon as he heard the outer door closed after the other.

"Think of him? why I don't think of him at all, Cuff; that sleeping hound by the fire is enough for me to trouble myself about, after trampoosing for twenty-four hours on a stretch, with not even a loon's nap at the eend of it."

"Trabeller-man hab mighty fine hoss, massa!

Him look as like as two peas to de hoss dat Wolf Valtmeyer bought last week for Massa Bradshawe, and drew to here, mighty like dat same hoss, massa."

"Well, what of that? you don't take the chap for a horse-thief, do you? He's more like some travelling cobbler, that's going his circuit through the settlements."

"He be bery like a cobbler, certing," said the complaisant negro; and then, after musing a few moments, added, "He be bery like lawyer Wat Bradshawe too, massa."

"I never saw that rip, Cuff, though, if the traveller has heard as much of him as I have, he wouldn't be beholden to you for discovering the likeness."

"Lawyer Wat has shaked hands wid de debbil, certing!" said the negro, shaking his head mysteriously.

"Why do you say that, Cuff?"

"'Cause he no fear de debbil."

"Why, what the devil do you know about him, you old curmudgeon?"

"Hab not old black Violet told me of his doings long ago, when he was but a boy? Let Cuff alone to find out de secret; he know all about Massa Bradshawe, and he know how to keep de secret too."

"Now, Cuff," said the soldier, stopping short in the middle of the room, "you see that Injun there! Well, he's a raal Injun juggler, and, unless you tell me instantly your secret, as you call it, I'll stir up that fellow with the butt end of my rifle, and he shall fill this room with fiery sarpents in a moment."

The poor superstitious negro recoiled with horror at this alarming threat. He had all the awe of his race for the red man, who, having never been reduced to subservience by the white, is regarded by the docile African partly as a wayward,

wicked, and disobedient child, who refuses to be guided by those who have a natural right to authority, and partly as a hybrid, heathenish mortal, in whose paternity the devil has so large a share that the Indian is unfitted to take a part in the ordinary lot of mankind.

"Why you see, massa," said he, beginning at once, with trembling lips, to tell his story, "it was when old Dinah, the black witch, that perhaps you have heerd tell on, was living. She used sometimes, of a winter's night, to be let in at de house of Massa Walter's papa, where she slept by de kitchen fire, but always went up de chimbley on a broomstick before de morning. Violet herself say—and Violet live at de house for many years—Violet say she often let Dinah in, but she nebber in her life see her go out, 'cept one morning, and den she went out a corpse; and she die wid pains and aches, oh horrible! so Violet say—"

"The devil take Violet; out with your story; what had Wat Bradshawe to do with the business?" cried the impatient soldier, thinking matter might be forthcoming from this kitchen gossip that would reward him by adding something worth repeating to the many strange stories that were told of Bradshawe throughout the country.

"What Massa Walter do?" exclaimed the negro, lowering his voice; "why, who but he dat kill de old woman! Massa Wat, he watch Dinah go up de chimbley, he see dat de black witch always slip off her skin, and hang it up behind de pantry-door before she go up. So he watch him chance, like a mad boy he was; he go to de dresser, take de casters, put pepper, mustard, and plenty salt on de skin; him chuckle, laugh, say 'he make de *debbil* ob de old woman.' Well, de witch come back, slip into her skin, she kick, she holler, she

fall down in fit, and so she die, and dat de end ob Missy Dinah."

"Why—you—tar—nal—old—black—fool!" said the soldier, with a ludicrously indignant expression of baffled curiosity. "You—you—you jackass—you. I've more than a mind to stir up this Injun juggler, to show what raal deviltry is, Cuff, for making me listen to such heathen stuff as that."

As the soldier spoke, he advanced so near to the sleeping Mohawk as to strike him with his foot while heedlessly throwing it out to annoy the apprehensive negro. He had better have alarmed a coiled rattlesnake. For a knife, as deadly as the fangs of a serpent, was the next moment plunged in his bosom as the captive leaped upon him. A window was thrown wide open by some unseen hand in the same moment. The negro stood speechless with horror; and, before the slumbering comrades of the unfortunate sentinel could rouse to avenge him, his scalp was filched from his head by the carving-knife which the Indian had secured beneath his blanket while brushing past the supper-table. He shook his gory trophy in the affrighted eyes of his half-awakened foemen, and bounded like a deer through the window.

In the morning there were no traces to be found either of the young savage or the suspicious-looking itinerant.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INDIAN LEECH.

"Thus error's monstrous shapes from earth are driven;
They fade, they fly—but truth survives their flight;
Earth has no shades to quench that beam of heaven;
Each ray that shone, in early time, to light
The faltering footsteps in the path of right,
Each gleam of clearer brightness, shed to aid
In man's maturer day his bolder sight,
All blended, like the rainbow's radiant braid,
Pour yet, and still shall pour, the blaze that cannot fade."

BRYANT.

THE wound of Greyslaer had been given precisely in the manner described by the panic-struck fugitive, though both he and De Roos were mistaken in thinking that their party was surrounded. A large body of Indians had indeed crossed the river, under the shelter of the cape or headland, during the few moments that the moon was obscured; but this was after De Roos was in full retreat: and the "skulking savage" who had so alarmed his followers, as well as the sharpshooter who had subsequently picked off Greyslaer, and struck a panic into his party in turn, was no other than the single desperado who had so gallantly achieved his escape from the canoe. This formidable warrior—for, as Balt surmised, it was no other than "old Josey," or Thayendanagea himself—was aided by fortune, not less than by his own address, in escaping the perils of the night. Foiling by his prowess the ambushed foes that attempted to seize him, he had, in the first instance, after breaking from their hands, struck directly across the neck of the promontory

as the shortest way to the station. He had nearly gained the little bay on this side, where he would take the water to swim to the opposite shore, when, discovering the position of De Roos's band by hearing some of the outlyers whispering together, he made a detour to turn their flank. The gleam of his rifle soon after betrayed his vicinity to them, as was indicated by a movement of alarm among them; and, perceiving that he was observed, he widened his circuit by striking inland toward the hill. This route brought him immediately beneath the projecting ledge whereon Greyslaer was reclining. Deeming himself now surrounded by foes, the chieftain thought that it only remained for him to fight his way through them as best he might; and when the moon, after being a few moments obscured by a cloud, shone out, bringing the form of Greyslaer above him in clear relief against the sky, Brant discharged his piece and raised the war-whoop. His fire was returned with a volley from the bushes, where the whites lay within a few yards of their officer; but their shot were thrown away, for the darkness that reigned below the cliff prevented them from taking aim at their unseen assailant. The single war-whoop of Brant was the next moment echoed back by a tumultuous yell from the nearer side of the river, and the dismayed borderers, hearing no order from their insensible leader, concluded that he was slain, and sought their own safety in instant flight.

The darkness of the woods rendered pursuit ineffectual. The forest rung for a while with the impatient yells of an Indian chase, and then, before an hour had passed away, the lonely whoop of some solitary savage, hailing his comrades after a reluctant and disappointed return, was all that met the ear These last sounds, had Greyslaer had suffi-

cient consciousness to comprehend them, would have told him of the safety of his friends, however precarious might be his own. The wounded officer, upon reviving from his swoon, found himself stretched upon a pile of skins in an Indian wigwam, with a noble-looking Mohawk, a man of majestic figure and commanding aspect, standing near, with eyes bent keenly upon his own. Greyslaer made a movement as if to lift one of his hands, and was about to speak, but the Medicine-man—for such the Indian seemed by the talisman which he wore around his neck, as well as other emblems and equipments of the aboriginal leech, or conjuror's trade, that marked his appearance—motioned the youth to remain silent and quiet. The sage then, baring the wound by stripping off some moss or lichen with which the blood had been temporarily stanched, proceeded to dress it. This he did, with the assistance of a withered old squaw, who stood by, holding the various preparations in her hands, while ever and anon she bowed reverently to the muttered charm of the operator. When this part of his medical treatment was carefully completed, the magician administered a draught with the same solemn and superstitious ceremonial; and his patient soon after slept.

The slumbers of Greyslaer must have been long and refreshing, for he found himself so much revived upon awaking as to feel a disposition to rise. But upon the first indication of such an intention, his ears were saluted by a shrill and discordant cry from the old squaw, who sat crouched among the ashes, watching a brazen kettle, into which from time to time she cast certain roots and herbs, muttering some gibberish to herself the while. Her call was answered from without by a gruff "umph," as of some voice chiding her shrewish cry; and

straightway the mat which formed the only door of the lodge was raised, and the benignant features of the Medicine-man were seen at the entrance. He advanced to the couch of Greyslaer, and placing his hand upon the forehead of his patient, while he gazed upon him thoughtfully for some moments, seemed to be at length thoroughly satisfied with the results of his treatment thus far, for straightway he began to engage him in conversation, speaking English at the same time with an ease and fluency that astonished the soldier-student.

"THE SPIRIT hath not yet need of thee in another land, young man. HE leaves thee here yet a while, to repent of thy wickedness in aiding to drive his red children from their country."

"*I* drive them? I love the Indians!" said Greyslaer, with spirit. "It is only those who make themselves the slaves of a foreign king, to aid in enchaining my countrymen. It is only the murderous Brant and his renegade crew upon whom I would make war."

"Darest thou, young man, speak thus of the great Thayendanagea? and yet it fits thy presumptuous years to pass in judgment upon the deeds of a sachem who hath sat in council with the wisest of thy race."

"The *great* Thayendanagea!" scornfully repeated Max. "A presumptuous half-breed! whose demi-barbarous vanity has been tickled by sharing in the mummery of European courts. A degenerate hound, that has exchanged the noble instincts of his forest training for the dainty tricks of a parlour-bred spaniel. *He* sit in council! the poor tool of profligate Tory partisans, who will use him to enslave his people when they have destroyed mine."

The eyes of the Medicine-man shot fire as Greyslaer, feverish perhaps from his wound, spoke

thus intemperately of Brant, whose doubtful Indian origin did not commend him to the romantic student, and whose clerkly employment as secretary of Guy Johnson had not raised him in the eyes of the aspiring young soldier; while recent events made Max regard him as a crafty, cruel, semi-civilized barbarian, who brought the name of "Mohawk" into abhorrence and contempt. Greyslaer had his eyes fixed upon the rafters above him while thus warmly and disdainfully inveighing against the captor of Alida, and he did not, therefore, observe the agitated movement with which the Medicine-man carried his hand to the knife which he wore in his girdle, though, from the excitement under which he spoke, it is doubtful if even such observation would have restrained his heated expressions.

The magician took two or three turns through the narrow apartment before he trusted himself to reply, which he did at last with calmness and dignity.

"Young man, you speak falsely, though probably unknowingly, in calling Joseph Brant a half-breed; and, were you not intrusted by him to my care, you should die on this ground for so vile a slander. Thayendanagea is a Mohawk of the full blood. And if any gainsay this truth, Brant, much as he holds your European usages to scorn, will—I take it upon myself to say—meet any rebel officer of his own rank in private quarrel, after the foolish fashion of the whites. For the rest—" and here a strange and undefinable expression of emotion passed over the swarthy features of the speaker, who seemed to hesitate for words to express his mingled feelings—"for the rest, the Sachem would, I know, forgive you for the love you seem to bear his race; and it may be true that he has done ill in linking the fortunes of his tribe with those of

either party of the whites. The carrion birds might have quarrelled over the carcass, but the eagle should never have stooped to share their wrangling, if he would soar with untainted plumage."

"Your tribesmen, noble Mohawk, if indeed you be an Indian," answered Greyslaer, touched by the proud yet feeling tone with which the last words were uttered, "your red brethren had indeed better keep aloof from us, alike in war or in peace, for they seem to acquire only the worst attributes of civilized life by attempting to mingle with us as one people: and their share in this struggle must—"

"Ay, you speak well, young man," interrupted the Indian, now wholly thrown off his dignified reserve of manner by what appeared to be a theme of great excitement with him; "if your vaunted civilization be not all a fraud, your perverted learning but a shallow substitute for the wisdom of the heart, your so-called social virtues but a loose covering for guile, like the frail thatch of leaves that hides the traps of an Indian hunter; if your religion be not a bitter satire upon the lives of all of ye; if, in a word, all your conflicting teachings and practices be indeed reconcilable to *Truth* and pleasing to THE SPIRIT, then hath he created Truth of as many colours as he hath man; and his red children should still rest content with the simple system which alone their hearts are fitted to understand."

Greyslaer was precisely at that age when most men of an imaginative cast of mind mistake musing for philosophizing, sentiment for religion; and with that ready confidence in the result of one's own reflections and mental experience which is the darling prerogative of youth and immaturity of thought, he did not hesitate to assume the attitude of a teacher in reply to the last remark of the Indian. "Truth,

noble Mohawk, hath ever been, will ever be the same. But the truths of the other world, as well as of this, are often wrapped in mystery. God has, in two dispensations of light from above, revealed to mortals so much of his holy truth as the human mind was fitted to receive.

"The first revelation was like a dawn in the forest, where the young day shoots its horizontal rays beneath the dusky canopy of tree-tops, and, glancing between the columned trunks, streams upon the path of the benighted wanderer of the wilderness. That matin-light—those holy rays of the virgin morn of true religion—I am willing to believe, illumined the lake-girdled mountains of the Iroquois hunter as well as the cedar-crowned hills of the Hebrew shepherd. It shone alike, perhaps, upon the pathway of either, if indeed they were not one and the same people. But the realm of glory to which that pathway led; the snares that beset it; the solace and refreshment that lay within reach of the traveller, alternating his perils, these it required a second revelation to bring to light; when the sun of righteousness, fairly uprisen, should throw the blaze of noontide into that forest, revealing now, in stern reality, its yawning caverns, its precipices and pitfalls; now touching with mellow beauty its mossy resting-places, or sparkling with cheerful radiance upon its refreshing wayside-waters; and now bathing with glorious effulgence the region beyond the wilderness, where lay the final rest and reward of the wanderer. The good men of my race, therefore, preach not a new Truth to the Indian! they seek but to share with him that broader light which has been vouchsafed to us regarding the same one Eternal Truth."

The Mohawk listened with an air of deep respect to the earnest language of the youth, but his

own feelings and prejudices were too deeply excited to permit the discussion long to preserve the abstract character which Greyslaer attempted to give it.

"I spoke not against the truths of Christianity," said he; "for they may have their sanctuary as well in the desert and the forest as in the city; I spoke not, I say, of the pure light of Christianity, which your mobbled faith no more resembles than do the stained and distorted rays that struggle through a dungeon's window resemble the beams of the noontide sun. The holy teachings of your Master come to us like those unwholesome airs which, travelling out pure and invigorating from the skies, are polluted and made pestiferous by traversing some noxious marsh before they reach the unfortunate mortal who is doomed to breathe them. It is your vaunted social system from which I recoil with loathing. Your so-called civilization is, in its very essence, a tyrant and enthraller of the soul; it merges the individual in the mass, and moulds him to the purposes, not of God, but of a community of men. It follows the guidance of true religion so far only as that ministers to its own ends, and then it turns and fashions anew its belief from time to time, to suit the 'improved' mechanism of its artificial system. In crowded Europe the evil is irremediable; for man the machine occupies less room than man the herdsman or hunter; but your mode of existence is not less a curse to ye—the white man's curse, which he would fain share with his red brother! But have I not seen how it works among you? Have I not been to your palaces and your churches, and seen there a deformed piece of earth assume airs that become none but the great Spirit above? Have I not been to your prisons, and seen the wretched debtor peering through the bars? You

call the Indian nations cruel! Yet liberty to a rational creature as much exceeds property in value as does the light of the sun that of the smallest twinkling star! But you put them on a level, to the everlasting disgrace of human nature. I have seen the white captive writhing at the Indian stake, and rending the air with shrieks of agony; strange that the unhappy man did not endeavour, by his fortitude, to atone in some degree for the crimes committed during the life thus justly shortened. I have witnessed all the hideous torments that you ascribe to such a death, and yet I had rather die by the most severe tortures ever inflicted by the Indian than languish in one of your prisons a single year! Great Spirit of the Universe! and do you call yourselves Christians? Does the religion of him you call your Saviour inspire this spirit and lead to these practices?"*

Greyslaer, who listened with curious attention to this strange harangue, as coming from the lips of an Indian, was completely bewildered by the fluency and energy with which the magician delivered his tirade, and he scrutinized his features and complexion, as if expecting to discover the lineaments of some disguised renegado white, who, with talents fitted for a better sphere, had, induced by caprice or compelled by crime, banished himself from society, and assumed the character of one of the aborigines. But the natural and easy manner in which the object of his suspicions turned the next moment and addressed the Indian woman in her own language, not less than the veneration with which the

* The crude sentiments of this "Medicine-man," as thus spoken, seem, by some coincidence or other, to have been afterward partially repeated by Thayendanagea, and in nearly similar words, in a letter to a correspondent of the chieftain.—*Vide Stone's Life of Brant*, vol. ii., p. 481.

squaw received his behests, dispelled the idea, while little opportunity was given him for making a more minute examination. The Medicine-man, smiling blandly, as if he read what was passing in the mind of his patient, approached to his side, and telling him that he was now about to consign him to the care of others, asked Greyslaer, as the only return expected for any service he might have rendered him, to curb his tongue hereafter in speaking of Joseph Brant!

Before the patriot officer could reply, the magician had turned upon his heel and gained the door; but, as if struck with an after thought, he instantly returned, and, ere Greyslaer was aware of his intention, he had bared his arm to the shoulder, produced a stained flint from his pouch, and branded an uncouth device, that made the skin smart with pain as the blood oozed through.

"He who loves the Red-man may die by rifle or tomahawk, but he will never be disgraced by the scalping-knife or tortured at the stake if he shows this mark to the followers of Thayendanagea!"

And, before Greyslaer could find language to express his astonishment, either at the act or the words which accompanied it, he was alone with the old woman, who busied herself in reverentially picking up and putting away the mumming tools of his profession which the pseudo magician had flung upon the ground as he disappeared through the door.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SQUAW CAMP.

"A swampy lair, walled round with sullen hills,
Whose jagged rocks upheaved their splintered crests,
Frowning above the fray of wrestling limbs below;
A wild morass, whose tangled thickets hid
The blessed sunshine from its oozy pools,
Save where some grassy tussock, cinctured by a rill,
O'er which the fragrant birch and spicewood drooped,
Let down the quivering light upon its floor."

MS. Poems.

THE above lines describe, not inaptly, the scene to which the wounded prisoner had been carried for safety and seclusion. The lodge in which Greyslaer lay helpless upon the bed of pain, stood, among several others in the wilderness, remote from the station where the warriors of the Mohawks were collected; and, from the pleasant murmur of female voices, and cheering call of children at play, which met his ear when returning strength enabled the wounded officer to be more observant of things around him, he soon became aware that his present domicil must be none other than the "Squaw Camp" of Thayendanagea; a lonely fastness where, in time of war, the women and children of his tribe were sequestered for safety.

Eager to catch at anything to vary the monotony of slow convalescence, and prompted by that thirst for sunshine and the breeze which gives such a yearning to the sick man's spirit, Greyslaer would fain have expressed his desire to be lifted out in front of the lodge. But, ignorant of the Mohawk language, he found some difficulty in making the

old squaw, who, as his only nurse, affected to regulate all his movements, understand his wishes. Her consent to the step, however, was obtained without any great difficulty, and she transported the invalid beyond the porch by dragging his pallet of skins, with the patient upon it, to the outside of the wigwam.

A rivulet, bounded upon the opposite side by a wall of vines and briers, which in their turn were overhung by tall aspens, intermingled with the swamp-ash and dusky tamarack, rippled against the mossy bank whereon he lay, and hid its wanderings in mazy thickets beyond. The hammock whereon the cluster of wigwams which formed the camp had been raised, seemed to afford the only spot firm enough for such a purpose amid the spongy and quaking morass that spread around on every side. And this grassy esplanade was so limited in extent, that a clump of witch-elms growing in the centre cast their drooping branches nearly to the middle of the stream that bathed the wild flowers on its edges.

Beneath one of these trees was collected a group that instantly arrested the earnest gaze of the captive officer. A merry crew of children, which seemed to have been confided to her care, were playing with a large, solemn hound that reposed at the feet of a slim Indian girl. The girl, leaning against the tree, with one pretty foot upraised upon its straggling roots, sat weaving a baldric of silk and wampum, whose gaudy strings lay partly on the green sod beside her, and were partly held in long beaded cords by a noble-looking woman that stood behind her, playfully twining the gay tassels in the raven locks of her companion. The face of the larger and more commanding maiden was averted from his gaze when her person first caught the eye of Greyslaer; but her snowy hand, resting for a moment

upon the nut-brown neck of the Indian girl, sufficiently revealed to him the neighbourhood of one of his own race and colour; perhaps a countrywoman; perhaps, indeed—he could scarcely repress a cry of joy at the thought of the bare possibility—perhaps Alida! The proud and commanding mien—proud, even though something mournful in her air was blended with the half sportive act in which she was engaged—was surely that of Alida. The same dejection or listlessness of manner, call it which you will, it was true, might characterize any female captive so situated; but the scenes which Miss De Roos had recently passed through would best mark her as the victim of present melancholy.

So Greyslaer thought, and his surmises were almost ripened to a certainty when he looked again at the hound. He thought he beheld in him the cause of an outcry which had been more than once raised near his cabin, as the shrewish squaw beat off a dog that from day to day persisted in thrusting his nose under the blanket which formed the door, and smelling round as if in search of an acquaintance. The invalid had himself noticed the intrusion as pertinacious, but believed the offender to be merely one of the wolfish mongrels that hang round an Indian camp. It was like recognising an old friend to discover his mistake. "Brom!" he called, in a low voice; the hound raised his ears. "Brom!" he repeated, in the same suppressed tone. The dog shook off the urchins that beleaguered him as he sprang to his feet and looked anxiously around. "Brom, my poor fellow!" said Greyslaer, somewhat louder, and the hound bounded upon him, devouring him with caresses.

"Down, sir, down," he cried, extricating himself with difficulty from this overpowering outbreak of affection, and turning to look for the fair mistress of

the animal. But Alida, if it were indeed she, had disappeared on the instant; and the Indian girl, collecting her work together, was preparing to follow her companion.

The wounded Greyslaer, whose situation prevented his moving, was filled with grief and vexation when, unheeding every gesture by which he attempted to arrest her attention, the Indian girl also flitted from the spot. He sank back, exhausted with agitation, upon his couch of skins; and believing almost that his fevered senses had deceived him, turned the next moment to look for the dog, to see if he too had been spirited away. The hound had couched down a few yards off, where he sat watching his new-found acquaintance. He wagged his tail, and approaching as he caught an encouraging look from Greyslaer, proved, by rubbing his cold nose against the hand of his friend, that he at least was a substantial thing of earth.

"Why, old Brom, are you still true to your mistress's friend, while she flies his presence as if he were an evil spirit?"

The dog looked as if he had every disposition in the world to comprehend what was said to him, but, like most dogs who fail in such endeavour, gave no reply.

"But here comes my termagant nurse, and you must walk off, my poor fellow."

As the youth spoke he warded off a blow which the truculent dame aimed at the hound with a stick which she seized from the ground, and which Greyslaer, snatching from her hand, shook at her in a threatening manner, to show his displeasure, before casting it into the stream near him. The worthy Brom, meanwhile, either understanding the last words which had been addressed to him, or unwilling to create scandal by causing a domestic broil in

Greyslaer's establishment, wisely abstracted himself as fast as his legs could carry him. It is a curious fact, that a well-bred dog, who has been happy in his associations with the polite of our species, will never fly at a woman or child; and Brom, though he preferred running to fighting in the present instance, curled his tail so erect upon his retreat, that no suspicion could attach to his valour. Turning round when he had gained a discreet distance from the virago, he paused for a few moments, and looked back upon her with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger before taking up the lazy trot with which he finally disappeared behind a remote wigwam of the group.

The young officer was not at a loss to account for the conduct of the white lady in *apparently* avoiding him, if she were here a captive like himself. But, assuming her to be such, he could conceive no satisfactory reason for her discouraging every kind of communication between them. Yet such seemed really to be the case when, a few days after his first transient glimpse of her person, his eye again encountered her figure, as, with the luxurious laziness of an invalid, he loitered in the cool shade, musing upon his situation. His strength, which had rapidly improved within the last few days, enabled him now to move toward the lady; but the eager cry with which he pronounced the name of "Alida" warned her of his approach; and its earnest and anxious repetition only added quickness to the speed with which she eluded his pursuit.

The dispirited Greyslaer began now to doubt whether or not the fair captive, for such both the dress and complexion proclaimed her to be, were really Miss De Roos. And yet, while it would be equally strange for any other of his countrywomen to practise a similar avoidance, considering the situ-

ation of both parties, and how much a good understanding between them might tend to facilitate their mutual escape, the circumstances under which Alida had been carried off, and the presence of her favourite dog in company with the mysterious maiden, seemed sufficiently to prove that the white lady could be no other than Miss De Roos.

Another suspicion which passed through the mind of Greyslaer was hastily dismissed as unworthy both of Alida and himself, considering the perils which he had encountered to restore her to her friends. It was, that the coldness with which she had ever frowned upon his boyish suit actuated her conduct in their present situation. "She is unwilling," said he, bitterly, "to receive succour at my hands. Nay, she is indifferent to the disaster which has overtaken me in attempting to rescue her; and regardless, perhaps, as to what may be my fate as a wounded prisoner in the hands of these savages; and yet she lacks not humanity! Surely, am I less than naught to her?"

We have said that Greyslaer repelled these unworthy suspicions, and so he did, indignant that a thought demeaning to his mistress should have found a place in his mind, much less shaped itself into words. He repelled it, but in vain, for the same ungenerous thought recurred again and again, with withering effect upon his already depressed spirits.

Alas! what a blight does that thought bring over a young, ardent, ingenuous mind! The thought that it hath lavished its wealth of loving upon one who not only can make no return, but who cares not, recks not how prodigally the treasures of the heart may be wasted; who regards the most generous sacrifices of disinterested feeling as mere incense upon the altar of vanity; who derides the

idolatry of true affection, and holds the deepest throes of devoted passion but as idle sallies of youthful extravagance that have no claim upon her sympathy, that can never awaken her gratitude! Such, however, is too often the recompense of the misplaced affection that knows not how to conceal or regulate its own overflowings.

Ingratitude, however, is not, therefore, the special fault of the sex! It is human nature, not woman nature, which sets lightly by a homage which has never been solicited, and which is paid without stint! When that homage is pertinacious and unseasonable, it becomes irksome and offensive. The attentions of love that we do not reciprocate, however pleasing to our vanity at first, cease to flatter when passion increases to infatuation. The idolatry which springs from too extravagant an appreciation of our character or personal qualities, seems akin either to folly or madness, and we no longer value the good opinion which is the offspring rather of a heated fancy than of a judgment which we can respect.

But though these chilling laws of reasoning human nature admit of but little mitigation, yet Alida de Roos was of too magnanimous a spirit to apply them in full to one who loved her, if not wisely, yet with all truth and nobleness; and seeing in her youthful admirer all the qualities to awaken a sister's tenderness, she mourned his infatuation with a sister's sorrow. Love him she thought she never could, even if her heart had not been preoccupied by an emotion that closed it completely against such a sentiment. Her haughty and aspiring mind had hitherto detected no qualities in Greyslaer's character which could touch it to gentle issues. It was only as the refined but visionary student, the romantic cherisher of vain and speculative dreams,

such as float around a young enthusiast who knows the world through books alone, that Greyslaer had hitherto appeared to the lady of his love. The play of his polished fancy, the allurements of his cultivated intellect, had interested her in studying the character of a stripling who, some years her junior, and continually thrown in her society as the most intimate friend of her brother, did, not unnaturally, attract her kindly regard. But while, with less mental acquirement upon her own part, Alida perhaps over-estimated that of which Greyslaer could boast, yet her esteem for his talents and accomplishments was full as nearly allied to pity as to admiration. She admired the qualities in themselves, but she thought that their possessor, in this instance, was deficient in the power to make them useful either to himself or to others. She thought the character of Greyslaer was wholly unsuited to the country and the circumstances amid which his lot was cast. He possessed the requisites, among other scenes and other times, to grace a fortune or uphold an honourable name; but he lacked the stirring qualities to win either by his own exertions. He was, in a word, one whose impracticable, feeble, or misapplied energies doomed him to mediocrity in life; a mediocrity which, by the comfortable respectability that she believed would attend it, gained nothing in the eyes of a woman whom poverty or peril would never have prevented from sharing the destiny of the man she loved.

'Twas strange! yet the acute-minded Alida de Roos seemed never to dream that the wild devotion which the student bore her was what absorbed all the salient energies of his soul; that she was the bond that kept its pinions from mounting; that idolatry for her alone had robbed ambition's shrine of Greyslaer's worship; that love—love only—all-ab-

sorbing, all-devouring love, had delved the grave in which his youth's best promise was swallowed up!

The bitter reflections of the lonely prisoner were destined to a more early and agreeable relief than he had anticipated. An hour or more had passed away, and Greyslaer still sat beneath the weeping elm, now moodily gazing upon the stream that twinkled through the bushes near him, and now casting a fierce and impatient glance upon some lounging Indian, an aged or broken-down warrior of the band, who had been left by the chief for the nominal protection of the camp. At last an object of more agreeable interest presented itself in the shape of Brom, the stag-hound. Greyslaer had not seen the dog for some days; and surmising that the friendly animal had been kept out of his sight by design, he was at once struck with the peculiarity of his conduct now, as the hound, instead of bounding eagerly forward to fawn upon him, exhibited the coolest indifference to the call of his friend. The sagacious Brom went wandering hither and thither, smelling idly along the ground, and, though gradually coming nearer, making his approaches after such a careless fashion, that Greyslaer was in doubt whether the brute knew him or not. He whistled, and again called him by name; but the dog, raising his head, looked vacantly around him, and then resumed his course, without adding either to the rapidity or directness of his steps. At last, getting within a few yards of his friend, the worthy Brom appeared to be for the first time aware of his neighbourhood, though not until he had first passed by, and, as it seemed, thrown a chance look over his shoulder, which induced him to turn and come gravely forward, as not wishing to cut an old acquaintance by design. Amused with "the airs" of the dog—for in happier days Greyslaer

had frequently seen him put on the same whimsical dignity for less cause than might have given Brom offence at his last visit to the wigwam—the young man took the head of the hound in his lap and patted it kindly. Brom only acknowledged the caress by rubbing his head against the knees of his friend, as if his collar were too tight for him; and, placing his hand under the clasp to loosen it, Greyslaer felt beneath it a scroll of birchen bark, whose smooth and flexible texture allows it to be written upon and folded like paper. Agitated with joy at the discovery, the surprise of the youth did not, however, prevent him from instantly concealing the missive in his dress; while the wise Brom, apparently contented with the interview, went smelling and loitering on his way around the camp, as if his tour was one of idleness altogether.

The note, as read by Greyslaer the moment he had attained the interior of his lodge, from which his quondam nurse and present amiable housekeeper was happily absent, contained only these words, written with charcoal:

"An hour after midnight, be near the fallen sycamore which crosses the brook within a few paces of your wigwam. The Indian girl will conduct you to an interview with

"A. D. R."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAUNTED ROCK.

"And in the mountain mist, the torrent's spray,
The quivering forest or the glassy flood,
Soft-falling showers or hues of orient day,
They imaged spirits beautiful and good;
But when the tempest roared, with voices rude,
Or fierce red lightning fired the forest-pine,
Or withering heats untimely seared the wood,
The angry forms they saw of powers malign;
These they besought to spare, those blessed for aid divine." SANDS.

"AND what fears The Spreading Dew in this place, that she would have me now choose another for her to lead the white man to, that I may hear tidings of my friends?"

"This rock whereon we sit, lady—for Teondetha told me thou wert a chieftainess among thy people—this rock is sacred to the spirit that watches over true affection. Here the young hunter breathes the vow that binds his fidelity for ever. And she that hearkens to it here, if listening but from girlish levity, or induced by maiden prankishness to break it afterward, she withers from the earth like a plant plucked from the garden of the blessed, and sent to shrivel mid the fires of the Evil One."

"But, foolish girl, I mean not to mislead this youth," rejoined Alida, in the Mohawk tongue, which, like many a lady near the border at that time, she spoke with ease and fluency. "Is the soul of my young friend so full of Teondetha, that she thinks every man, like him, a lover?"

"The image of her true warrior, though ever present to The Spreading Dew, still leaves room for all good spirits, and their ruler, Owaneyo, to be remembered. The brown-haired captive loves my blue-eyed sister; and if he be no more to her than she says, it were mockery to the spirit to bring him here."

"And by what means got you the idea that this young man thinks of your friend save as a countrywoman in captivity like himself?"

"Thou speakest with two tongues, lady; and I, though the talk of the white man is strange to me, can do the same. The brown-haired warrior is a friend of the Oneidas, and can use the tongue of Teondetha; and, even if words had not betrayed his secret, as he implored me to look first to your safety, lady, when you came not to the spot to which I led him upon the opposite side of the camp yesternight, should I not have known how it stood with him? Doth not the breeze know why the flower trembles when it fans it? And held I not the captive's hand while I spoke of you, when guiding him through the thicket's depths?"

"It is too late now, my gentle sister, to change our place of meeting," said Miss De Roos, who saw that it was equally impossible to reason the girl out of the conviction which she had lately adopted, or the superstition which was so intimately ingrafted with her forest faith. "I must see the youth to-night, and upon this spot, or we must abandon the interview altogether; and even now I hear the sound as of some one leaping from bog to bog in the quaking fen around us."

The Mohawk girl hesitated no longer. Anxiety for the fate of Teondetha's friend, wandering in darkness amid the spongy and treacherous morass, laced everywhere among its blind thickets with

deep and sloughy pools, urged her to spring forward and guide him in safety to the Haunted Rock; and in a few moments Greyslaer had penetrated the copse of tamaracks that girdled it, and gained the firm and broad platform whereon his mistress stood. The Indian maiden, from considerations of delicacy that in such matters seem common to her sex, however uncultivated, instantly glided away; and the lovers, if such they may be called, were left alone together.

And now, young gallant, so lithe of foot and bold of hand, so ready in speech and act, alike amid manhood's councils and warrior fray, where lurks thy smooth tongue, thy nimble wit and stout endeavour, that have already proclaimed thee *man* among the ablest of thy fellows? Why do thy knees tremble, and thy quivering lips refuse to lackey thy laggard thoughts to utterance? Why tak'st thou not the outstretched hand the maid in friendliness accords thee? Why fall thy muttered syllables like broken drops feebly distilled from some slow-thawing fountain? Is it the Divinity of the place that awes thee? or doth thy spirit quail before an earthly presence?

"Greyslaer," said Alida, solemnly, for her woman's heart was touched by the agitation which overwhelmed her lover, and the bright stars shining down upon the spot revealed the paleness of his cheek. "God! he knows that I would spare you the pain my words may inflict to-night; I sought this interview for a far different object from that to which I now see that it must—that it ought, perhaps, for your future happiness, to tend. I blame myself in not inviting such an explanation between us long ago. Be a man, Max Greyslaer, and shrink not at what I am about to say. You love me?"

"To idolatry, to madness," cried the young man, in a hoarse whisper of passion, while his thronged

feelings, rushing tumultuously to find vent through his lips, seemed nearly to suffocate him as he flung himself upon his knees before Alida.

The lady recoiled against a blasted-tree that grew near by, and, overcome for a moment, could only mutely motion to him to rise. He sprang to his feet, and stood with folded arms before her. "Alas! alas!" she said, at length recovering herself, "you need not have told me that. And yet, the God of Heaven be my judge, I dreamed not till this night that your regard was of so deep a nature. But you are yet young, Greyslaer; love cannot exist without hope, and this fancy will soon pass away, or be transferred to another more worthy of your esteem; to one who can reciprocate your affection."

"Yes! when the last year's stubble shall sprout with a second spring; when that scathed tree against which you lean shall shake off the moss that drinks up its sap of life, and be clothed anew with verdure of its own; when—"

"Hold, Max, hold; this is the very phrensy of passion. I cannot listen to you longer, unless you show some regard for my feelings by repressing the vehemence of yours. Oh! Max Greyslaer, if you knew how deep a cause I have for grief in which you cannot share, you would from this moment cease to add to my sorrows by urging this misplaced, this most unhappy passion."

"*You* unhappy, Alida?—forgive me for thus calling you. You the victim of a secret sorrow? You, with that smooth cheek; that rounded, pliant form; that brow on which—no, no, the hand of grief hath never left its wasting fingers there, nor hollow care enshrined himself in such a tenement; you but mock me, Alida; or, rather, you would thus, in mercy, crush my ill-starred passion. But, Miss De

Roos, you know me not! If the presumption of my love offend you—"

"Oh! not *offend* me," tearfully murmured the afflicted girl.

"If the madness of my love offend you," pursued Max, unheeding the low-voiced interruption, "you may teach me to curb, to smother, to bury in my inmost soul the feeling that consumes it; but there, there it will burn for ever. The heart of Greyslaer can know no second love."

"This is too, too much! It will drive me mad to speak it; yet nothing else will extinguish his unhappy infatuation. Max Greyslaer, hear me. I have long since given you the regard of a sister. I have watched you alike in your studies and your sports, with the pride and the interest of an elder sister; and a sister's fondness would have followed, could I have shut out the painful conviction that it was not with the affection of a brother you regarded me. This interest in your welfare alone would impel me to leave no step untried to root out this fatal passion from your heart. But since the wild avowal of this night; since the declaration of desperate feelings you but now betrayed, I feel, though most innocently the cause of them, that you have still deeper claims upon my sympathy, that you have new ones upon my gratitude. I feel that there is but one way to break the miserable chain by which you would link your fate with mine, and give you back to the higher and happier destiny for which, by every circumstance save this one only, you are fitted. Nay, thank me not; I acknowledge you have a *right* to my confidence." She paused, and the features upon which the domestic sorrows of the last few weeks had left no feeble impress, became agitated with an expression of pain, which even the recollection of that night of horror at the Hawks-

nest had failed to trace. Greyslaer himself awaited what was to follow; and her words, as she resumed, were spoken in a tone low but clear, firm but inexpressibly mournful. "There is," she said, "there is but one man living, Greyslaer—one as vile, sordid, ruthless, and malignant as you are gentle, generous, and noble—one only other who shares the secret you have this night wrung from me."

"And he is—"

"My husband!"

The wretched girl, whose lofty spirit was still farther wrought up by the high and magnanimous sentiment of generosity which sustained her for the moment, swooned the instant she had pronounced the words. The weakness, however, quickly passed away, as, at a cry of alarm from Greyslaer, the Indian maiden bounded from the covert, and applied some cool glossy leaves, wet with the dews of night, to the brow of the sufferer.

The blow was better received by Greyslaer than could have been expected or hoped for by her that dealt it. He was indeed astounded and petrified by the first announcement; but all consideration for himself seemed the next moment merged in concern for his unhappy mistress.

"Lady," he said, dropping on one knee before her, and with an air of deep respect pressing his lips to the hand which she did not attempt to withdraw, "you spoke truly, lady, when you said my fate was linked with yours; but you erred in believing that aught could sever the chain, though it might lead me to destruction. As a lover, after what I have heard this night, you shall never know me more. But you have still left me something to live for, in taking away the only hope that could make existence happy. You have given me back to myself, but from this moment I am more com-

pletely yours than ever. The romantic dream of my youth has passed away, the madness of my misplaced and boyish love is over; and here, by the cool light of manhood's enfranchised reason, here upon this planted rock, with yon bright heaven as witness of my vow, I swear, while the pulses of life beat within me, never to leave nor desert you until I unravel this hideous mystery, and break the spell in which some fiend has manacled your soul. Nay, shrink not, dearest lady, as if my sworn service might prove intrusive. How or why these devilish meshes have been woven around you, I ask you not to explain until I have in some way approved my faith and loyalty. But be it when or where you choose to make the revelation; be the deed what it may, you claim in return for the precious boon of your confidence, if human hand can work it, it shall be done at your bidding."

A light as from a maniac's eye glared in that of Alida as the young man rose slowly up before her after this wild and solemn adjuration.

"No, no, Greyslaer," she cried, shaking back the long tresses which had fallen in disorder over her neck and shoulders. "No, Greyslaer, thou art not yet dear enough to me to share the fruition of the hoarded hope I have lived upon for years. Alida's own hand shall alone avenge Alida! For what else have I cherished the strength of this useless frame; for what have I forgot my woman's nature, and shared your schooling in feats of arms with my brother? Think you it was an idle caprice of my sex, or the perverted taste of an Amazon, that made me choose pistol and rapier, instead of needle and distaff, for my amusement? No, Max Greyslaer; my hand, as well as my heart, hath been schooled for years to the accomplishment of one only end, and they will neither of them fail

me at my purpose. That is, if this poor brain hold out."

And, pressing both hands to her temples, the unfortunate young lady looked so bewildered for a moment, that Greyslaer could hardly resist the conviction that her intellects were disordered. Yet, if such were indeed the case, how, he thought, could her mind be so well balanced in regard to all other subjects? In reference to this one, too, her reason, though disturbed, was not clouded; the agitation of the fountain did indeed hide its depths from view, but the water was bright and limpid still.

If it be true, however, "that great wit to madness nearly is allied," while gleams of insanity have been discovered in minds which have exercised a wide and enduring influence over mankind, and, mastering their disease till the last, have left in death the wisest of their survivers doubtful as to the suspicion that has attached to them; then might a far more experienced observer of human nature than young Greyslaer be at fault. Nor, indeed, were it just to conclude, only from what he had witnessed, that the senses of Alida were deranged. The sentiments which she had just uttered were indeed abhorrent to the nature of her sex, to her Christian education, and all her early associations of refinement. But while the excitement under which she spoke would sufficiently account for her momentary air of wildness, there was none of the incoherence of distraction in her speech; and as for nature and education, the first had been shocked, overthrown, and changed by the outrage which trampled upon it, and the last—the last is but an artificial barrier, that at once gives way when the former has become perverted.

While these reflections, or others not unlike them, passed hurriedly through the mind of Greyslaer,

the lovely subject of them seemed too busied with her own conflicting thoughts to observe the earnest and anxious gaze that was riveted upon her countenance. At last, as if shaking off the load that weighed upon her spirits, and recovering from the attitude of dejection that for a moment bowed her commanding form, she said, in a calm voice,

"I would, Mr. Greyslaer, that you could forget what has passed between us this night. I have been hasty in permitting you to commit yourself to take an interest in my affairs which they do not deserve at your hands. I have thought of the mischievous consequences of yielding you a more full and complete confidence; and it would be ungenerous in me to claim your active sympathy for the blind and partial revelation of my sorrows already made. I beseech you to remember only the friendly interest with which I requite your regard, and to forget all else that has passed between us."

These formal words, which struck chillingly upon the ear of Greyslaer, were pronounced in that measured tone of superior self-possession with which a master-spirit may sometimes address an inferior, blended with the air of kind authority which considerate age will put on when conversing with inexperienced youth. But, though she knew it not yet, the ascendancy which the generous and haughty-souled Alida had hitherto exercised over the mind of her lover was gone for ever; and Greyslaer made her feel that it was so in his reply.

"An hour ago, Miss De Roos, and I was, perhaps, the rash and doting boy you think me. Rash in aspiring to the hand of one so gifted as yourself, doting in that I dared to tell you of my passion; but though I still bear you a regard passing the love of kindred, however near, *boy* I am no longer. The day-star of my youth has set for ever; the des-

tiny of my life is written; for good or for evil, 'tis henceforth twined with yours. If you repent the share you may have had in thus determining my fate, if it be a generous concern for my welfare that prompted your words, your anxiety is thrown away. It is too late for *you* to recede; and *I*—I have thrown my cast, and am determined to stand the hazard of the die!"

"And how," said the lady, with an irresolute, uneasy air, that perhaps betrayed a mingled feeling of jealous pride, of growing self-diffidence, and newly-awakened respect for the lofty and decided tone the youth assumed so unexpectedly, "how, Greyslaer, am I to avail myself of any service which you might render me?"

"By designating the villain at whose life you aim, and leaving me to avenge your injuries."

"Speak you in earnest, Max Greyslaer? Do you think me, then, capable of such ignoble and cold-blooded selfishness? so ignoble as to place my mortal quarrel in the hands of one who is a stranger to my blood; so selfish as to requite affection by imposing a task that may lead to death?"

"Well spoken, young missus, like a gal of spunk as you are," exclaimed a harsh voice near by, while a brawny ruffian, leaping from the thicket, and striking the rock with a short Indian war-club as he gained his footing upon it, placed himself between Greyslaer and Alida. "What, ho! younker," he cried; "you would add to the account that is chalked up agin you already, would you? God help you in his own way; but, unless the devil fail wild Wat afore then, you will find him a hard reckoner; that is, if your carcass first escape a roasting at the hands of the bloody Mohawk."

"Stand off, ruffian," muttered Greyslaer, choking with passion, as he saw the savage-looking fellow

circling the waist of Alida with one arm, while, weaponless and feeble from his recent wound, he felt himself incapable of protecting her.

"Fair words, fair words, if you please, my young master; I come here only to rescue this lady from Indian captivity; and, as the Redskins are still my friends in the main, I should be sorry to rob the stake doubly by knocking you in the head."

"Oh, Max," murmured Alida, who had hitherto stood as if paralyzed with horror, "strive not with this dark and terrible man, who even now has stepped, as from the grave, between us."

"And so you, too, eh, my fraulein, thought, like many others, that Red Wolfert had kicked the bucket, because I took Wat's advice, and cleared out for a while, to save my neck, till things should blow over. But times have changed, my spanking lass; tall fellows hold up their heads once more, and I come here to exercise the rights of one of them over Mistress—"

"Speak, speak but one word, I pray you, Alida! Is this horrible ruffi—is this your husband?"

"Dunder und blixem, and suppose I be," cried the man, catching the words out of the mouth of Alida, whose senses seemed too much benumbed to make a ready reply. "Don't you see how the gal wilts like when I look at her, and who but her natural husband should make a woman cower?"

"In the name of the devil, who are you, that speak so fitly in his tongue?" said Greyslaer, making a wary movement toward the man, in the desperate hope of clutching from his hand the short mace with which he dallied.

"A clerk of St. Nicholas, who will despatch you with a message to his employer if you move a step nearer, verfluchter kerl."

"If you be the fiend himself, here's at you,"

shouted Greyslaer, bounding furiously forward. The contest was too unequal to leave a hope of success for the invalid youth, had he succeeded in closing with his antagonist; but the latter, to whom the now senseless Alida seemed no encumbrance, as he actively leaped aside, laughed to scorn the vain efforts of his assailant, who still pressed impetuously upon him. His words, however, betrayed his growing irritation, as, backing step by step toward the edge of the rock, so as still to keep the full swing of his arm while the youth attempted to close in upon him,

"Gemeiner hund, madcap, idiot, dolt, take that to quiet you," he cried, at last dealing a blow that brought Greyslaer instantly to the ground.

Valtmeyer, for the ruffian was no other than that redoubtable outlaw, waited not to see how durable might be the effects of the blow, but, plunging into the bushes, he glided along a slippery log with his burden, thridding the morass like one accustomed to its dangers. Stricken down, and stunned for the moment, Greyslaer was slowly regaining his feet, when the first object he beheld was the Mohawk maiden, gazing, with clasped hands and bewildered eyes, toward the thickets into which the outlaw had disappeared. His towering form, his sallow features, his long beard of grizzled red, and aspect altogether foreign and hideous to her sight, made him no unfit personification of those evil spirits of the forest which the Indian girl would naturally paint, as the very reverse in appearance from the smooth-cheeked warriors of her race; and the simple sylvan maiden, as she breathed a prayer for the ill-fated pale sister of her sex, thought that the offended genius of the place had permitted some fiend to intrude within his hallowed circle, and punish on the spot the first violation of the Haunted Rock.

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

TORY COUNCILS.

"The Sachem spoke:
Resentment rising, seemed to choke
The words of wrath that forth had broke;
But conscience lent her bland relief,
And calmly spoke the injured chief."

SANDS.

THE calamity which had overtaken the family of the Hawksnest, the mysterious fate of Miss De Roos, and the presumed death of one so popular as young Max Greyslaer, excited the deepest sensation through the Valley of the Mohawk. The two political parties which divided the district were as yet by no means fairly in the field against each other; and the warfare of words being still carried on for a season before a final appeal to arms was had, recrimination rose high between either faction.

The patriots did not hesitate to charge the Tories with being the instigators of this ruthless attack upon the peace of a private family, while the loyalists, affecting to be equally indignant at the outrage, taunted the Whigs with being the first to bring the laws of the country into contempt by their own factious conduct. The catastrophe, however, seemed in one respect to have a salutary effect. It opened the eyes of both parties to the horrors of a civil war.

Both seemed willing to pause and await the effect of circumstance in preventing their being farther embroiled; and both united with apparent sincerity in passing public resolutions against the employment of the Indians to strengthen either side, whatever the issue might be, and whenever that issue might be finally joined.

But the ball of Revolution was in motion; and though its course might be for the time more noiseless, neither its momentum nor its accumulating forces were diminished. The organization of party, and the dangerous tampering with the Indian tribes, went on as industriously as ever; the Whigs displaying the greatest coolness, foresight, and address in the one respect, while the Tories were equally successful in the other.

Months, in the mean time, passed away, and the operations of either began to show results which must produce a crisis. The civil authority passed into the hands of the patriots, who found an excuse for a stern exercise of that authority in sending General Schuyler, with a large body of militia, to disarm the disaffected, in the same moment that the predominant influence of the Tories in Indian politics was fully consummated. The tribe of Oneidas, after long nobly withstanding both threats and cajoling, were at length driven, by the intriguing arts of the latter, to detach themselves from the confederacy of the Six Nations, and assume that neutral position which was afterward only abandoned for a warm espousal of the patriot cause.

It was Christmas morning; and the sun, which shone through the sacred grove of Onondaga, touched with gold the pendant icicles which drooped from the heavy boughs that had wailed for a thousand winters around the ancient citadel of the Ongi-Honwe. The adjacent lake, whose frozen surface

was freshly covered with virgin snow, smiled in the glad light of the morning, whose early rays were glinted back from bush and thicket, that were all clothed with the same dazzling mantle. A few shreds of smoke ascending straight upward into the clear blue sky was the only object stirring amid the bright and tranquil scene.

But for this faint indication of the neighbourhood of man, the lonely stockade, that was dignified with the name of "The Onondaga Castle," seemed wholly deserted; and he who gazed within would have looked in vain for the imposing assemblage of patriarchal sachems which, in the previous century, was likened to the Senate of Rome by Frontenac, when that adventurous Frenchman, like another Brennus, intruded with his armed followers into the great council of the Aganuschion.* One lonely female was the only occupant of the building.

The stranger, who was aware of the consideration in which the sex were held among the Ongi-Honwe, and who knew that this rude building contained the great national altar of their confederacy, might at first have mistaken the woman now before him for one of those pious devotees who successively, for ages, watched the sacred central council-fire of the Aganuschion. But the mean features and apparel of the withered old crone, as she sat crouched in the ashes, would soon, upon a close survey, have proved that she could not claim to be numbered among "the principal women of the Six Nations."

* "The national council (of the Six Nations) took cognizance of war and peace, of the affairs of the tributary nations, and of their negotiations with the French and English colonies. All their proceedings were conducted with great deliberation, and were distinguished for order, decorum, and solemnity. In eloquence, in dignity, and in all the characteristics of profound policy, they surpassed an assembly of feudal barons, and were, perhaps, not far inferior to the great Amphictyonic council of Greece."—*De Witt Clinton.*

"Wah!" exclaimed the hag, as, with a crooked stick, she vainly pushed a wet and blackened ember toward the smouldering ashes; "could not the fools leave enough of the fire that has burned for a thousand winters to warm these old bones with? May the Evil One broil them on his own for meddling in the quarrel of Corlear* with the Sagernash! May their tribes be dispersed like these scattered embers! May they, like them, be trampled upon by—" Stopping short in her imprecation as she caught sight of a half-extinguished branch, which still lay smoking in the corner where it had been tossed, the crone hobbled toward it, and thrust it afresh in the ashes, applying, at the same time, the air from her wheezy lungs to rekindle the flame.

Her efforts were followed by a momentary ignition, indicated by a few sparks, that made her mutter still more angrily, as, to avoid them, she threw back her head, from which the long gray hair drooped in the ashes. The dying brand crackled feebly, sighed like a living thing, and expired.

"A-rai-wah! The Sacred Fire of Onondaga is extinguished for ever!"

As she spoke the hag gathered her knees toward her body with one hand, and resting her shrivelled cheek upon the other, commenced rocking backward and forward, croaking a harsh song, in which lamentations and curses were so wildly intermingled that the eldrich dirge partook equally of the character of either.

But this wretched remnant of mortality was not the only mourner for the extinguished pride and power of the now broken Iroquois confederacy.

* "Sons of Corlear," or "The Children of Quidar," were the terms by which "The Six Nations" indifferently distinguished the inhabitants of the Colony of New-York; and, though first adopted during the Dutch ascendancy over the province, we find them used in Indian treaties and speeches down to quite a recent period.

The Christmas sun shone merrily upon the frosted window-panes of Johnson Hall; gleamed upon the armour that decked its walls, and tinted with freshness the evergreens that festooned its ancient portraits. But here, as at Onondaga, its beams seemed to smile only as in mockery of man and his doings. Here were men, haggard and worn with long watching, grouped in disorder throughout the broad corridor. Some were engaged in anxious or angry debate together; some, as if wearied out with action or discussion, were stretched upon the oaken settles, regarding with dogged indifference the excited disputes of their comrades; and one, more swarthy of feature than the rest, a tall man of a fierce and haughty aspect, was striding impatiently to and fro, casting ever and anon a hasty look at the staircase, whose polished banister he repeatedly struck with his tomahawk in passing.* Twice he had ascended several steps, as if determined to seek above some person who had exhausted his patience in delaying an interview; and then pausing a moment as he thundered anew with his hatchet upon the stairs, he turned abruptly upon his heel, breathing indignation against those who appeared not to heed his savage signal.

At last a strong-framed man, hastily arrayed in a dressing-gown, accompanied by a Highland officer in full uniform, presented himself upon the landing of the staircase. The features of either were clouded; but of the two the former seemed to be labouring under the greater emotion. His look was agitated, but not alarmed; distempered, but not angry.

"Brant!" said he, with some severity, "at any other time I would not overlook this want of respect; I would not put up with this rudeness from

* The marks of the Indian tomahawk are shown upon the stairs of the hall to this day.

any man breathing. But since we are all here companions in affliction together, a quarrel with so old a friend of my house would not become me."

"Companions together, Sir John? You honour the poor Indian by placing him in such company, even in your *speech*, though you can find no room for him in your *writings* when making terms with the enemy!"

"Speak, Alan MacDonald, and dispel these ungenerous suspicions of our friend! Tell him the circumstances under which we have been compelled to treat with the commissioners from Albany."

"I am wholly at a loss upon what particular point to answer Captain Brant," said MacDonald, coolly. "He seems already to be aware that we have accepted terms from General Schuyler, who is marching hitherward with three thousand men; and, unless report belies them, with a hundred Mohawk warriors in his train!"

"Yes! a pack of frightened curs from the lower castle, with a handful of naked renegades from my own people. The hungry offcasts from my tribe, who hope, with Schuyler's countenance, to make spoil of the blankets and provisions that are laid up here for our projected campaign. But tell me, Sir John Johnson, is the falling off of these wretches to excuse this desertion of your Indian friends, after entangling us in this contemptible quarrel? God of my people! that the power and glory which thou hast suffered them to attain should be thus ruinously perilled in a stranger's brawl! that the league of our ancient confederacy, cemented by the blood of a thousand victories, should dissolve like snowflakes upon the river, because, in an evil moment, we consented to interfere in a paltry dispute about a few halfpence of revenue between some peddling foreigners, who would cut each other's throats for

gain! Nay, sir, never lay your hand upon your sword! and you, ye prying knaves, unless ye stand back at mine or your master's bidding, shall be dealt with less daintily than the rebel general will handle ye. Back, I say, or my signal call shall fill this hall with those who'll flood it with your gore! By the valour of a Mohawk! but it were a good deed to call in my warriors, and supplant such recreants with men who will hold these walls against all odds till they crumble around them!"

And the indignant chieftain strode haughtily to and fro, as if really balancing in his mind this mad procedure, while the baronet, too much incensed by the insolence of Brant to make any concession to his wrath, was yet too politic to trust himself with a hasty reply. The cool and discreet MacDonald now put in a word to sooth the exasperated mood of the demi-savage, as he considered the chieftain when thus excited.

"Captain Brant is too experienced a soldier not to be aware of the impossibility of maintaining our present position against the overpowering force which has been unexpectedly sent against us."

"And could not these heavy-limbed fellows have taken to the bush, and shared a hunter's fare for a few weeks, until the first burst of the storm should have spent its fury? Did you think, in taking up arms in a forest-land like this, where every rock is a fortress, every tree a citadel, did you think that the struggle was to be decided by the capture of a few towns and villages?"

"We did not, noble Thayendanagea," said Sir John, taking the words from the mouth of MacDonald. "Nor do we now believe that one compulsory compromise like the present is to terminate the resistance of the king's friends in this rebellious colony. Had we treated with the rebels for peace

throughout the province, our brave Indian brethren would never have been forgotten in the treaty; but our capitulation refers only to the loyalists in this individual district. Our friends are still in arms in other parts of the colony; and even here the gallant gentlemen whom you see around you will yet again lift up the royal banner, or flock to it upon the first opportunity, if Thayendanagea keeps it flying in the field. I—I myself will lead them to—"

"Hold, Sir John! unless you would have your spoken promise give the lie to your written pledge. Remember that '*Sir John Johnson, having given his parole of honour not to take up arms against America,*' he can never—"

"Where, where do you find such words as those?" cried the baronet, hardly knowing what he said in his confusion.

"The *title* of the instrument runs thus, please ye, Sir John," replied Brant, coolly drawing a written document from his bosom, the preamble of which he began to read in a measured, sarcastic tone: "'Terms offered by the honourable Philip Schuyler, major-general in the army of the Thirteen United Colonies, and commanding in the New-York department, to Sir John Johnson, baronet, and all such other persons in the county of Tryon as have evinced their intentions of supporting his majesty's ministry to carry into effect the unconstitutional measures of which the Americans so justly complain:' do you mark the emphasis?" said the Mohawk, scornfully, while another storm seemed gathering on his brow, as, repeating the phrase, he went on, "'of which the Americans so *justly* complain; and to prevent which they have been driven to the dreadful necessity of having recourse to arms: first, that—' Pshaw! you have it there in the third article, and may read for yourselves if you

have forgotten the contents of the document, when your signatures, confirming your acceptance of these terms, can scarcely be dry upon the original."

The chieftain, as he spoke, flung the paper contemptuously at the feet of Sir John, who comprehended, without looking at it, that it must be a copy of his terms of surrender, furnished by the politic Whigs to shake the loyalty of Brant.

"It is in vain, Captain Brant," said he, with sad composure, "to conceal from you the extent of our misfortunes. My poor services, in a military capacity, are indeed lost to the crown; and these brave Scottish gentlemen, though suffered to retain their side-arms, are placed by their parole in the same unhappy predicament as myself. But the king has many as capable servants as we, who may still assert their loyalty in the field; and if the fear of chilling their zeal in my royal master's cause induced me to withhold from you the extent of the rebel triumph, I know I shall be forgiven by so ardent and generous a partisan as Thayendanagea."

The tones in which his gallant friend spoke, not less than the words which he uttered, seemed instantly to change the mood of the stormy chieftain, who paced to and fro for a moment before he replied.

"Sir John," said Brant, with feeling, "I have nothing to forgive. It is you of whom I should ask pardon. You are nearer to the great king than I am, and know best how much of his affairs to suppress and how much to reveal. I have always borne you the love of a brother; and for that, if for nothing else, you will forgive me for thinking you faithless when you were only unfortunate. But I have heard that within the last hour," he added, with that air of calm fatalism characteristic of the Iroquois, even while using the language of a European, "I have heard that which might well dis-

temper me: the confederacy of the Aganuschion is broken. A formal assemblage of Sachems at Onondaga has dissolved the league of the United Cantons that existed beyond the traditions of our race. Our Great Council Fire is extinguished, and the Six Nations, whose delegates consummated the fatal ceremony with the peaceful unanimity of a band of brothers, meet hereafter only as broken tribes arrayed in deadly hostility to each other."

"Not so, noble Sachem!" cried the baronet, with brightening features. "It is only the Oneidas, with their adopted children, the Mohicans, who have seceded from the union. The whole Tuscarora tribe, the greater portion of the Onondagas, the fiery Senecas, and valiant Cayugas, are even now assembling under Guy Johnson at Oswego, and wait but for you, with your indomitable Mohawks, to lead them, in all their ancient pride of arms, upon the foe. The delegates of the loyal tribes attended the great central fire only to gain time and blind the lazy eyes of the Oneidas, who convoked the council. Their protest against the confederacy taking any part on either side in this war was not received. They declared their secession from the union, and the sacred fire of the united brethren was extinguished. But the act was illegal; for, as you know, the Mohawks were not represented in the council;* and the holy flame of union and power may again

* It may have been under some such pretence as this that the refugee Mohawks, who found a home in Upper Canada after the Revolution, ventured to dedicate a place there as the seat of "The Great Council Fire of the Six Nations," and call it Onondaga, while, in fact, all the confederates but themselves remained within the territory of New-York, keeping the original Onondaga among their reserved lands till the present day. Red Jacket, the famous Seneca, stirred up a serious dispute about this exclusive assumption both of the national shrine and general name of his countrymen.—See *Stone's Life of Brant*, vol. ii.

be relighted in a blaze of glory which shall illumine the land."

The eye of the Indian sagamore flashed with fierce delight; his mien assumed a lofty bearing, as of one who felt himself yet destined to be the leader of armies, while his nostril dilated as if already he snuffed the battle. These indications of strong emotion, however, passed away like a flash, even as Sir John pronounced the last words which seemed to have kindled them; and then the face of the Mohawk assumed that immovably stoical expression which rendered it impossible to surmise what was passing in his bosom, and which, upon the countenance of an Iroquois, always covered his deepest and most earnest thoughts.

It might be that vague dreams of ambition, which had heretofore passed through the mind of Brant; that plans of personal elevation at the expense of his less cultivated countrymen, which, in moments of temptation, had suggested themselves, and been indignantly discarded from his thoughts at the generous call of patriotism, or reluctantly abandoned from a conviction of their impracticability under the existing organization of the Aganuschion republic—it may be that these dark and aspiring schemes were busy within him now!

It might be—and the loyal, disinterested character of the man, his romantic love of his doomed race, and his pertinacious aversion to European civilization, while evincing in his own conduct many of its benefits, render this solution by far the most likely—it might be that that silent mien and fixed expression of countenance concealed the devotional communings of his heart—a patriot's thanksgiving for a people saved.

"Captain Brant looks grave," said MacDonald; "he thinks that the responsibility of his part has

increased just in proportion that the chance of his playing it successfully with our aid has diminished by that aid being now withdrawn."

If a taunt were implied in this speech, it was so slight as to pass unheeded by Brant; but his heart was not inaccessible to the subtle appeal to his vanity which it conveyed.

"I see, I see," said he, casting his eyes in musing fashion upon the ground, and smiling grimly, as if it were impossible wholly to suppress the pleasurable thrill of pride which he wished to conceal. "The great king depends now upon the Indians to preserve this colony for him. Our warriors are to keep the rebels in check until the great king can send over such an army as shall make it safe for his loyal subjects once more to rise and help him! Good! very good! *He shall find that* WE *are to be depended upon.*" The voice and manner of the Sachem suddenly altered with the last words, as he raised his eyes and cast a stern and haughty gaze around. "Yes, gentlemen," he continued, in a more cool and lofty tone, "the largest, and the fairest, and most fertile part of this rich province is now left to the guardianship of one who, among yourselves, bears but the rank of an English captain; and I would have you know that it is not from ignorance of the value of the pledge, of the cost of protecting it, or of the opportunity of successfully treating with the Americans for the heritage which you are compelled to abandon, that I here, in the name of my countrymen, assume its charge. With you, Sir John Johnson, as the official representative of your sovereign, I might have made my own terms for the better defined security of our rights under the British dominion; but a Mohawk chieftain is no trafficker of loyalty. Your king shall learn how far he may depend upon the faith and valour of the Iro-

quois, and the future will reveal the measure of his justice to us in return.* Our *power* to serve the British cause remains to be proved. You at least, Sir John, can bear witness to the readiness of our *will*."

"He is a slave that doubts either," cried the baronet. "Though the terrible Virginian himself should take the field against you, his wisdom and his valour will find a match in Thayendanagea. And *I*, my noble friend, though prevented by fate from serving with you as a comrade in arms, I, while watching your glorious career, will console myself with the reflection that I have, by temporizing, preserved the services of these brave followers to my sovereign till they can be used with a hope of success hereafter."

The last words, which were addressed as much to the by-standers as to Brant himself, had their full influence in reassuring the spirits of the former; and MacDonald confirmed their effect by immediately adding,

"Sir John could certainly not better serve our cause in the present exigency than by securing him in the midst of the party which we wish to keep together. We are still strong in numbers throughout the district, and, while he remains with us, we shall never want a leader at the proper moment for striking."

"Your parole of honour!" said Brant, drawing himself up and looking with a lowering eye upon the company.

* The difficulties with the British government which imbittered the closing years of Brant, his neglected petitions, the invasion alike of the property and the political rights of his tribe, and the forced necessity he was under of asserting his legal claim to the half pay of a British captain, might suggest some doubts as to the wisdom of his confidence in the justice of the crown. But have the Oneidas, who espoused the cause of the republic, fared better than the Mohawks? See note at the end of the volume.

"Though given to outlaws, it shall never be broken but for cause," replied Johnson. "But the rebels, drunken with their first success, will soon supply us with legitimate grounds for disregarding the pledge they have wrung from us."

"Well, you white men know best how far ye may trust each other," observed the chief, with a significant and pitying smile, while, in drawing his mantle around him to depart, he muttered less audibly beneath its folds something still more contemptuous. His precise words were unheard, but their purport was sufficiently intelligible to rouse the ire of MacDonald, who mutely folded his arms when the chieftain stretched out his hand to exchange a parting salutation with him.

"Nay, Captain MacDonald," said Brant, "I part not thus with a brave comrade and tried soldier. It was of the white man's, and not the Scotchman's, faith of which I spoke, and you will pardon the prejudices of the Indian, however you would resent the suspicions of the friend."

"I am not so Quixotic, Captain Brant, as to proclaim myself the champion of my race," replied the other. "But, in giving you my hand, as I now do, I will venture to suggest that, if your knowledge of our usages disinclines you to practise European urbanity, you are not fortunate in your mode of recommending Indian courtesy—by your own example."

"Good!" said Brant, smiling. "Very good!" he repeated, shaking again the hand of him who had chastened him, while MacDonald, whose whimsical expression of countenance showed how much he was confounded at the odd impression which his pithy lecture had made upon his half-savage friend, followed his retreating figure with his eye as the Mohawk strode out of the apartment.

"The infernal strange dog!" cried the Scotchman; "I never know where the devil to find him."

"What, Alan," said Johnson, laughing, "is my red brother Joseph a puzzle to you? An Indian, man, is like a woman; you must follow his humours without attempting to regulate them. Brant's touches of civilization are like grains of wit in a madman's brain; they just suffice to mislead him who would discover some regular system of ideas in the lunatic's disordered senses. But, for all that, the fellow has sense and courage, and is as true as steel in matters of moment."

And thus ended this singular interview, which, commencing in a scene of passion, that, with its attendant grouping of strongly contrasted characters, might well exercise the pen of the dramatist, terminated, as do most romantic situations in real life, with commonplace occurrence and discussion; which, however actual in themselves, detract, it must be confessed, not a little from the poetic dignity of their relation. But "these are the days of fact nor fable;" and the legendary writer of our time must content himself with detailing mere familiar tradition, until another SCOTT shall arise to revivify the dry bones which it is our humble task to collect together, clothe them anew with all the attributes of breathing life, and make them walk the earth afresh, dignified, exalted, and adorned by the prodigal drapery of immortal Genius.

CHAPTER II.

THE BORDERERS.

"When, lo, he saw his courser reined
By an unwelcome hand!"—EARL RUPERT.

THERE was a proud complacency upon the brow of the Indian chief when he found himself alone beyond the precincts of the Hall. The morning was cold, and the snow lay deep upon the ground; but while the latter offered no impediment to his devouring steps as he rapidly stalked along, the glowing thoughts within his bosom seemed to make him insensible to the former. His mantle was indeed wrapped closely around him, but it was from the tension of strong emotion that his hands were clinched in its folds. His open throat and lofty head, whose plumes tossed in the light breeze that swept the eminence from which he was descending, betrayed none of that sensibility to the elements which belittles the mien of the cloaked and cowering form that now confronts him in his path.

It is a half-frozen horseman, who shrinks in his saddle, as if he would thus make his weight as light as possible to his jaded steed. The proportions of his figure are concealed by a military roquelaire wrapped closely around him, and his face is so muffled up with furs as barely to permit his eyes to see the road before them; yet both are instantly recognised by the keen-eyed Mohawk. Some new emotion now agitates his features, and a look of sudden wrath has succeeded to that of

calm and pleasurable pride. He stops short in his rapid walk, and plants himself in the centre of a little bridge that here crosses the highway, just as the mounted traveller has gained its opposite side. The horse recoils at the barbaric apparition in his path, and his rider, looking up for the first time, beholds the cause of his affright.

"Why, you d—d Indian scarecrow, what mean you by standing there to frighten cattle on the king's highway—wae, boy! wa—e—gently, now, gently—stand out of my path, you stupid blockhead, or, God help me, I'll ride right over you." And, suiting the action to the word, the distempered and insolent traveller plunged both spurs into his horse, which bounded forward upon the bridge; but, quick as light, the sinewy arm of the Indian has grappled his bridle-rein, and, with starting eye and distended nostril, the mastered steed stands trembling.

"Why, Joseph Brant, my good fellow! who the devil expected to meet you here! You must forgive my haste in speaking as I did, and I'll pardon this abrupt salutation in so old a friend, if you'll only loose my rein and let me push ahead to the Hall."

"There is time enough for that," said the chief, smothering his indignation at the man's insolent familiarity. "What news bring you from below?"

"Schuyler's within half a day's march, with three thousand Whig militia; that's all, my good fellow; and now let me carry the news to our friends. We must up stakes, I take it, from these parts, and go and lend a lift to the loyalists in the southern corner of the province: and now, my dear Joseph, I wish you a good-morning."

"Softly, softly, Mr. Bradshawe. There is no necessity for this great haste. Sir John is already in possession of all the news you can give him."

"He is? The devil! I met that arch-rebel Duer, with a brace of kindred Whigs, at a roadside inn last night—Yates and Glen, I think they were; and I half guessed that their venturing so far in the valley boded no good to our cause. Surely they cannot have brought the news, conveyed in the shape of a threat, from Schuyler?"

"They were commissioners to settle the terms of Sir John's surrender, and Schuyler's present advance to take possession of Johnstown shows how well they succeeded."

The countenance of the traveller grew dark as midnight while Brant thus briefly and coolly told him of the discomfiture of his party. The chief waited a moment for him to make some comment, but his astonishment was so great that he had not a word wherewith to reply; and Brant, in the same calm tone, went on. "These tidings seem to be somewhat strange to Mr. Bradshawe. He has kept himself aloof from his friends of late. It is at least four months since I heard of him in these parts."

"Yes, why, yes," said the other, confusedly. "Some business took me south last summer about the time the Hawksnest affair and subsequent disappearance of young Greyslaer put the country in hot water. None but you, Joseph, could have been at the bottom of that hubbub."

"I heard of Mr. Bradshawe in Schoharie," said Brant, dryly, and with an elevation of his eyebrows so slight as to be almost imperceptible.

"Schoharie? Oh!—ay—yes, I have been in Schoharie. I've just come, indeed, from down that way. I heard of this rebel rising while in Schoharie, and rode for dear life to warn Sir John."

"It is useless to seek him now upon such an errand; and if Mr. Bradshawe wishes to give his reasons for having so long kept out of the way of

his political friends, I would advise him to take some opportunity when the baronet is in a happier mood."

"A d—d politic suggestion! Josey, you certainly are no fool. But where the devil are you leading my mare to?"

"Why," said Brant, with a careless laugh, "two such suspicious characters as we are should not be seen holding so long a talk here on the highway, when, by moving a few yards, we can throw that knoll between us and any travelling impertinents that may chance to pass. I would confer with you, too, Mr. Bradshawe," he added, more gravely, "where we are not liable to interruption."

"You are a queer chap, Brant. Leave you alone to have your own way. But here we are in the hollow; and now what have you got to say? Be quick, man, for I'm getting devilish cold."

"You will be still colder before I have done with you, Walter Bradshawe, unless you reply promptly to my questions."

"Why, my good Joseph, what the h—"

"Hold! no more of that, sir; blasphemous and vulgar-souled as you are, you can still ape the decorum of a gentleman when it suits your turn; and you shall perish here like a crushed hound in the snow, unless you practise it now."

"This to me, you d—d Indian dog!" cried Bradshawe, jerking his rein with one hand, and plucking a pistol from his holster with the other. But, before he could cock the piece, a blow from Brant's tomahawk sent it flying through the air into an adjacent snowbank, while in the same moment the desperado was hurled from his saddle, and lay prostrate at the feet of the Mohawk.

"One motion, one word, a look of insolence, and I'll brain you on the spot; that snow-wreath shall be your winding-sheet, and the April thaws will

alone reveal your fate, if the wolves in the mean time spare that wretched carcass."

"Who the devil thinks of resisting, with knife and tomahawk both at his throat? Ugh—ugh, you have knocked all the breath out of my body. Gad! Brant, you inherit a white man's brawn from your Dutch grandfather. Hold! you Indian devil; don't murder me for squinting at a fact which all the country believes except yourself."

"They lie who say I'm other than a Mohawk of the full blood," exclaimed the Indian, fiercely, but drawing back, at the same time, as if stung by an adder.

"Perhaps they do; but you'll not prove the genuineness of your blood by spilling mine," replied the other, picking himself leisurely from the ground. "Give me my other pistol, son of Nickus, and we can dispute the matter more upon an equality."

"Bradshawe, you are a brave man, and, as such, I cannot wholly scorn you; and were your honour but half as bright as your courage, you should—But enough of this. You will be wise, sir, now, in fooling no longer with my patience, but reply with directness to what I have to ask you. You are reputed to have sense, Bradshawe, and you see I am not to be trifled with."

"Why, as to my sense, Sachem, it seems to have been pretty much at fault in dealing with you. I've always thought you a devilish shrewd fellow for one who was only quarter white man—nay, let that cursed knife alone—I say I've thought you so, that's a fact; though I may sometimes have laughed in my sleeve when you got on your high ropes, and put on quality airs like Sir John. I don't know how it is, however; I still believe you to be pretty much of an adventurer like myself; but, if you are not a lineal chief, as your enemies say, by

G—d, you deserve to be a born aristocrat for the neat style in which you do the thing. I speak the truth, I do, by G—d. I could put it in softer phrase, as you know full well; for you have seen me humouring the shallow fools who ape nobility here among us provincials. But I talk to you as a man that can't be come over by flummery; and now go ahead with your questions, which, I suppose, relate to the De Roos girl that Red Wolfert snicked off so handsomely."

"Red Wolfert," said Brant, scornfully. "Wolfert Valtmeyer dared not have touched captive of mine but as the instrument of a more powerful scoundrel than himself; and you, Bradshawe, must answer for the acts of your creature. Where is Miss De Roos?"

"Where? Ask Wolfert. If I use the rascal now and then to farther our political intrigues, does it follow that I know aught of his amorous doings? I suspected that you would hold me accountable for his dealings with this wench; for it certainly was a bold flight for such a kite as Valtmeyer to strike at game like her."

"Beware, Mr. Bradshawe; there are limits to my patience, and you cannot deceive me. It was through your aid that Au-neh-yesh escaped from the hands of the rebels. He repaid you with information that you valued beyond aught else, for no scruple could prevent you from availing yourself of it to tear the young lady from the refuge in which I had placed her. You, and you only, with the ruffian Valtmeyer and my wayward and unhappy son for your instruments, have spirited away this girl, for whose safety both our friends and our foes hold me now accountable. Bradshawe, I tell you, if one hair of her head be injured, I will wreak vengeance so dire that men shall stand aghast when they hear

of it. The tortures of the Indian stake shall be merciful to those which you shall suffer, till the hapless fate of Thayendanagea's captive is forgotten in the hideous punishment of her destroyer."

The voice of Brant was calm and low as he pronounced these words; but the ascendancy of his mind was now so completely established over that of Bradshawe, that, daring and reckless as he was, they fell with withering effect upon his spirit; and he even, for a moment, shivered like the criminal who has just heard his awful and irrevocable doom passing the lips of one who is endowed with all earthly authority to inflict the final sentence of a judicial tribunal.

"She is safe—I believe—I know—she is—she must be safe," stammered forth the bold borderer, who, for the first time in his life perhaps, felt conscious that his heart quailed and his cheek blanched beneath the eye of a fellow-mortal. "I left her last where I believed no earthly harm could reach her; and, so help me Heaven, Sachem, there breathes no human being whom, with my life, I would sooner guard from injury than this same lady."

"Yes! as the cougar would protect the hare from the wolf that disputes his prey with him. Where left you Miss De Roos?"

The distressed air of mortification that now marked Bradshawe's features showed that he would gladly evade the question. He even turned his head quickly on one side, as if recourse to flight suddenly suggested itself upon the emergency. But the snowdrift that walled in the little hollow in which he stood shut out the desperate hope on that side. He turned his eager gaze to the other, but it straightway fell before the basilisk eye of the Indian, who, still grasping the bridle of Bradshawe's horse, stood with one foot advanced, and his right

hand upon his knife, warily watching his victim. But the hand fell to his side, the foot was drawn back, and the deadly glare of his eye changed to a cold and stony gaze in the moment that the crest-fallen borderer slunk back to his former dogged attitude of unresisting dejection.

"Where is the lady?" repeated Brant, between his clinched teeth.

"Take my secret, then, if I must speak—the Cave of Waneonda, where the stream which you Indians call the River of Ghosts holds its way far under ground beneath the forests of Schoharie, there in the—Hah! what sounds are those? May my tongue be blistered if its swiftness to betray has—"

"'Tis Schuyler's advancing column. I know the sound of his bugles," cried Brant, uneasily; and, even as he spoke, a squadron of troopers, who formed the advanced guard of the Republican forces, wheeled around an angle of the road, and came galloping forward in all the hasty disorder of newly-levied militia flushed with their first success in the operations of war.

Their common danger—for Brant and his recent adversary were, on personal as well as political grounds, equally obnoxious to the popular party in their district—impelled them to simultaneous flight. But even at such an exigency, when his life seemed on the point of being yielded up to the sabres of this lawless and hot-headed soldiery, the generosity of the chieftain did not desert him. "Save yourself," cried he to Bradshawe, in the same moment flinging his bridle into the hand of the royalist officer. "But remember! if you have deceived me here, you had better perish on this spot than live to meet my vengeance."

The last words were either unheard or unheeded by Bradshawe. He made no reply, but, leaping

swiftly into his saddle, struck the spurs into his horse, and dashed across the fields, so as to turn the right flank of the advancing party, and place a hill between himself and the threatening danger. He had emerged from the hollow so suddenly that he gained a hundred yards almost from his starting-place before he was observed by the troopers. And it was well for him that such was the case; for, as his dark figure swept the snowy waste, it offered so distinct a mark for the yeomanry sharp-shooters, that the volley which they fired, after vainly hailing him, must inevitably have proved fatal but for the distance. The militiamen, as Brant had perhaps anticipated, instantly wheeled from the road, and with tumultuous cries launched in pursuit of the flying officer; and, though the chase was abandoned with equal suddenness when they found themselves floundering through deep snowdrifts after a fugitive as well mounted as themselves, and who had soon placed a ridge of upland between himself and their fire, yet the circle which they made in again recovering the road enabled the stealthy Indian to glide unseen along a snowy swale, and shelter himself in a thicket of evergreens, from which he soon seized an opportunity to escape into the deep forest.

Brant did not retire, however, until he had first seen the march of the Congressional army, whose main body was now at hand. The forces were newly levied; but, though exhibiting few of the disciplined traits of veteran soldiery, yet the sturdy yeomanry wore individually that martial air which characterizes Frontiers-men skilled from their boyhood to the use of arms, alike in the wild forest-hunt and the Indian foray. The clump of cedars in which Brant had ensconced himself crowned a rocky knoll which commanded a turning of the

road; and the stern though dejected mien with which he looked upon the pageant; the gaze, half sullen, half admiring, which he fixed upon the serried battalion, as banner, and plume, and fluttering scarf, and bright bayonet flashing in the frosty air, swept beneath his view, might have marked the chief as the personified genius of his fated race; a warrior prophet, who gazed admiringly upon the battle cloud whose thunders he knew must destroy his people.

CHAPTER III.

THE FASTNESS.

"But see, along that mountain's slope, a fiery horseman ride,
Mark his torn plume, his tarnished belt, the sabre at his side;
His spurs are buried rowel deep, he rides with loosened rein,
There's blood upon his charger's flank, and foam upon his mane;
He speeds toward the olive-grove, along that shaded hill,
God shield the helpless maiden there, if he should mean her ill."

BRYANT.

BRADSHAWE, after the interview which had been so abruptly commenced and broken off with Brant, lost no time in making his escape from the precincts of Johnstown, where the presence of the patriot forces made every moment fraught with peril to him. Indeed, after escaping so nearly from their hands, he was obliged more than once to make a wide circuit in order to avoid the straggling bands of Whig militia that seemed pouring along the roads, bent upon making their way to join the main column of Schuyler's army.

Schoharie was the point which he now aimed at making as quickly as possible; and as it was long before he could venture to cross the frozen river and turn his horse's head upon the direct route he wished to travel, the noble animal had occasion more than once to rue the brutal temper of his master, as, chafing with impatience at each cause of delay that interposed, he now spurred hotly toward the bank of the stream, and now wheeled from its brink, or reined up sharply at some turning of the road. Here the rapids, or the evident weakness of the ice,

prevented him from crossing; there the deep snow-drifts, or the steep and slippery banks, prevented him from descending to the frozen highway; and now again there were appearances upon the opposite shore which deterred him from trusting himself upon the snowy waste, where his dark figure crossing over might be seen at a long gunshot, and tempt some idle patriot ranger, or officious "committee-of-safety" member to bring him to for a parley.

The immediate personal peril weighed not, indeed, a feather with him. But to be recognised and tracked in the snow to his ultimate destination might be fatal to the projects which he had now most at heart. The truth is, that, though Bradshawe had, when he found himself so hard pressed by Brant, designated the Cave of Waneonda as the present retreat of Alida, he was not himself perfectly assured that she was really there, though his last orders to his creature Valtmeyer had been to make that disposition of his prize; and, believing that his wishes in this respect had been complied with, he was actually upon his way to the cavern, when the rumoured approach of Schuyler induced him momentarily to change his destination, and make the best of his way to Sir John Johnson.

Brant, as it appeared, had been misinformed as to Bradshawe's keeping himself aloof from his political friends, and attending to his own concerns in Schoharie. His actual business had been among the Tories in the neighbourhood of Wyoming, whom he succeeded in confirming, and drawing off in a body, to unite their forces with a band of Iroquois which had established a position about the forks of the Susquehanna, upon the confines of New-York and Pennsylvania. And this absence in that then unsettled country will account for his ignorance of the projected movement and subsequent march of

the patriots upon Johnstown, until he had reached the southwestern settlements of Tryon county.

He had unexpectedly, upon an order from Sir John, started upon his expedition immediately after planning the abduction of Brant's fair captive, which was so ruthlessly consummated by his creature Valtmeyer. He had heard of Valtmeyer's success only through an Indian runner charged with letters from Sir John, by whom Valtmeyer also contrived to transmit intelligence from himself. The tidings from either spoke of the precarious condition of their party, and Bradshawe determined that, whatever course public affairs might take, his own private views should not necessarily be thwarted. At present he thought only how he could best make sure of the prey which Valtmeyer had thus far secured for him.

That ruffian, immediately upon the seizure of his victim, had, by the aid of confederates, transported her to a lonely cabin upon the skirts of the settlements, where a thrifty innkeeper, privately associated with the outlaw in certain matters of business best known to themselves, maintained a small establishment, which he dignified with the name of his Dairy Farm.

The inn of mine host lay some miles distant from this possession upon the public highway. During the first months of the present troubles it had been used alike by both parties as a rendezvous for their public meetings. But as the cause of the Whigs advanced in popularity, the opposite faction appeared to have withdrawn their patronage from the house, though there were some shrewd surmises that the landlord did not therefore suffer in his coffers. But when it was whispered that the Dairy Farm harboured a nest of Tory spies, and served merely as a sort of scouting-post to collect political gossip

from the inn below, the close inquiry that was at once instituted, followed by an examination of the tavern-keeper before a committee of safety, elicited nothing to inculpate that worthy, and, as every one thought, much-injured individual.

An old black woman and a strapping mulatto lass, whose labours in the dairy were superintended, from time to time, by the pretty daughter of the proprietor, seemed the only permanent or occasional occupants of the place. The old woman was deaf and suffering from rheumatism; the mulatto seemed an exception to the generality of her quick-witted race, in being as stolid and stupid of intellect as she was simple and ignorant; and the pretty Tavy Wingear was known the country round as a sprightly, frank, and guileless girl, whom no one would think of making the depositary of a political secret. All suspicions about the Dairy Farm were allayed, and it became nearly as safe a house for the royalist partisans as ever, until the affair of the Hawksnest, subsequent to which the Tories had been shy of holding their secret meetings anywhere in this immediate neighbourhood.

Such was the spot to which Valtmeyer bore his prisoner; and here, having the two Africans to attend upon her, Alida had passed even months, with no signs of approaching rescue to cheer her solitude. Valtmeyer was often, though never for any length of time, absent from the house; and irksome as this imprisonment became, yet, though he proffered her the full range of the premises whenever his eye was there to watch her motions, this was just the season when confinement to her chamber became most welcome.

Long weeks wore on, and the hope of release became almost extinct in her bosom. The summer was gone; autumn, with its varied tints, made the

forests around like one gorgeous bed of tulips to the eye. Winter was at hand, with all its icy rigours; yet the lapse of the seasons and the change of the foliage, as she viewed it from her window, was all that varied the monotonous hours of the unhappy Alida. Once, indeed, and only a few days after she was first immured in this lonely spot, her heart leaped as she heard the blithe tones of a gay young female voice beneath her window. But, flying to the casement, she was scarcely permitted to catch a glimpse of the young woman from whose lips came the cheering sound, before Valtmeyer had rushed into her apartment and rudely drawn her back from the window.

Upon two other occasions she heard the same tones at a distance; and once, before the autumn became sere, she had seen a stranger female afar off, gathering flowers upon the hillside, while a Canadian pony stood grazing near her. The next moment the country damsel leaped into her saddle, and, galloping gayly past the house, guided her active pony amid the stumps of the clearing until she had reached the road, and soon after disappeared to the view of Alida. The sight of that free-limbed courser, and the thought of escape which its appearance suggested, awakened a fresh yearning for freedom that was all but maddening. But neither the horse nor the rider ever appeared again.

As the winter set in, however, a change of scene, if not a release from imprisonment, was soon to be realized by the unoffending captive. Bradshawe, alarmed for the security of his prey, had written to Valtmeyer by the runner who had brought him a missive from that worthy confederate, giving a glowing account of his successful adventure. His letter urged Valtmeyer to lose no time in moving Miss De Roos from so dangerous a neighbourhood. For

Alida's friends were scouring the country round for traces of Thayendanagea's captive.

Her fickle-minded but high-spirited brother, so far from slackening in his endeavour to rescue her after the first ill-starred attempt already commemorated, had twice beaten up the Mohawk's quarters with a strong band of border yeomanry; nor did he give up dogging the movements of Brant until the chief had crossed the frontier and passed into Canada for a season. Despairing, then, of recovering his sister by the means hitherto used, Derrick had made his way to the head-quarters of the patriot army, where, offering his sword to his country, he lived in the hope of obtaining tidings of the lost Alida through the medium of the first flag of truce that should be sent to the royalist generals in Canada. Balt, too, the humble but zealous friend of the Hawksnest family, adopting less readily the belief that Brant had removed his captive across the frontier, had, after accompanying Derrick in his bootless wildwood quest at the north, renewed a diligent search among the haunts of the Tories nearer home.

It was the restless and prying offices of this faithful fellow—which Valtmeyer, with characteristic hardihood, seemed to make light of when detailing them to his employer—that awakened the anxiety of Bradshawe for the better security of his prize; and his letter designated a remarkable cavern in Schoharie county, well known both to the outlaw and his ruffian principal as the best retreat for security; and it commanded that, as soon as the winter snows should allow of easy and rapid transportation, a covered sleigh should convey Alida, her two attendants, and such furniture as would be indispensable, to this dungeon fastness. A valuable farm on the German Flats, with the promised manumission of the African servants, who were actually the slaves of Brad-

shawe, was the promised reward for these services if they should be faithfully and effectually rendered.

This letter was the last communication which Bradshawe had held with the lawless instrument of his crimes. He was now about to realize how far his behests had been obeyed. He burned with impatience to ascertain the result of Valtmeyer's machinations, and he ground his teeth in wrath at the thought that the momentary quailing of his spirit before that of Brant had betrayed his secret, endangered his final triumph over Alida, and perhaps compromised the safety alike of his confederate and himself. His horse had long since become way-worn and jaded; still it was scarcely possible that Brant, though he might have taken a more direct course for the cavern, could on foot accomplish the journey as soon as himself. His rage and vexation at the bare possibility were for a moment insupportable; and then, as he ferociously vented his feelings upon his tired steed, struggling now with difficulty through the deep snowdrifts, he became calmer the next instant upon remembering that Brant was alone, and that Valtmeyer, in performing his duty of castellan, might possibly despatch the officious and insolent Mohawk.

In the mean time, as the short winter's day approached to a close, Bradshawe himself began to suffer for the want of refreshment; and he was compelled to admit, at last, that it was impossible for his horse to proceed farther, and that he would prove useless on the morrow unless the wants of the animal were soon administered to. And, fortunately for both, an asylum soon presented itself in the deserted cabin of some fugitive settler, whom fear of the Indians had driven from his solitary clearing in the forest to some safer home.

storm of rain and sleet set in a few moments

after the horseman gained this welcome shelter; but he heeded not its peltings without, as, after tethering his horse in one corner of the shanty, he kindled a fire upon the hearth, and by its light discovered a pile of unshocked corn, which he soon laid under contribution, both for himself and his steed. He foddered the horse, while still heated, with the dried blades and husks only, busying himself in the mean time with shelling the ears. The grain thus procured was partly pounded up, and, by the aid of snow-water, converted into hoe-cakes, which were soon roasting by the fire. The rest of it, with a dozen more loose ears, he placed before his horse after this frugal supper was served; nor did Bradshawe resign himself to rest before, like an experienced trooper, he had well groomed his noble steed, by using the husks and cobs of the maize as a substitute for the straw whisp and brush, to which the animal's glossy coat showed he was accustomed. His fire, in the mean time, he fed with an armful of fuel from the same pile which had supplied him with provisions. It blazed up so as to fill the whole cabin with a ruddy light as the dry blades were first ignited, crackled and sputtered for a few moments as the grains of corn became parched and split by the heat, and then subsided into a bed of glowing brands as the dry cobs were seized upon by the element.

"And why," thought Bradshawe, as, wrapped in his cloak, he now stretched himself out for repose, "why may not the burning of this indigenous plant be emblematic of the career of the thousands of my countrymen who are reared almost upon it alone. Here is the quick flash of their first outbreak of rebellion, the noisy sputtering far and wide, in which men more wise than myself thought that it would vent itself and have an end. And here are the live

coals at the bottom, that will burn on steady through this long winter's night!—Pshaw! what care I, though, if men are such asses as to light the fire, so I only can warm my fingers by the blaze?" And, concluding his unwonted strain of thought with this characteristic reflection, the worthy trooper resigned himself to slumber.

The dawn found Bradshawe again upon his journey. But the rain of the preceding night, followed by one of those mild, foggy days which sometimes occur in midwinter, made his road a difficult one: the half-thawed snow was converted into slush, which, yielding and slipping beneath his horse's feet, made the track at once heavy and insecure. The rivulets upon the hillside too, released for a brief period from their icy fetters, were swollen frequently to torrents, which were absolutely perilous in the passage. The road he was traversing could scarcely, indeed, be dignified with the title of a bridle-path; and though the cavern toward which he was urging his course has of late years been frequently visited by the curious, it would be difficult to designate the route by which Bradshawe had hitherto approached it by any precise geographical data of the present day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAVERN OF WANEONDA.

"Earth hath her wondrous scenes, but few like this.
The everlasting surge hath worn itself
A pathway in the solid rock; and there,
Far in those caverned chambers, where the warm,
Sweet sunlight enters not, is heard the war
Of hidden waves, imprisoned tempests—bursting
Anon like thunder; then, with low, deep moan,
Falling upon the ear—the mournful wail,
As Indian legends say, of spirits accursed."

MRS. ELLET.

IN the hilly region of Schoharie county, where the Onidegra ridge of the Helderburg mountains extends its flanking battlements of perpendicular rock along the lovely vale of the Schoharie kill, there ran in former days an old Indian pathway.

The principal route between Schoharie court-house and the hamlets to the east and west of that settlement, as well as the great Indian trail between Catskill and Canajoharie, had a course nearly parallel with this path, and it had therefore been neglected for so many years as to be nearly forgotten by every one, save some roving Indian that now and then straggled into the settlements, or the white hunter, who, tired with traversing the forest thickets and rocky defiles of the adjacent mountains, took his homeward way along this secluded but well-beaten path.

This trail, where Bradshawe was now travelling it, was walled by huge buttresses of rock upon the west, while its terraced edge commanded, through the leafless trees, a complete view of the vale of the Schoharie upon the east; and as a burst of sunshine

ever and anon lighted up with smiles that landscape which even in winter is most lovely, even the heart of so reckless an adventurer was touched with the idea of carrying rapine and devastation into a scene so exquisitely calm and rural; "yet such," thought he, with a sternness more in unison with his general character, "such is our only policy, if the king's party ever again get the ascendancy in the district. We must take the hearthstones from under these people, and then they'll bother us no longer about their parchment privileges."

Alas! did Bradshawe mean to prophesy that Johnson and his bands should sweep, like the besom of desolation, over this fated region within two years afterward? Did he foresee the part which men as ruthless as himself should play in those dark days of monstrous violence?

But now, as he remembers the devious route that he has travelled to avoid the settlements, and looks back upon the road behind him, circling wide to the east and south of his ultimate destination, the desperado remembers again that Brant may have reached it before him. He spurs his horse along the narrow path, descends toward the valley, approaches the village, wheels off, skirts the valley, and, ascending once more, tracks his way through a forest of walnut and maples, and arrives at last at the yawning mouth of Waneonda.

A moment sufficed Bradshawe to secure his horse, and then he impatiently hurried to descend. The top of the pit, some twenty or thirty feet in diameter, was wholly hidden from the eye by some huge trees which had probably been felled across it purposely to screen the opening. But their roots were so grown around with thickets, and the trunks lay tossed about in such disorder, that no design was apparent in their arrangement; and they might

have been thought to be blown down by the wind, or fallen from natural decay precisely where they now lay.

Below this funnel-like cavity, which was not more than ten feet in depth, there opened a narrow fissure about half that breadth, but extending downward into perfect darkness. The top of this black chasm was likewise crossed by several sticks of timber; and to the stoutest and longest of these was attached a perpendicular ladder of rope fifty feet in length, secured by the lower end to the rocks below. The ladder was coated with ice, and Bradshawe was compelled to clutch closely the frozen rungs as his feet slipped repeatedly in descending. A sloping declivity of rocks received him; and so rough and precipitous was his pathway, now rendered doubly perilous by the mud and half-frozen slime from the dripping walls above, that he would scarcely have dared to venture farther amid the darkness that reigned below. But, groping about for a few moments, he felt the broken limb of a tree, and, passing his hand along it toward the trunk, discovered that a new convenience had been provided since last he visited the spot, and he readily perceived that it must have been for the accommodation of Alida that the ponderous piece of timber had been plunged down and placed in its present situation. Lowering himself down the tree in an oblique direction, he soon entirely lost sight of the opening above him; and the temperature of the cave became so mild that traces of ice were no longer discovered. A ladder of wood then gave him a firmer foothold down the third descent; and a fourth declivity of rough rocks brought him to the bottom of the cavern.

The adventurer was now one hundred and fifty feet beneath the surface of the soil; and no one, un-

less as perfectly familiar with the cave as was Bradshawe, could have safely effected the descent amid the darkness which reigned around him. The horizontal passage in which he now found himself was about ten or twelve feet in breadth, nearly half of which space was occupied by a rivulet running in a southern direction; and, keeping as close to the wall on his left as possible, Bradshawe followed it for a few paces, until the roof of the cavern drooped so low that he could feel it with his outstretched hands as he placed them before him. Dropping now upon his knees, he crawled along for several yards, until his eyes were greeted by a stream of light which came through a narrow aperture on the left. He crawled through the opening, and entered an apartment some thirty feet in diameter by a hundred or more in height.

Had Bradshawe possessed a taste for the grand and beautiful in nature, the appearance of this chamber might have arrested his attention. The ceiling was fretted with stalactites; the walls hung with a rich tracery of spar, which likewise, in a thousand fantastic forms, encumbered the floor upon which, in the course of ages, its broken fragments had fallen. But a solitary lamp, fed with bear's fat, which stood upon a truncated column in the centre, dimly revealing the glistening objects around, seemed only to claim his attention as he eagerly advanced toward it. A bugle lay by the side of the lamp; and, taking the latter only in his hand, he repassed through the fissure which had admitted him into "the Warder's Room," as it was called by his followers, and regained the low-arched passage from which he had temporarily digressed.

Crawling now cautiously a few paces in advance, he paused, and, placing the bugle to his lips, blew a blast which resounded through the cavern. Sev-

eral minutes now elapsed; the last rumbling echoes seemed to have traversed every chamber of the cavern which could send back a sound, and died away at last in some unfathomable abyss remote from them all. At last a sound like the dip of an Indian paddle was heard. A shred of light then seemed to flicker upon the bottom of the cave, like a glow-worm crawling along its floor toward him. A moment after the feeble ray became stronger, and separated itself into two dots of light, which were still approaching; and then, again, from the brighter reflection upon the water as the taper now neared Bradshawe, it could be seen that he was standing upon the brink of a subterranean lake, and that a canoe, with one solitary voyager, was approaching him.

"Valtmeyer, is he here, my good Charon?" asked Bradshawe of the deformed half-breed that steered the canoe, as the man turned a rocky promontory on the left, and suddenly presented his features in full view by the ruddy torchlight.

"He is here, captain," replied the Indian, respectfully.

"And the lady?"

"I know nothing of the lady since the first day she came down among us, when I carried her along the River of Ghosts to the chamber at the north end of the cavern, which our men call the 'Chapel.'"

"And has no one else been here?"

"Not a soul but Red Wolfert, and he seems to go near her as seldom as possible."

"It is well. Shove off."

There was a silence for a few moments as the shallop kept her way over the deep and mysterious flood; and Bradshawe, as he sat with folded arms in the stern, seemed busied only in trying to pierce

with his eye the undiscoverable height of the black vault above him.

"Who of my band are here?" he at length resumed, abruptly.

"Not those whom you value most; and some, perhaps, who should never have been trusted with the secret of the cave. But Syl Stickney says that things are going so badly above, that we must find hiding-places for our friends if we'd have them stick to the cause, and Wolfert therefore forgave him for bringing them down."

"Syl Stickney and be d—d to him! I must pistol that officious rascal some cold morning," muttered Bradshawe; and then added aloud, "And have these fellows seen the lady?"

"Neither they nor Syl. Syl only guesses that there is some mystery shut up at the other end of the cave; for Wolfert has forbidden that the newcomers should be told there is such a place as the Chapel; and he swears he'll cut Syl's throat if he approaches it."

"Admirable Wolfert!" said Bradshawe, mentally; "thou hast thus far been the truest of ruffians, and well earned thy reward."

The boat had now reached the farther shore of this "Black Acheron," where a shelving indentation among the steep rocks affords a landing-place to the voyager, who, having passed the gulf, proposes to penetrate the Cimmerian region beyond. This enterprise, though unattended with danger, is sufficiently awe-inspiring to any one who has been ferried over that dark, still river, upon which no beam of sunshine has ever fallen. But a man less bold than Bradshawe might have shrunk from adventuring farther, if unfamiliar with the sounds which now met his ear as he scaled a rough ascent leading up from the water side; for never from Tar-

tarus itself arose a wilder discord of horrid blasphemy, intermingled with drunken laughter. The strange, unearthly oaths, echoed from the hollow depths around, seemed to tremble long in air, as if it *thickened* with the damning sounds, and held them there suspended as in their proper element. The peals of eldrich merriment were first shrilly reverberated as in mockery from the vaulted roof; and then, as if flung back into some lower pit, some burial-house of mirth, died away in a sullen moan beneath his very feet.

This strange confusion of sounds, however, lost its effect upon the ear the moment Bradshawe had entered the outlaws' banqueting hall, where he suddenly presented himself in the midst of his men, who, in every variety of costume, were variously grouped about the vast circular chamber. Some were carousing deeply around a board well filled with flagons; some, seated upon the ground, were deep in a game of cards together; the rattling of a dice-box betrayed the not dissimilar occupation of two others; while some, more remote from the rest, were amusing themselves with jumping for a wager, and other feats of strength and agility. The size of this apartment, which formed a rotunda forty paces in diameter by fifty feet in height, afforded ample room for all this diversity of occupation.

Syl Stickney and others of Bradshawe's Tory followers, who were not willing to identify themselves completely with Valtmeyer's especial band of outlaws, though they had long consorted with them, kept partially aloof; a herd of them being collected around the worthy Sylla himself, who, with a tankard by his side and a pipe in his mouth, sat upon a ponderous fragment of fallen spar, discoursing much to his own satisfaction, if not to that of his hearers.

"Why, do tell!" he exclaimed, breaking off in his discourse, "if there aint the capting now! Did I ever! Why, capting, I was jist saying to my brother Marius and these gentlemen—"

"Your brother Marius be d—d. Keep your seats, gentlemen. Stickney, where's Valtmeyer?"

"I guess, if you follow the turning to the right, you'll find him in one of the chambers to the north o' this," said the cool Syl, without ever moving from his seat to salute or welcome his officer.

"Nay, my good fellows," said Bradshawe, turning to the others, who were beginning to explain how they had become his guests in his absence, "the king's friends are always welcome to any shelter I can afford them; and I ought, perhaps, to thank our friend Stickney here for gaining such valuable recruits for my band in times like these."

"Ought ye, raaly, capting? Well, now, that's jist what I told Red Wolfert when he showed signs of kicking up a muss, case, when I went up into daylight one day to lift a rebel sheep or two, 'Wolfert,' says I—but, by darn, the capting's cleared out without speaking to one of the company but ourselves." And, true enough, Bradshawe, seizing a torch from a cleft in the rock, had glided out of the apartment, unobserved by all save those who had marked his entrance.

Taking now a northern direction, he soon encountered the outlaw in a long narrow passage leading from some secret chamber where arms and munitions were said to be kept, but which Valtmeyer probably appropriated to the stowage of booty; a matter which Bradshawe, who did not care to mix himself up with the predatory doings of his lieutenant, never inquired into. Valtmeyer, exchanging but few words with his leader for the present, led him back to the Outlaws' Hall, where

every one seemed to be too much engaged in their own pastime to notice them, as, passing along the wall on one side, Bradshawe entered a narrow aperture toward the south, leading to a distinct suite of apartments. Here Valtmeyer soon brought him the refreshment he so much needed after the toils he had undergone.

In one of these chambers, where the air was ever cooled and kept in motion by the dripping of water from above, a thin plate of stone upon which it fell emitted a sound not unlike that which proceeds from the body of a guitar or other stringed instrument when the wooden part is lightly tapped by the finger. These monotonous tones, varying only at times to a higher and wilder key, as if the cords of the instrument were swept by some unseen hand, mingled strangely with the low murmur of their voices as the two adventurers conversed together; while the huge Cyclopean frame of the freebooter, and fiery eye and reckless features of the Tory captain—which looked doubly wan by the blazing torch that the other held before them while sitting in deep shadow himself—formed one of those studies which the old masters so loved to paint.

A few moments sufficed Bradshawe to despatch his hasty meal, and possess himself of all the information which his zealous coadjutor had to impart; and, repassing again through the Outlaws' Hall, without pausing to make himself known to the half-drunken revellers who were still grouped about it much in the same attitudes in which they were first introduced to the reader, he motioned silently to the wierd-looking ferryman who had brought him into these gloomy realms, and once more regained the shores of the subterranean lake.

The black pool was then again crossed; and, passing by the Warder's Room on the right, the two

pursued the arched passage which Bradshawe had before traversed, until they came to the open space in the cave where he had first reached the bottom in descending from the region of daylight to these grim abodes.

The cloistered arches above rose so loftily that the roof was shrouded in impenetrable darkness; and here, through a small aperture in the wall on the left, was again heard the sound of water. It seemed not to be a still, sullen lake, like that he had just crossed, but a flowing river, whose waves dashed heavily and slowly against the cavernous rocks which confined them on either side; and now, taking a torch and paddle in his hands, and placing himself in a recumbent posture in a boat barely large enough to admit of its being pushed through the crevice, Bradshawe, by the aid of the half-breed, entered the opening in the curtain of rock, and launched upon the stream beyond.

The subterranean voyager, who first pushed himself along with his hands only, soon found the vault to enlarge above him, so that he could sit erect in the boat and use his paddle. The water, so clear that his torchlight gleamed upon the bottom some thirty feet below him, was only broken at long intervals by a mimic cascade scarcely a foot in height, over which he easily lifted his shallop, and proceeded upon his errand to the distant chamber where Alida was immured. In this spacious apartment Valtmeyer had partitioned off a dry place by erecting a bark shanty over it, and made other provisions for the unhappy female, from whom, in the outlaw's slang, it took its name of "The Lady's Chapel." But Bradshawe has now gained the threshold of that the dreariest bower in which Beauty ever yet received her suiter, and we must pause before venturing to describe the strange and painful interview between them.

CHAPTER V.

THE INTERVIEW.

"*Hernando.* Thou art here
Wholly within my power; now, as a guest,
Fair cousin, be less scornful.
Izidora. Thou wouldst not dare to wrong me!
Hernando. I would be
Loth to do that; I claim thy hand;
If thou dost scorn me, lady, then beware!"
Velasco, by EPES SARGENT.

"The hallowed honour that protects a maid
Is round me like a circle of bright fire;
A savage would not cross it, nor shall you.
I'm mistress of my presence—leave me, sir."—WILLIS.

THE ruffian Valtmeyer had not, as we have hinted, been wholly unmindful of the comfort of his captive when dragging her from the light of day to become the tenant of this dungeon-like abode. Whether this considerateness arose from motives utterly selfish, or whether the outlaw had really some latent sparks of kindness in his rude bosom, it is impossible to say. But certainly he had been at much pains in preparing "the Chapel" for its occupant before he ever brought her to the cave.

The spot which he had selected for her tent or wigwam of birchen bark had been smoothed by filling up its inequalities with dry leaves; and these, when covered by a piece of Indian matting, afforded an elastic and comfortable carpet. Hither he had, too, with much trouble—from the difficulty of transporting articles of any bulk through these sinuous vaults—conveyed bedding, a chair or two, a table—which he was obliged to take to pieces, and

which cost him many an oath in reconstructing —and other household articles. Nor had he forgotten even the ordinary kitchen utensils when preparing one corner of the Chapel for the accommodation of the two coloured women who were to attend upon Alida.

It was probably owing to these arrangements chiefly that the health of Miss De Roos was not utterly prostrated by the long weeks she was compelled to pass in the gloomy vaults of Waneonda. For though the air of this remarkable cavern is said to be perfectly pure, and the temperature mild and equable, yet such utter exclusion from the light of day must always be more or less prejudicial, especially to one whose anxious spirit is so worn by emotion that the frame needs all fostering care to prevent its giving way and releasing the throbbing tenant.

But the thought of Death, which, to most characters in her situation, would often have suggested itself as a refuge, had perhaps never once occurred to Alida de Roos. She neither wished for it nor feared it. But she did fear that her bodily strength might give way; her mind become enfeebled with the decay of her health; that mind, upon whose inborn and conscious energies she so haughtily relied in the last emergency to which she might be driven. She did fear that the greatest trial of its ascendency and its powers—for she knew that she was in Bradshawe's hands—might be deferred till her faculties were impaired by suffering and her hitherto indomitable spirit overborne.

The thought that those faculties might fail their mistress, and that she might fall irretrievably into the power of Bradshawe, was maddening to her. She revolted from it whenever it swept athwart her brain. She tried to forget her sorrows; she refused

to entertain her griefs; she endeavoured to postpone, as it were, reflecting upon the full horrors of her situation; and she caught at every object within her reach that could occupy her attention, if it did not amuse her mind. She divided their duties with her attendants, and assumed all those which appertained immediately to the care of her own person; she borrowed her needle of the mulatto, who was glad of an excuse for remaining unemployed, and sleeping away the indolent and monotonous hours; and, listening for hours to her dotard prating, she drew from the elder negress all the superstitious lore which formed the only furniture wherewith the mind of the decrepit crone was supplied.

Alida unwittingly thus attached these humble companions to her; and as their simple-hearted affection more and more manifested itself, she began at last to derive a certain solace from their sympathy which actually approached to pleasure in their society. The dungeon-doomed captive, who, in his solitary misery, has made friends of animals that belong to the very lowest and most loathsome orders of created beings, can alone, perhaps, appreciate this growth of friendship between a mind the most gifted and refined, and those the least tutored and liberalized.

On the day—if the phrase be allowable in regions where night alone hath, since creation, reigned—on the day that Bradshawe came on his stern errand to the Lady's Chapel, Alida had, from some slight indisposition, remained withdrawn in her tent; and the two blacks, for the purpose of washing some household articles, had kindled a fire upon the brink of the stream, within a few yards of its door, where they sat watching a boiling kettle, and chattering together after the manner of their loquacious race. The sound of their voices prevented their hearing

Bradshawe's approach; and as he extinguished his torch the moment he came within the guiding light of their fire, he was wholly unobserved till he stood suddenly before them.

The shriek they simultaneously uttered at the apparition startled Alida from her couch, and she sprang to her feet, lifting, at the same time, the curtain of her tent, so that the light of a lamp suspended from within fell brokenly across her loosely arrayed person.

Bradshawe, motioning with the back of his hand as if he would cuff the negroes aside, pushed his way at once rudely between them. "Shut up, you squalling black brutes," cried the ruffian, in a characteristic tone, which changed on the instant, as if belonging to another voice, as, bowing low, he saluted Alida when he had approached a few paces toward her.

"I have come," said he, pausing in his advance, and casting his eyes, as in respect to her, upon the ground, "I have come, unheralded and unannounced, I fear, no welcome visiter."

"Unheralded? Who but the savage Valtmeyer is *your* fitting herald? Unannounced? What better than the terrors of this hideous dungeon could announce its proper jailer! Waste not the soft speeches that sit so idly on your lips, and are thrown away in my ears. But tell me, tell me, Walter Bradshawe, whence come you, why come you? Tell me why I am here; for what monstrous wickedness have I been kidnapped, kept for months aloof from my friends and family, and brought to this spot? and why do you stand there blasting my eyes with your presence? Speak out, man; out with it all, if words can syllable the foul contrivings of your heart!"

Thus haughtily did Alida confront her spoiler;

and as she thus, in look as well as words, gave vent to her outraged feelings, while Bradshawe, standing on the declivity below her, seemed to stoop and cower before her presence, she looked—half emerging from the drapery of the tent, with the pale light from within brightening the outlines of her features and person, and leaving the rest in deep shadow—she looked like some indignant spirit, who, descending from a brighter world, had pierced its way into these black realms to rebuke their unhallowed master.

"By Jove, she'll unhitch lightning against me next," said Bradshawe, mentally. "She's a great girl, and no mistake, this same Mistress Bradshawe;" and then, still preserving his obsequious and almost reverential bearing toward her, he rejoined aloud, "I can bear this from you; this, and more, Alida. My heart has not now, for the first time, to be schooled in your unkindness. If you call it kidnapping to rescue you from the horrors of Indian captivity; if you call it outrage to provide a secluded and safe home for you, when the havoc of civil war has made thousands shelterless, and your own friends are either scattered or slain; if you call it wickedness to snatch you from the neighbourhood of these scenes of horror as they thicken through the land, and provide you here a retreat which, rude and gloomy as I confess it is, still is not without its comforts and advantages; if these humble, but zealous and unwearying efforts of one who has long since waived his right as a husband to win your regard as a friend, can make no amends for the one rash but well-meant act by which I would have made you mine—then—then, Alida—then—"

"Then, sir!" said the lady, scornfully, as he

paused a moment for a word; "well, sir, and what then?"

"I'm d—d if *I* know," said Bradshawe to himself. "The jade looks so cursed cool that my stump eloquence fails me. I must go it on some other touch."

"Why don't you finish your speech, sir?" repeated Alida, noticing his hesitation. "Why stop you so short in your pleadings and specifications? Even Mr. Bradshawe's enemies allow him the glibness, as well as the guile, of a county-court attorney."

He did not reply, and the lady went on. "Bradshawe, you are a skilful actor, a most specious hypocrite, though your selfish passions are too fitful and stormy to make you a consummate one. But you must deem me credulous indeed when you claim for yourself motives of disinterested kindness which would give the lie to all I have known of your character in long years gone by. The very attachment with whose declaration this cruel persecution began, was—"

"Was true, pure, disinterested, by Heaven!" exclaimed Bradshawe, now really speaking from his heart; "was earnest and devoted as ever mortal man bore toward your sex. No, no, Alida, chafe me not with that. Had you but accepted my honourable proposals when first I dared to press my suit, you might have made me what you would. Wild and reckless as men called me, my mother's gentleness seemed born anew in my spirit whenever it turned to you."

"And where," said Alida, not wholly untouched by this natural burst of feeling, yet shuddering as she spoke the words which followed, "where was that spirit of gentleness when those horrid nuptials were forced upon me; when, by your lawless instruments, I was torn from my home, and my hand

to you in wedlock made the price by which alone you consented to redeem me from the licentious hands of that young barbarian with whom you, as well as Valtmeyer, were colleagued ? That fearful night ! oh God ! oh God !" And the now agitated Alida covered her face with her hands, as if shutting out some hideous spectre which her imagination had conjured up for the moment.

" You have never had reason," said Bradshawe, coldly, " to believe that I was privy to that deed of violence ; and though, for certain valuable political services he has rendered, I have since taken Valtmeyer into my confidence, no man has ever dared to whisper audibly that I was at that time colleagued with him. No, Alida, though you *then* disbelieved the tale, I can now only repeat the same story I told you *then*. And what are the circumstances ? I had been some weeks from home in a remote settlement, and, returning by a short road through the wilderness, I stop to bait my horse at the solitary lodge of an Indian missionary. I find the timid man in the utmost anxiety about a female prisoner that, within an hour, had been brought to the house by a ferocious young savage, whose band is hovering near. His followers have called the spoiler away for a few hasty moments, and left a white desperado to stand guard over the captive. I ask to see her, and, to my horror, discover that it is Alida ; she whom, a short month since, I had hoped to call my Alida ; she for whom still, as her rejected lover, I cherished the deepest respect, the tenderest affection. In my wrath I threaten Valtmeyer for the part he has played in this forced abduction. He derides my anger, and points to the smoke of the Indian fires near by, as seen through the window. I entreat, I conjure him. I add bribes to my entreaties, and he consents to hear me, but re-

jects the alternatives of flight or resistance as equally hopeless in rescuing the prisoner. There is but one resort remains. I am not personally unknown to Au-neh-yesh; I must plead to him. But will he hear me in such a cause? He has already avowed to the Catholic missionary his intention to marry the white woman; will he be dissuaded from his course by words, when his deeds have just proved the determination of his character. No! there is no way of rescuing you from the ruthless hands of that licentious son of Brant, but by convincing him that you are already married; that, in a word, you are my wife. Proofs are wanting; for, as you do not bear my name, I must make it appear that the espousals long since took place clandestinely. The missionary is the only party at hand whose testimony will be believed; but he refuses to give it falsely. He will not swear that we are married unless the rite be solemnized; but he consents, if we accept his ministry at once, to leave a blank in the marriage certificate, which I can antedate, so that Au-neh-yesh shall have no suspicion of being overreached. What remains to be told? You startle from a stupor as you hear the dreadful sound of his voice approaching from a distance; there is not a moment to be lost; the service is hurried through; you faint at the last response, but the ceremony is finished, and the demi-savage foiled in his claim before he makes his appearance at the door."

"God of mercy!" passionately exclaimed Alida, clasping her hands together, "*is* Thy truth like human truth? Not one word which that man has spoken can I gainsay; yet, while the very scene he describes passed before my eyes—my own eyes—I feel, I know, that it was all false; false, fiendishly false. A LIE; a living, breathing, moving lie.'

She paused. "Yet I did see that stony-eyed priest; I did hear Bradshawe pleading with Valtmeyer; I do remember leaping forward when I heard the voice of that red barbarian, whose naked arm had been around my waist an hour before.—More I remember not till they showed me that fatal certificate; but even then I did not think that this was all a cruel inveiglement, and Bradshawe a specious villain, a most accursed.—When and whence, then, came this firm conviction that I was foully dealt with—that I was a blind victim in the toils of demons?"

The ill-starred lady, while speaking thus, with eyes intensely fixed on vacancy, pushed back with her fingers the long tresses from her brow, as if her intellectual as well as physical vision could thus be cleared. Then shaking her head, from which the dishevelled hair again fell slowly to her shoulders, she turned and fixed on Bradshawe a look so mournful yet so piercing, that even his features of bronze betrayed the uneasy and painful emotion it awakened. But whether that emotion was one of alarm for the future or of remorse for the past; whether his guilty heart quailed beneath that penetrating glance, or whether the grief-stricken mien of the beautiful woman whom he had reduced to this condition of forlornness touched some latent feeling of pity and regret, it was impossible to say. The slight agitation passed rapidly from his countenance, and, folding his arms with a composed but dejected air, in which something of dignity was not unmingled, he said,

"Madam, it is in vain for me to attempt removing these ungenerous, these monstrous suspicions. I shall never attempt to combat with them more; nor would I now have said what I have said, save that I always attributed your horror of my legal claim

upon your hand to some painful impression upon your mind, made during the fits of delirium which marked the long illness that followed those unhappy nuptials. I therefore suspended that claim till years should intervene and efface these frightful imaginings. I for years avoided molesting you with my hateful presence, though, unseen by you, I was often hovering near. I kept secret the bond of union between us. I thought that time might soften the bitterness of your aversion. I hoped to melt at last that heart of obduracy. But I have reasoned vainly. An opportunity such as I have recently availed myself of to prove my watchful affection and devotedness, may never again occur; and if it does, what will be my reward if I embrace it? Scorn and contempt—ay, those are my wages—scorn for the feelings that prompted the service, contempt for the claim I would thus purchase on your regard."

The lady bowed her head and wept. The borderer saw he was gaining an advantage, and determined to pursue it. She spoke not, and he thus went on:

"Hear me, Alida: there was a time when, in the full tide of youth, madly as I loved you, I would never have taken you as a reluctant partner to my bosom. But years of care and disappointment have sobered this arrogance of all-exacting affection. I am, alas! no longer young; and the freshness of both our lives has passed away for ever. I never have loved, I never can love, another than you; and you —you can never belong to another until my death shall set you free. Why, then, oh why shall we both continue to be miserable for our remaining years? Why will you not make it my privilege, as it is my right, to minister to your happiness, by crowning mine? Why not confide in the partner whom

Destiny has, for good or ill, allotted you, and permit me to announce you to the world as my wife? These wars must soon be over," pursued the Tory captain, gathering confidence as he proceeded; "the rebels are even now splitting into factions among themselves; and when the king's friends come in for honour and offices, and the forfeited estates of heavy-pursed and rich-landed traitors, Walter Bradshawe's claims for the spoils that are won by loyalty and valour will not be the feeblest among them. Ay, and men do say that titles will not be withheld when success shall finally entitle us to the full meed of royal bounty and graciousness. Wilt be my Lady Bradshawe, fair Alida?" And the wily suiter, dropping not ungracefully on one knee, tried that half frank, half humorous smile which had made more than one village maiden pronounce him positively handsome when his features wore it, and which others of the sex, less innocent, had called "the devil's own trick" when they had learned to rue its influence upon their hearts. But Alida—though she too might, in some sense, be numbered among his victims—was made of different metal from those whom Bradshawe had often moulded to his purpose.

"Kneel not to me," she cried, "thou base and sordid slave! thou wretched minion of power debauched and misapplied! thou most fitting tool of drunken tyranny! Share thy name! thy *loyal* name, thy honours, thy titles, forsooth! Vile parricide, I thank thee for reminding me of my bleeding country, which even now is convulsed with the throe of casting out such wretches as thou from her bosom. By Heaven, Bradshawe, I would rather these rocks should close together and crush me where I stand, or that yon black stream should float my senseless corse to an abyss still lower than that in which your

villany has already buried my living frame; I would, I would, rather than bear the name of your wife before men for a single day!"

"There may be a fate reserved for you in these vaults worse than either," said Bradshawe, in a voice husky with passion, as he regained his feet and stepped a pace or two backward. A sheathed poniard, unnoticed by himself, slipped from his belt as he rose, and lay upon the floor of the cavern midway between him and Alida. Her quick eye caught sight of the weapon in a moment; and, almost ere the dreadful import of the last words had reached her ears, she had sprung forward, plucked the dirk from the ground, and recovered her former position. Bradshawe, recoiling first at the impetuous bound she had made toward him, now actually turned pale when he saw her slowly draw the weapon from its sheath, and gaze with a cold smile upon its gleaming blade. He would have spoken, but horror kept him tongue-tied; he would have leaped forward to snatch the deadly steel from her hand, but the least motion on his part would precipitate the catastrophe which he verily believed was impending. But the next movement of Alida relieved the fearful suspense that agitated him. She calmly, after feeling its point, passed the naked dagger through her girdle, so as to secure it to her person.

"It is small, but it will do," she said, flinging the sheath to the feet of Bradshawe. "Your power over me from this moment has its limit. The instrument of my deliverance is in my own hands; and you can do no more than compel me to use it," she added, with an air of determination, so quiet as sufficiently to speak her resolve, even if the words had not been significant enough to reveal her purpose.

"I meant not—I did not mean—" stammered Bradshawe.

"Our conference is over, sir; and it has a fitting end," interrupted Alida, haughtily, waving her hand. "I would be alone, Mr. Bradshawe."

"Another time, then, when my care for your welfare, so far as I can study it in these dreary retreats, shall have obliterated these ignominious suspicions, this most ungenerous and unjust misinterpretation of every word I utter, I will come, Alida, and in a few days, perhaps, may venture to—"

"Come, sir, whenever you have made up your mind to the moment my doom is sealed; but let the victim be released from the presence of the executioner for the few hours that may yet be allotted her."

The curtain of the tent dropped before her as she pronounced these words; and Bradshawe, too much stupified by the sudden turn which events had taken, and confounded by the position in which he had placed himself, withdrew sullenly to his boat, without bestowing the least notice upon his gaping slaves, who had been the mute and astonished witnesses of this singular scene.

"What a cursed blockhead I was to threaten a storm, when I had lots of time to circumvent, and a thousand other ways to drive the garrison to surrender. Wat Bradshawe, you are more of an ass than most men believe you. You great boy you, to let your blood get above your brain for a moment, because a theatrical girl is mad enough to scoff at you! She, too, wholly, at the moment, in your power! Zounds! but my henhawk made a gallant thing of it. That cursed dagger, too, slipping away as it did. Well for me it was not a pistol, or the Amazon had done for me at five paces. She's a tall girl; a great piece of woman's flesh, that same

Mistress Bradshawe. I don't know whether it be love or hatred that drives me on; but something does drive me. If love, there's certainly a streak of malice in it. If hatred, there must be some wishy-washy drippings of tenderness in the bitter waters, for my heart beat the devil's tattoo when she pointed that infernal bodkin so near to her bosom. Hallo, Charon! mongrel half-breed! bowknot of twisted man's flesh! hither, I say! Ah! my good Charon, I dreamed not you were so near at hand."

And Bradshawe, terminating his amiable soliloquy as his deformed follower joined him at the opening in the rock where they had before separated, the two soon afterward regained the Outlaws' Hall.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REFUGEES.

"There's song and oath, and gaming deep,
Hot words and laughter, mad carouse;
There's naught of prayer and little sleep:
The devil keeps the house."—*The Bucanier.*

An injury may be forgiven by a proud spirit, but an insult never. And what human being is without his share of pride? That miserable deformed half-breed; that crooked mongrel of a man; that dumb and uncomplaining slave of the gloomy mine of Waneonda, had yet his human feelings, had still his modicum of inward self-esteem, which brutal words could wound and outrage. His vocation in those tomb-like cells, though toilsome and humble, was still one of the greatest trust; for he was alike warder and seneschal of that subterranean castle, whose moat and drawbridge were the black stream and tottering skiff of the hunchback ferryman.

With these defences the renegade garrison had always held themselves safe from hostile intrusion. They might be starved out of their stronghold, but it could never be carried by assault. For, however the secret of the cave might become known, its recesses could never be penetrated by a stranger, save through the treachery of the ferryman.

That poor wretch, whom we have only known by the sobriquet of Charon, as Bradshawe had nicknamed him, had always enjoyed his confidence, and hitherto not undeservedly; though, while Bradshawe regarded himself as the patron of the half-

breed, and entitled to his gratitude, the other, perhaps, had merely viewed their relations toward each other as a mutual affair of give and take, which left neither party under special obligations to the other. The half-breed, who had originally been a fisherman by occupation, had, in former years, pointed out the cave to Bradshawe when acting as his guide to the trout-streams among the hills. Bradshawe, learning that the spot had been hitherto known only to the Indians, and, for some motive best known to himself, wishing that a knowledge of it should be extended to those white men only to whom he chose to intrust it, determined instantly to take the half-breed into his service, upon condition of his keeping the secret of the place.

Time passed on; the half-breed, carried to another part of the country, became a useless hanger-on of Bradshawe's establishment; nominally a provider for, but really a pensioner upon, Bradshawe's kitchen; in short, one of that lounging, eel-catching degenerates of the aborigines that may still be found near some of the old families on Long Island, incident, as it were, rather than belonging to the establishment. The abduction of Miss De Roos, which made it necessary for Valtmeyer, who played the part of scapegoat in that affair, to disappear from among men for a time, was the first thing that called the half-breed and his secret into actual use. Since that time he had silently almost passed into Valtmeyer's service, who sometimes for a month together retained him in the cavern, of which he was a perfectly contented tenant, and which grew more and more like a home to him. Idle by nature, yet always to be relied upon when any duty was required of him, this inoffensive, taciturn creature was one of the few human beings who had never provoked the imperious insolence of Bradshawe's

nature when brought in familiar contact with him. But his brutality did break out at last in the hour that, foaming with rage and vexation, he called for the service of the ferryman when returning from his fruitless interview with Alida. The jeer at his deformity was resented by the half-breed even in the moment it was uttered; for the means of vengeance were at hand, and, as we shall soon see, he did not hesitate to embrace them.

The goodly company to which Bradshawe was now about to introduce himself in the Outlaws' Hall might, in the slight glimpse we have had of them in these deep cavern shades, have passed well enough as a redoubtable crew of desperadoes, a real melodramatic set of brigands. But the truth is, that, though felon-loving old Salvator might have picked out a head or two among them for his savage pencil, a majority of these worthies would have formed a more suitable study for some American Wilkie—our own Richard Mount, perhaps—whose canvass, borrowing for the nonce some broader and bolder shadows, might delight in preserving the grotesque array of characters.

Among Valtmeyer's immediate crew there were, indeed, some as hideous-looking gentlemen as ever said stand and deliver upon the highway. Faces stolid yet ferocious; looks blended of sinister malice and sensual audacity; wild, rude, and reckless-featured men, with that dash of the genuine savage in their aspect which is only acquired by pursuing a career of crime upon the extreme borders of society, where the practitioner incessantly vibrates between civilized and barbarian life; a variety of the robber species, in short, such as is only found upon our Indian frontiers; such as the curious may occasionally there light upon even at this day; but

such as only existed in perfection when the name of Red Wolfert Valtmeyer was terrible in the land.

But, though these ill-omened visages glowered here and there from beneath the wolfskin cap or checkered handkerchief which swathed around the brows, and, with some tawdry plume or Indian medal stuck in its folds, generally formed the headgear in this portrait-gallery of infernals, yet there was that both in the guise and features of many which was hardly in keeping with their present associations. The complexions and appointments of a few betrayed them as city-bred and of luxurious nurture; they were ill-disciplined youths, whom the mad spirit of loyalty, or some home disgust, or some silly boyish escapado, had driven from a parent's roof to the stormy border, where, in the whirl of events, they had been hurled, with the black-bearded men around them, into this place of bad spirits, where so many had huddled together for safety.

Of others, the faces were coarse, but not weather-beaten, and bloated in some instances, as if by the loose debauch of the roadside tippling-house, from which, perhaps, their swaggering air was likewise borrowed.

Here a red flannel shirt, breeches of corduroy, and thick-soled brogans betrayed the quondam village tradesman; while there the coat of foxy black, or tattered blue with tarnished metal buttons, and shrunken underclothes of threadbare gray, might have bespoken some bankrupt pedler (or travelling merchant, as the country folk would more reverentially call him), save that the rusty-hilted small-sword by his side, bespeaking his oldfashioned claim to gentility, might induce one to set him down as an absconding attorney.

All of the motley group, however, notwithstand-

ing these little discrepances, seemed to be close confreres, who were upon the choicest terms of fellowship together; and though Syl Stickney's contribution of new-comers had been received at first rather coolly by some members of the company, they had all, doubtless, in other scenes and places, often consorted in brotherhood of some kind to establish the harmonious sympathy which reigned among them.

The tie of that brotherhood was political faith! They were all possessed by that spirit which, next to the old democrat DEATH, is your only true leveller, bringing all men on whom it seizes, save only kings and demagogues, upon the same platform. *Party spirit* had made them at first co-labourers, and then co-mates together. But what mattered the temporary inconvenience of so incongruous an association? The disagreeableness and evils of their state affected only themselves; and what mattered such transient exposure when the well-being of countless generations was concerned? Were they not loyal subjects, banded together to sustain, not merely the right of a crowned king, but to preserve and fix the blessed precedence of rank, with all its orderly succession of prerogative, by which alone civilization can be sustained?

Thus reasoned some four or five small landed proprietors or gentlemen farmers of undoubted respectability, who, having compromised their safety in the plots of their party by being seen riding home from more than one Tory rendezvous, were now compelled "to take earth" for a season, and share this den with the lowest dregs of the faction to which they belonged. These suffering partisans of the royal cause had been now for so many weeks crowded together in familiar contact with their present comrades, that there was really little in their

bearing to distinguish them from the rest, though a gray riding-frock and broad-leafed beaver, with a feather in it of the same colour, or the uniform of the royal Greens, in which some of them, who bore a commission in the yeomanry militia, were dressed, might have marked them as being better apparalled than their comrades.

"Ah! Bradshawe," cried one of these worthies, "Bradshawe, my ace of trumps, I am rejoiced to see you; for there are so few faced cards in our pack here, that some of us would throw up our hands in very disgust were it not for the royal game we're playing. But by what devilish legerdemain are we all shuffled here together?"

"Yes, Bradshawe," exclaimed another, "tell us, is there no chance of our breaking away from this cursed hole till the rebels come to unearth us?"

"If you know of any better *hole* to creep into, gentlemen, there is nothing to prevent our parting company at any moment that suits your pleasure," dryly replied Bradshawe, at the same time saluting the company with a formal courtesy.

His personal retainers, crowding tumultuously around him the moment they heard the sound of his voice, prevented any farther parley with the group of gentlemen who had first accosted him, and with whom, indeed, Bradshawe seemed disposed to converse as little as possible. The truth is, that, though he had been more than once indebted to the hospitality of some of them, and would on no account have been so impolitic as to treat any of them with positive rudeness, yet the presence of these royalists of the more respectable class put a check upon his conduct that filled him with chagrin and vexation.

More than one of these gentlemen had, in less troublous times, been personally acquainted with

the family of the unfortunate Alida; and all of them were men of that stamp who would not hesitate to embroil themselves in deadly quarrel to succour a lady so iniquitously dealt with as Miss De Roos had been. Nor would his political faith or loyal services have been any shield to Bradshawe had these country gentlemen dreamed of the villany he was practising against the daughter of an old neighbour well known, and once universally beloved in the county.

Their wrath, had it been once really awakened, Bradshawe would have laughed to scorn, and would soon have made them feel, in their present situation, the folly of chiding the lion when their heads were in his mouth. But while, for very natural reasons, not wishing that anything should create disunion between himself and his brother partisans, he felt that, however idly their indignation might explode where they could be so easily overmastered by his immediate crew, yet, to bring his affair with Alida to a successful termination, the secret of the cavern must not be extended to more than were at present intrusted with it. It was therefore not without an inward feeling of satisfaction that he listened to a proposition which one of the Tory gentlemen, coming forward in behalf of the rest, made him as soon as he was disengaged from receiving the boisterous welcome that others gave him in the Outlaws' Hall.

"We pardon the coldness of your greeting, Captain Bradshawe," said this gentleman, "in consideration of the kindness we have already received from some of your servants; and because our some days' experience of the difficulty of providing for so many mouths in this place suggests that there must be limits to your hospitality, and—"

"Nay, my dear Fenton," said Bradshawe, seizing

both hands of the speaker, "I beg you would not mention—"

"Pardon me, Captain Bradshawe," said the Refugee, bowing somewhat stiffly as he withdrew his hands from the familiar grasp of the other, "there are four or five of us here who have made up our minds where to dispose of ourselves; and all that we ask is a couple of your retainers, to act as guides and packmen till we can make our way within the borders of Ulster county, where we are sure of a cordial reception at the house of a royalist gentleman of our acquaintance."

"The men, Mr. Fenton, are entirely at your service, if you insist upon thus abruptly taking leave of the poor entertainment I have to offer you. But why not, gentlemen, at the least, put off your departure till the morrow?"

"We had no idea of starting till to-morrow," rejoined one of the older royalists, bluntly.

"Not at all, not at all," said Fenton, rather hurriedly, and colouring at the same time as he appreciated Bradshawe's readiness to get rid of himself and his friends; "we'll be off within the hour if your men can get ready."

"Within the hour be it, since you *will* go," replied Bradshawe, turning at once upon his heel to give the necessary order.

"The churl!" muttered Fenton.

"What can you expect from a hog but a grunt?" echoed Sylla.

"If you sit down with dogs, you must look for fleas," rejoined his brother Marius, as the classic pair stood listening to this colloquy of their betters.

"I say, Squire Fenton," pursued Syl, "I mistrust Marius and I'll make tracks with you out of this darned hole. A fellow'll turn into a woodchuck if he burrows here much longer."

This accession to his party was gladly welcomed by Fenton at the time, though, as it included several of Syl's immediate friends and cronies, it proved subsequently disastrous from the undue confidence it gave Fenton in his numbers, as will appear in the sequel.

The arrangements for their departure were soon completed. But the final exit of Fenton and his followers was attended by circumstances which can scarcely be understood unless we recur to other actors in the scene, athwart whose shadows a new and strange form is but now flitting to mingle mysteriously with the rest.

We have already spoken of the feeling of bitter exasperation which had been excited in the bosom of the hunchback ferryman by the brutal language of his master, but we have not told that the hour which Bradshawe consumed in the Lady's Chapel had seen a trial of the half-breed's fidelity which, considering his Indian origin, was of the severest kind.

Scarcely, indeed, had the Tory captain passed through the opening in the rock and launched in his boat upon the river beyond, before the Hunchback found himself in contact with another authority than that which had posted him there as sentinel. Hearing the fall of a pebble on the bottom of the cavern, he stepped quickly forward, and threw the light of his torch against the walls of the pit by which you first descend into the cave. He could discover nothing. Presently another pebble rolled to his feet. It seemed to bound from a ledge of rock near him. Still he could not fix the direction whence it came; and he climbs half way up the zigzag shaft of the pit to see if it can have been precipitated from without. He lifts his torch aloft, so as to throw its light where the rope ladder is wont to be suspended from the

crossed trees above. But all looks quiet there and safe. The ladder has been, as usual, drawn in and secured, a thin tendril of grapevine, passing over a cross timber above, being left hanging to raise it from within to its former place, when necessary. Suddenly he sees the grapevine vibrate. The ladder begins slowly to uncoil, and rise before his eyes. He leaps forward, and with one blow of his hunting-knife severs the vine, and the rope falls by his side.

"Ugh!" exclaims an Indian voice without, as the swinging sliver comes burdenless to his hand.

The swart features of the Hunchback become radiant at the sound as he tosses his torch above his head, and hails the stranger in the Mohawk tongue. The vine is again let down. The Hunchback quickly attaches it anew to the ladder of rope. It is drawn up from above. A towering figure darkens the opening for a moment, and then Brant stands beside the deformed outcast of his tribe.

"My child, how fares he here with his white father?" said the chief, kindly.

"'The Broken Tomahawk,'" said the man, calling himself by his Indian name, "has no father. The Mohawk owns not him, he owns not the white man. He is here on his own bidding, but will do the will of Thayendanagea." And, speaking thus, he was about to usher the chief farther into the cavern; for Brant was known to him as the companion in arms of Bradshawe, and, as such, the Hunchback had no hesitation in farthering his ingress. The Sachem, however, was by no means desirous of the interview which the half-breed thought he was seeking, and his errand here must be a brief one, if he would despatch it at all. He ascertained that Bradshawe had already arrived at Waneonda, and assumed the personal charge of his captive. Brant's

only chance, then, of rescuing her, depended upon the aid and connivance of the half-breed; and that aid could only be secured by awakening the fellow's Indian sympathies so strongly in favour of the Mohawk that they should overpower his fidelity to the white man.

But the Hunchback, though evidently flattered by the frank confidence which the chief seemed to repose in him, and listening with mute respect to the claims which he urged upon his services, was unflinching in his trust. Brant could wring nothing from him save a promise not to reveal this secret visit to Bradshawe; and even this promise was accompanied with a condition which seemed something like a threat upon the part of the Hunchback.

"Let the chief go," said he. "Let Thayendanagea depart in secret as he has come. No bird shall whisper that he has been here, and Thayendanagea will come no more."

There was nothing, therefore, to be done with this stanch seneschal, unless Brant had chosen to strangle him where he stood, or hurl him deathward down the black pit whose entrance he guarded. But it was not in the heart of Brant to crush in cold blood a creature always so inoffensive, and now so firm when he stood most exposed and defenceless. Had he debated such a thing in his own mind, however, there was now hardly time to effect it successfully; for at this moment the enraged voice of Bradshawe was heard shouting to the half-breed, who waved his hand to Brant, as if motioning him to ascend and leave the cave at once, and then hurried to wait upon the Tory captain.

Brant seized the opportunity to descend farther into the cavern, with whose peculiarities he was perfectly familiar, and gained a recess of the rock not far from the fallen tree just as Bradshawe brushed

by it in traversing the passage. The hand of the Mohawk clutched the belt-knife, which was half drawn from its sheath as the glare of the Hunchback's torch shone full upon him for a moment. The life of Bradshawe turned upon a cast. But, haply, he passed by unheeding the peril at hand; and the person of Brant being thrown the next instant into deep shadow, the knife was shot back into its sheath as he saw the danger of discovery had passed away. That momentary gleam of light, however, had revealed to Brant the features of the Hunchback, and the feelings which agitated them; for he had overheard the contumelious epithets which Bradshawe applied to the unfortunate. Brant scarcely doubted what their effect would be upon the half-Indian nature of the Hunchback. If not a provocation to revenge, they would at least cancel all ties of kindness which bound him as a retainer of Bradshawe.

Nor did the sagacious Mohawk err in his judgment; for, following shortly afterward to the spot where the others embarked upon the black lake to cross to the threshold of the Outlaws' Hall, the plashing of the ferryman's paddle had hardly died away upon his ear before he again heard its faint dip approach once more the shore from which he had just parted. The Hunchback, neither by look nor word, expressed his surprise at finding the chief awaiting him, but mutely drew up his boat, marshalled Brant forward to the opening in the curtain of rock, and aided him in launching upon the River of Ghosts.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESCUE.

"His boat was nigh; its fragile side
Boldly the venturous wanderer tried;
Indeed, it was a full strange sight
To see in the track of the ghostly light
The swarthy chief and the lady bright,
On the heaving waves borne on;
While her wan cheek and robe of white
The pale ray played upon,
And above his dusky plumage shook;
Backward was flung his feathery cloak,
As his brawny arms were stretched to ply
The oars that made their shallop fly."—SANDS.

ALIDA, to whom, haply, the story of her family, desolated through the agency of Brant, was yet unknown, did not hesitate to accept the deliverance proffered at his hands; but the noble-hearted girl insisted upon the negroes, to whose kindness she was so much indebted, being first removed from the reach of Bradshawe's cruelty; for she knew that the first outbreak of his wrath would be terrible, and that it was upon these defenceless creatures it would fall. The little shallop would contain but two persons at a time, and many precious moments were consumed in ferrying the whole party to the chamber where the Hunchback stood a sullen sentry.

The negroes have already found their way to the outside of the cave without farther peril of discovery; and now the swarthy chief and the bright lady have embarked upon those ghostly waters. Their frail boat has brushed safely through the flinty

chasm which walls in the sinuous tide. They have reached the crevice in the curtain of rock, and have gained a footing on the land, when suddenly the distant reverberations of a horn are heard trembling through the shadowy cells around. It is a summons to the Hunchback to assume his office of warder in facilitating the egress of Fenton and his followers.

In the scene which followed, even the coolness of Brant, aided as he was by the presence of mind of his companion, would hardly have availed them, were it not for the ready offices of the Hunchback in assisting Alida up the first ascent before the foremost of Fenton's party had fairly reached the spot where the danger of discovery was most imminent.

And now, marshalled by torches formed of the blazing knots of the yellow pine, Bradshawe's parting guests were congregated in the chamber from which first commences the ascent to daylight—Bradshawe himself coming last to bid them farewell at their exit from the cavern, and make up, if possible, for previous indifference by the warmth of his adieus.

The two foremost of the party, who seemed more closely muffled than the rest, had already, as it appeared, surmounted the first ascent, and contented themselves with waving him a backward adieu, as, mounting beyond his reach, they stepped upon the ladder which led up the second. The rest successively gave him each a hand as they passed up the fallen tree before described.

About half had made the ascent of the first steep, when the half-breed Hunchback, exclaiming that he would steady the rope ladder for one of the party who was somewhat infirm, mounted with the agility of a cat to the ledge to which its lower end was attached. Bradshawe took no note of his officious-

ness, and the rest followed, till the two brothers Stickney alone were left at the bottom.

"Ho! treason!" shouted Bradshawe, seizing the luckless Syl by the collar, and flinging him upon the flinty floor of the cave, as he was in the act of moving forward in his turn. "Charon! Valtmeyer! —ho there! Charon, you humpbacked knave, what means this? Ten men, the number of Fenton's party, have already gone up, yet these two Yankee pedlers are still below."

"Pedler yourself, Captain Bradshawe," cried the sturdy Marius; and, in a moment, the indignant Syl having sprung to his feet, the two New-Englanders had rushed together upon the Tory captain, hurled him against the wall of the cavern, and scrambled up to the landing-place where stood the Hunchback, flinging his torchlight over the pit below. Bradshawe, recovering himself, cocked a pistol and levelled it at Marius on the instant.

"Hullo! capting," cried the undismayed Syl, pressing down the head of his brother, so that the rays of the torch passed over it, and left only his own arm to aim at. "Don't be such a darned fool, capting, as to throw away your shot upon us, who raaly have had nothing to do with this muss. Humpy here's your man, I reckon; and, if you wait a moment, I'll pitch him down to you."

How far the doughty Syl might have succeeded in a tussle with the active half-breed in such a spot, it is impossible now to say; for the Hunchback was about to prepare himself for the encounter, which he did by quickly flinging the torch from his hands into the abyss below. But the movement that he makes in leaning over to hurl it at Bradshawe exposes the upper part of his person for an instant, and the flash of Bradshawe's pistol illuminates the vault in the moment the blazing missile

leaves the hand of the Hunchback, who instantly follows it, shot to death, and tumbling from ledge to ledge, a mangled corpse, at the feet of the Tory captain.

"Sylla, Marius," shouted Bradshawe, when the reverberations had subsided, "halt the party, and tell them there is treason among us." But no answer came from the classic pair, who had already made their exit from the cavern. Bradshawe, whose presence of mind seems to have deserted him for a moment, instead of at once following the retiring party, groped his way to the Warder's Room, eagerly seized the lantern which was ever kept burning there, ferried himself across the lake, summoned Valtmeyer, with him recrossed the black pool once more, and, leaving his worthy adjutant in the chamber where the Hunchback had found a tomb, launched himself upon the River of Ghosts, and wended his way to the remote cell where Alida was immured.

The bats were now its only tenants, and the voiceless spot, with no light save the torch of the gloomy voyager to illumine its dark walls, seemed dreary and chill as it had never seemed before to his eyes.

The baffled Bradshawe rejoined his comrade. "Have that carrion flung out to the wolves; or, stay, it may remain till to-morrow, when we will all move away together."

"Do we carry any woman's baggage with us?" asked Valtmeyer, keenly eying his superior.

"No, Wolfert. I give you those niggers wherever you may find them."

"And the farm?"

"D—n the farm, and you too, sir! Don't you see, man, you are plucking at my heartstrings? The girl's gone; lost to me, perhaps, for ever. Is this a moment to remind me of the price I paid for her?" And Bradshawe ground another oath be-

tween his teeth that put a summary end to the conversation.

With the morrow's dawn the den of renegades had vomited forth its tenants, a wierd and ghastly crew, with beard unshorn and skin cadaverous from long exclusion from the light of day. A fall of snow had obliterated the tracks of those who had departed the night before; and Bradshawe, unwilling to penetrate with such a body of men into the settled country, where farther pursuit of Alida would most probably lead him, made no effort to recover Fenton's trail, but addressed himself to the task of getting his band of followers out of this Whig district as soon as possible. He then laid his course for Oswego, whither great numbers of Tories had already flocked together, under the lead of Colonels Claus and Butler, and where the royal banner, guarded by a thousand Indian warriors under Guy Johnson, was still kept flying.

The Cave of Waneonda, which had so lately rung with the wild peal of outlaw merriment, was left to echo only the monotonous sound of its black-rolling waters. And though some hard-hunted refugee, from time to time, had sought a shelter there with the handful of outlaws it occasionally harboured, it was not until after years that its hideous cells again were fully peopled. Those dungeon vaults, so silent now, what tales of wo and horror could they tell? Tales of those times when the Johnsons came back on their mad errand of vengeance; when they desolated the vale of Schoharie with fire and sword, and Waneonda again disgorged a felon crew to steep the land in crime and blood.

But let us now return to the wanderers who have last emerged from these shadowy realms.

The surprise of Fenton, when his band was fully mustered on the mountain's side and at some dis-

tance from the mouth of the cave, may be conceived at finding strangers among their number. But Brant, so well known to all the gentlemen of this region from the civil offices he had held previous to the present struggle, had only to reveal himself to be warmly received by his brother partisan.

The winter's night was closing in rapidly, and Fenton—whose indignation against Bradshawe was fully roused upon hearing the story of Alida's forcible detention in the vaults of Waneonda—assisted her down the mountain as they hurried forward on their journey. It was determined that she should at once seek a refuge in the settlement of Schoharie, which was at hand; and the whole party was halted to designate some one who could be trusted with the duty of placing her in the hands of her friends. It would have been madness for Brant, even upon such an embassy, to venture himself in the hands of the patriots; and his own men would not spare Fenton, who, although almost equally obnoxious as a virulent Tory, had still not been charged with any stain of cruelty that would call out personal vengeance.

While this discussion was taking place, the attention of the two leaders was distracted by a sudden outcry near. Several of the more lawless members of the party, as it seemed, had pushed in advance of the rest, for the purpose of driving off some horses that were grazing in a field near by. The farmhouse to which the field belonged chanced, at the moment, to be occupied by a patrol of villagers; for the Whig militia, since Schuyler's march upon Johnstown, had been industriously employed in scouring the country and arresting every person suspected of Toryism upon whom they could lay their hands. This patrol, hearing the clatter of hoofs, now sallied out. The moon, which shone

brightly down over the snow-covered fields, showed that they were a mere handful of men, whom Fenton's followers outnumbered; and, though provoked and incensed at the untimely occurrence, Fenton could not resist the temptation to crush the gang of rebellious boors, as he termed them. He sprang from the side of Alida as Brant attempted to seize his arm to prevent the mad movement, drew his rapier, and rushed into the fray.

Alida, though now not unused to scenes of blood and violence, had never stood before with hopes and fears divided between her friends and countrymen engaged in personal conflict. She covered her head with her mantle and cowered toward the earth. There was a quick, irregular volley of firearms, the shout of a sudden onset, followed by the clashing of swords against the barrels of clubbed rifles; and then came the trampling of many feet, as of men borne down in a struggle or flying along the frozen highway near her. She looked up; Brant had disappeared from her side, and the royalists had been driven back past the spot where she stood. Suddenly the Indian warwhoop arose wild and shrilly from a thicket of evergreens at a turning of the road; and now the patriots, as if seized by a sudden panic, came flying back over the road where they had just pressed the foe.

"That's right, boys; git into kiver as soon as you can; it's a regular ambush," exclaimed a well-known voice near her. "We've peppered 'em enough for one night's work." The spokesman, however, seemed very slow in practising his own recommendation, as, coolly loading his rifle, he trudged along behind the rest.

"Run, Balt, run," shouted a fugitive. "The Redskins are upon us."

"They won't lift my head-thatch this time, how-

somedever. I'm looking for the chap whose gourd I smashed so handsomely when he came pushing his skewer through my jacket. By the Etarnal, if it be not Squire Fenton," he suddenly exclaimed, starting back from the body of that gallant and unfortunate gentleman.

"Fenton!" faintly ejaculated Alida, who was not twenty paces distant. But her voice was unheeded by Balt; unheeded, too, were the exclamations of the group who quickly gathered around him, retracing their steps as they saw the last scattered remains of the Tory party, preserved by the ruse of Brant, disappear over the hills.

"Yes, boys, that's Squire Fenton, and no mistake," said Balt, with something resembling a heavy sigh; "and he shall have as decent a grave as ever a Christian laid in, if it took the best acre of ground in the county to hold him. He was as true a gentleman as ever sat in the king's commission of the peace among us. As kind and as brave a heart—"

"He was a d—d Tory," said a ruffian voice among the crew, bringing the butt of his rifle heavily upon the frozen ground as he spoke.

"Mister Bill Murphy," said Balt, no way perturbed, "you'll just please to take liberties with the names of Tories of your own shooting, and let mine alone. The devil knows that you've sent enough on 'em to their last account, what with firing on flags o' truce and sich like, Bill."*

Murphy felt the rude compliment rather than the reproach that was blended in this speech, and was silent.

* Is not this an anachronism? The famous rifle-shot and desperado whom tradition accuses of shooting down the bearers of flags of truce upon several occasions during the relentless conflicts between the Whigs and Tories of this region, is not mentioned as thus feloniously signalizing himself until the last great inroad of the refugees in the subsequent years of the war.—P. D.

"But who have we here?" said Balt, now for the first time noticing the crouched form of the half-frozen Alida. "Who, in the name of the first mother of gals, is this missus that the Tories have left behind them?"

Alida, who had shrunk from claiming the protection of these rude and blood-stained men, while still chafing around the warm remains of her friend, so recently slaughtered, now dashed these shuddering impressions from her mind, and gladly revealed herself to Balt.

The joy of the worthy woodsman was boundless at beholding her again, though he would scarcely trust his senses to believe that it was really Miss De Roos who stood alive before him. He approached without uttering a syllable in reply to her, turned her around as he raised her from the fallen tree against which she had been reclining, threw back the hood of the cloak which covered her head, and bared her fair features to the moon; then releasing her hand, he stepped back a pace or two, and, lifting his hat reverentially from his gray head, made a deep obeisance as he exclaimed, "The great God be praised, Miss Alida, it is really you!"

END OF VOL. I.