

AH-MEEK, THE BEAVER;

OR,

THE COPPER HUNTERS OF LAKE SUPERIOR.

By WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL,

AUTHOR OF "BERTHA," "PRAIRIE FIRE," "THE HERMIT OF COLORADO HILLS," "THE
BLACK ADDER" "OLD BRUIN, THE ONE-ARMED TRAPPER, ETC., ETC.



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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—THE "BEAVER."

BEFORE the discovery of copper, there were but few inducements to visit the sterile shores of Lake Superior, and it remained an almost *terra incognita*, except to the traders, who were lured thither by the hope of gain from the Indians, and the employés of the rival fur companies. They had fully explored its shores upon both sides, from *Sault de Ste Marie* to *La Point*—had trapped and fished in every stream—built their lonely camp fires in every bay and upon every headland, and circled every island. There was not a spot where human footsteps could stray, that they had not visited, or a locality with which they were not familiar, and though men of little or no education, experience had made them skillful boatmen and pilots, and the successful rivals of even the red men themselves in woodcraft.

Here to-day and away to-morrow—perhaps located but for a single winter in a place to which they would never return, very few formed lasting attachments, although the great majority had taken a squaw as a wife, (to be deserted whenever interest or inclination dictated) and left behind half-bred children, that would never even know the name of their father. The prevailing opinion with regard to this matter, could be summed up in the words of one of their number, "they made good Indians but very bad white men."

So it was better by far to leave them in ignorance and superstition, than attempt to graft them upon civilization, of which they would only learn the bad, without the slightest striving for the good!

So common, however, had quick desertion followed these quasi marriages, that the better portion of the Indians—all indeed except those who were not thoroughly debased by associations with the white man and his "fire-water," looked more than anxiously, when they saw their daughters receiving presents from or associating with the white man, and strove by every means in their power to save them from the ruin that was almost certain to follow.

That there were honorable exceptions—men who respected the lightly binding marriage vows, cannot be denied; but they were the exceptions that proved the rule. Others there were, also, who wandered among the Indians for years, in fact lived and died with them, without forming a single feminine attachment.

Of the latter class was Louis—— or "the Beaver," as he was most commonly called. The former title had been given him by the French, and the latter, "Ah-meek" by the Indians; but as to what his paternal one was, he might have been questioned in vain. When a mere child he had been captured by the Chippewas, while upon the war path in a distant part of the country, and those who had been engaged in the bloody fray, had long since been gathered to their

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fathers. That he was of white parentage no one would deny. With his earlier years passed among the Indians, and his latter ones among those of his own color, he was perfectly familiar with the language and manners of both; and now, when over forty winters had lodged their snow amid his hair, and the plow of time had left many a furrow in his weather-bronzed face, he led a sort of hybrid-hermit life. And like his associations so was his home. It was a lonely cabin, situated just far enough from the *Sault* to be able easily to supply his wants, and sufficiently so to enjoy all the advantages of the solitude of the forest.

With the news of the discovery of the metals, especially of copper, his wonted habits were sadly broken in upon. The spots where he had been used to trap for beaver and otter—the quiet bays where the wild geese and ducks had been accustomed to rest unmolested for years—the leafy coverts where he had never sought the shy deer in vain, and even the waters where the mottled trout frequented, were overrun with explorers, blasting the rocks and tearing up the earth. The searchers after mineral wealth left no stone unturned to gain knowledge. They sought the Indians and acquired but little—paid high prices and were deceived.

"Go to Ah-meek," they said, when they found their duplicity unmasked. "His head is covered with grey hairs. The snows of many winters are upon it. He is wise. He knows where the Pewaubic sleeps in the earth."

They turned to the voyageurs and found them engaged to the Hudson Bay Company, or, (by their means) to other parties.

"Go to the Beaver," they replied, when questioned. "If there was any one that could guide them, it was him. He had spent all his days upon the shores of the lake, and not even the Indians knew half as much."

"Who is 'the Beaver?'" they asked.

The voyageurs shook their heads at the ignorance, and pointed to where the smoke of a fire was curling skyward through the tall trees. Thither went the heads of the party, and saw both the man and his home. The latter was a simple, strong, but rudely constructed cabin—such an one as can be found

almost anywhere on the north-western frontier. The former was the type of a race that are fast fading away—the connecting link, as it were, between the white and the red man, between civilized and savage life.

It was near sun down. The old man was seated upon a broad, flat stone, that answered all his purposes for a work-bench, dressing a few fish that he had just taken. They saw that he was far above the usual height, broad-shouldered, long-armed and limbed and chested, like a giant. His hair hung in waving masses of iron gray around his neck, and his bronzed face was framed in heavy whiskers of the same hue. Like his mode of living his dress was hybrid—partaking both of the civilized and savage. The material had all been gathered in the wilderness and dressed by his own hands, but it was fashioned more after the manner of the white than the red man. The cariboo had been robbed of his tough hide for the hunting shirt, moccasins and leggins, and the otter of its soft fur for the facings and the cap. From beneath these, under garments of heavy woolen peeped forth, and the sash that girdled his waist was of unmistakable silk—scarlet, and such an one as an officer might once have been proud of, though now sadly frayed and faded. The rifle that lay within reach of his hand was of American manufacture. So, too, the knife that he was using, and the hatchet in his belt; but the bow and arrows and pipe, that could be seen suspended within his little home, told of Indian skill.

With the first echo of their footsteps, he raised his head and revealed the eyes, black and sparkling as anthracite, the Roman nose, broad, high forehead, firmly set lips, and neck with sinews standing out like whip cords. One glance was sufficient to have satisfied any one that he was a man of iron will, dauntless courage and unusual strength. A man that once a friend would remain so to death.

"Are you the 'Beaver?'" asked the leader of the little party.

"Ahem!"

He was measuring them with his sharp eyes—testing them with a mental gaze—trying to determine the object of their visit before he answered, although both nature

and his wild wood training had made him uncommonly reticent. But they fancied that he had not heard them, and repeated the question:—

"Are you the man that is commonly called 'The Beaver?'"

"Wal, yes. Ther Injins first named me so, and since then everybody appears ter have taken it up."

"Then we came to see you."

"What kin yer want of me?"

His language was the true, uneducated frontier dialect. A dictionary and grammar were things he might have heard of but never seen. In polite circles he would have been scoffed at, but in the locality where his lot had been cast and upon the platform of sound common sense, he would have been the peer of almost any man.

"You are acquainted with all parts of the lake?"

"Every foot of it."

"And the streams and rocks?"

"E'ennermost as well as ther fishes and ther deers themselves."

"And the headlands and islands?"

"Yes. Yer want'er go on er fishin' and huntin' tower, don't yer?"

"No. We are searching for copper mines and wish to employ you to guide us. We will pay you well for your services."

"What!" and the black eyes flashed with an almost dangerous light. "What! are you some of them chaps that ar eround tearin' up God's airth, blowin' up God's rocks, cuttin' down God's trees, turnin' aside God's rivers, and searchin' for ther secrets that he has hidden?"

"We are surveyors and geologists."

"I don't know nothin' about them ar names, but I do know that sich as ye ar drivin' away ther game, and bribin' ther Injins ter see what ther Lord Almighty gave them for huntin' grounds and er dwellin' place."

"Do you not kill the deer and take the fish when you are hungry?"

"Ter be sure."

"And where do yer get the material for your canoes and bows and arrows?"

"From ther woods," and the old trapper laughed at the absurdity of the question.

"And where the iron that is made into

your traps, and manufactured into steel for the barrel of your rifle, and the lead that you use for bullets?"

"From the arth, sartinly."

"And do not the rocks have to be blasted, the trees cut down, and the earth torn up to procure them?"

"Ahem!"

The old man saw at a glance the foolishness of his argument. The one educated and used to mental combat, was far too powerful an antagonist for him to cope with. Never before had any one attempted to convince him of the injustice of his opposition to the march of progress. They had either sneered at his stupidity, or abused him for his obstinacy. Now the cobwebs were swept from his brain in an instant. He saw that he must be left high and dry upon the rocks or swim with the current. Still it was very hard for one of his nature to give up the feeling that had been riveted around his heart by long years. Well was it therefore that his visitor continued:

"You say, my friend, that God gave this lake and its surroundings to the red man for a hunting ground and home. It would be useless to deny that, but he also pitied the white man across the great ocean, and gave him the knowledge to find and the skill to develope the riches that are hidden in the soil. Had it not been His will, do you think that He would have permitted any man to penetrate the secret?"

"I could'nt sarcumvent yer knowledge, stranger, ef I tried. I am er honest man, though er unlearned one, and I believe in and love ther good Lord even ef I have bin brought up in the wilderness. So I tell yer that yer have opened my eyes ter look at the matter as I never did erfore."

"Then you can no longer have any feeling that we are doing wrong?"

"Sartinly not. He," and the old man pointed reverently to the sky, "He wouldn't permit yer ter do it."

"And you will give us the benefit of your experience—that is if we pay you for it?"

"I don't know that. I don't know that," was the musing reply. "Fer over forty years, man and boy, I've dwelt on this here lake, and arned my livin with that ar rifle, and

them ar traps, and it would be most mighty hard ter give them up now."

"But you are getting old—the work would be much more easy, and in a few months you could earn far more than you could possibly do in years."

"Old? Yes, yes," and raising his hand to his head and brushing away the tangled locks from his honest face, he continued, "yes, yes, ther topmost branches of ther tree is dead, and er few more winters may sap ther trunk. But ther heart is sound yet, and he who would try ter bend even er limb may find ther strength of ther roots."

Ther was nothing vain or vaunting in the speech, although his eye kindled, and his sinewy hand was struck upon the breast with a report like a pistol. It was simply the natural sequence of a mind that had been trained amid danger and exertion, and was confident of its ability to do and dare to the end; the natural speech of a man, somewhat proud perhaps, of his giant frame and strength, and yet one who knew that death would certainly come.

"But," he continued after a brief pause, during which, simple hearted as he was, he had evidently been pleased by their admiration, "but you said sumthin' about airnin' money, stranger, didn't yer?"

"Yes, that we would pay you more for a few months' services than you could gain in years of hunting and trapping."

"Very like—very like. Ther game and ther otter and beaver and mink and rats ar gitting scarce, that am er fact, and I've thought often of movin', but somehow couldn't give up that old spot. It might not be like yer home but yer couldn't love it any better."

"That is a natural and an honorable feeling. You would not be long away, however. Our explorations will only continue during the summer months."

"And mighty short they ar, too. Ther snow and ice comes arly and lasts long, in these ar latertudes."

"We know it."

"How kin yer when yer have never bin here berfore?"

"Books teach us."

"Wal, book larnin is er great thing. I've often thought that I'd like ter know how ter

read and write. It might have been cheerin' like when I've been snowed in fer days. Howsomever, it wouldn't have bin of much 'count ter me arter all."

"You would certainly have lost nothing by it. But what do you say to going as guide and interpreter to our little party?"

"How many ar thar of yer?"

"But two that will go with you. We shall want you to take us in your canoe. You have one, I presume."

"Have er canoe? Yer mought jest as well have expected ter find er Injun without er dog, 'specially ef he whar poor! Two on yer?"

"Yes, that is all."

"Be yer them?" and the black eyes of the Beaver were riveted upon them, as if he would perfectly read their character before committing himself.

"I am one. The other will be here tomorrow, I expect."

"What sort of er man mought he be? I like you well enuff, but I can't tell erbout him until I see him."

"A good, clever, jovial fellow."

"Ahem!"

"You will like him, I am certain."

"Er young man?"

"Yes—half your age or mine."

"Wal, stranger, I can't make up my mind, until I've thought over night on it. Ef I couclude ter go, and I rayther reckon I will, I will be at ther head of ther portage at ther Soo, day arter ter morrow mornin', by the time the sun rises."

"Let me give you something to bind the bargain," and a piece of gold was offered.

"No, no!" replied the old man, drawing back proudly. "Ther beaver haint mine, until I have him in ther trap. Ef I do go, perhaps I may git yer ter advance er leetle ter buy powder and ball, and sich like."

"We will furnish all that, as well as provisions."

"Mighty leetle of them yer will want, but what these ar tough hands kin git yer."

"Then that part of the matter is easily arranged. With regard to the pay for your services?"

"Ahem!"

He had never done a day's work in his life

for pay, and had no more idea of what he ought to receive than a child; and child he was in many things pertaining to the customs of civilized life. His questioner saw this and at once helped him out of his trouble.

"We can settle that matter when we meet again."

"Yes, yes," was the eager reply.

"Good night, then."

"Wont yer come in and see how ther old man lives?"

"Certainly."

"And perhaps yer would like ter have er supper of trout? Yer don't see sich speckled beauties as these every day, I kin tell yer."

They saw that it would gratify him, and consented, stepping into the little cabin and taking a survey of its contents while he was cooking the fish. Of furniture there was very little. A rude table, bedstead and a couple of benches (all of domestic manufacture) comprised the entire inventory. Every corner, however, was filled with traps and peltries, and the walls were garnished with trophies of the chase, gathered during many a long hunt and amid many dangers. The skins, claws and teeth of the bear, the fox, the wolf, and even the panther were there, strangely commingled with the finer ones that in these days an empress might be proud of, and which it requires almost the dowry of an empress to purchase. There were hatchets and arrow heads of stone, the feathers of the eagle, moccasins and leggins quill-worked and beaded, telling of softer fingers than his own and, in short, everything that could be possibly collected during a nomad life in the wilderness.

"Thar!" said the old trapper, bringing in to them some of the fish upon a clean piece of bark for a plate, "Thar! ef yer ever tasted anything nicer than them, jest tell me on it. You folks that live in great cities don't know nothin' of how to git ther true flavor—nor of deer meat neither for that matter."

"They are certainly exquisite," was the response after the crisp, golden flakes had been tasted.

"Yes, and yer'll learn how to cook 'em if I go with yer."

"We shall want no better cook then."

"Ther way am this. Yer jest take er fish and hang it on er stick that is bent nigh onto ther fire. Then yer hang er piece of pork jest over it, and that kinder bastes it like by drippin' down the fat, and keeps it juicy, and and makes it brown like er berry."

"But if you have no pork, what then?"

"Jest roll it up in some wet leaves and bury it in ther hot ashes. I consate one is jest erbout as good as ther tother."

"We must thank you for the finest meal we have tasted in many a day. Once more good night."

"Good night. Ef I decide ter go you'll find me waitin' in the canoe and all ready for a start, day after ter-morrer morning at the head of ther portage, as I told yer."

The old man lighted his pipe and sat upon the broad rock watching until a turn in the path shut them from his sight. Then he muttered to himself:

"Young man? Er young man goin' too? I wish I could have seen him. It would have been easier ter have made up my mind. He may be all right, and I hope he is, but anyhow I must manage ter keep him from seein' the Swaller, ef I kin."

Satisfied apparently with his conclusions, he arose, carefully knocked out the ashes from his pipe, entered his cabin home, and throwing himself upon his bed of skins, was soon lost to all the surroundings of earth.

CHAPTER II.

SHAW-SHAW.

At the junction of the waters of the Michipicoten river and those of Lake Superior, was a village of the Chippewa Indians. Buildd upon both sides of the stream, the cone-shaped wigwams stood like so many shocks of corn, and entirely filled the cleared space between the water and the heavy background of evergreens, spotted here and there with trees, whose leaves were deciduous. Beyond this, and as a finish to the

picture, rose the high and irregular coast range of hills, brilliant in summer with the verdure of the larch, tamarack, fir and pine, and in winter glittering with the sheen of the thick branches heavily laden with snow and ice, and flashing in the sunlight like a forest of chrysalite.

To describe one, would be to describe all. The frame of poles, the covering of mats and skins, with a circular hole at the top, was the sum total of the architecture. In the hot months of summer, or the freezing ones of winter, there was no change. Each boasted of its family, and each of its half-starved and thieving dogs. The line of demarcation that occurs in civilized life between the rich and poor, was not to be found there—all were poor alike. The highest chief lodged no better than the lowliest hunter, and their food and clothing was the same. So much was this the case, that a mad-brained Agrarian would have found no labor either for his pen or his voice. The work he would fain accomplish in other parts of the world, was finished here.

Around each of the wigwams too, was gathered the same group of men, women and half-clad children, busy with bows, nets, baskets, mats or play. The same scanty cooking utensils were reproduced also upon every camp fire, the same cups and dishes of bark, the same hatchets and knives, the same canoe—almost the same features, in every family.

In the latter, however, the most marked difference occurred. Nature pleasures herself in the outcropping of rare beauty now and then amid the most uncongenial surroundings. She revenges herself, as it were, by placing in the most filthy hovel faces that are worthy of angelic lineage, while the palace holds those but one remove from the brute. Even as the purely white flower will bud and blossom amid the blackest mould, so now and then the red man's wigwam is blessed with beauty that is rendered far more glorious for the mass of repulsiveness around. Very rare, indeed, it may be and is, but yet as true as that the pearls that queens wear are the offspring of disease, or that from the labor of a worm is spun the snowy bridal veil.

Of this class was Shaw-Shaw, or the Swallow. Save a very slight olive tinge to her complexion and the want of wave in her hair, there was nothing to have marked her as not having been the child of European parents. Far back a stain of that blood might have mingled in her ancestry and now, perhaps, in the third generation it revealed itself again in almost its pristine purity. This, every one at all familiar with the subject knows is not uncommon. In a more Southern land the slight shading of her skin would not have been noticed, or if noticed commented upon, for the tropical climes have many of undoubted white lineage that are far darker.

Fully up to, if not above the usual height of womanhood, the figure of the Swallow was perfect in its every proportion and graceful to the extreme, that can only be acquired by constant exercise in the open air and freedom from all deforming pressure. The arms, circled with broad strings of wampum and heavy bands of shining silver (the purchase from the traders by her father and won by many a day of severe toil) were round and symmetrical, and the ankles (ornamented like her other limbs) were taper and joined to feet small and true of arch. The bust was full and the shoulders sloping. The neck exquisitely turned and crowned by a head that might have been born in a sculptor's dream, but could never be reproduced in marble. The hair was very long, soft, and of intense blackness, but of that changeable sheen that gleams in the sunlight like the glossv throat of the wild pigeon.

But it was the face that first attracted the eye and then chained the gaze. There were no high cheek bones that usually mark her race—the oval was true. So, too, was it with her brow. Nature, and perhaps the constant drawing back of the hair in heavy braids, had made it high—an uncommon thing among the Indians and especially those of her sex. The nose was strictly Grecian; the mouth small and daintily cut, and the lips full and pouting; the eyes large and black as her hair, but marked more with the pensive softness of the dove than the

bold gaze of the eagle, while the lashes that shaded them swept low upon the cheek.

The one remaining child of Ab-ne-mee-kee, or The Thunder, the entire love of his savage nature was wrapped up in her. Her brothers had perished in the war of the Nation against the Sioux, and her only sister fallen a victim to the baseness and treachery of a white man. She loved—he deserted her—she followed him to a great city and died there. That was all the father could tell. But her name was not "written in water," so far as he was concerned. He would remember her to the day of his death.

No wonder was it then that he was more than careful of his beautiful woodland flower. He spared her the hard tasks usual to those of her sex—decorated her with the most costly trinkets he could purchase—gave her the finest skins and furs for garments, and watched over her as the eagle does the one fledgling that the hunter has left in the nest.

To guard her against the pale face was the care that was uppermost in his mind. He thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night. One daughter had been lost to him, and revengeless for that, a double portion would fall upon the head of any one who ever attempted to lure the Swallow to his wigwam. Not to be wondered at, therefore, was the fact that the influx of strangers with a white skin sorely troubled him. That the hunting grounds were being destroyed—the caves where the Manitous dwelt torn asunder—the forests cut down—the fish driven away by the "fire-canoes"—almost the graves of his forefathers destroyed were as nothing to him, compared to the thought of losing his daughter.

"My child," he said as they were floating together in their light canoe—that wonderful construction of red man's skill—that graceful wave cradle that has never been improved upon by all the science and boat building experiments of the Anglo Saxon race, "My child, beware of the pale face."

"Why, father?" and she looked up to him with her soft eyes beaming with astonishment.

"His tongue is false as that of the Serpent. He speaks lies."

"Father!"

Never before had he mentioned the subject—never had she seen him so excited. But a little babe when her sister went away, she knew nothing of her history. The proud chief had kept it as a sealed book. The shame that had come upon his name he might bear in silence, but not talk about. Now, however, he deemed it time that his tongue should be loosened, and calming himself, continued after the figurative manner of his race:—

"Let my daughter listen," he said, letting the paddle hang idly in the water and the canoe rock at will upon the gentle billows. "Let my daughter listen with ears like the soft wax of the honey bee to receive, and heart like the flint to retain."

"It shall be so."

"Many winters ago two eagles dwelt upon the borders of the great lake. They thought themselves safe from the fire weapons of the Long Knives. The storm rocked their nest and the red flashes from the eye of the angry Manitou glanced around but disturbed them not. They were very happy. The moons grew bright and dark—the earth was covered with flowers—the snow came and hid them, but when the maize was green again, there was a little eaglet in the nest. It grew, became full fledged, and outshone in plumage any that circled around the mountain on their swift wings."

"My sister?" was the involuntary question.

"Yes, Wit-chi-ta, but listen and speak not. When she was near your age—how old are you my child?"

"For eighteen summers the eyes of Shaw-Shaw have seen the bright blue skies—for eighteen winters she has watched the white feathers of the snow spirit fall."

"So long? yes," he continued as if conversing with himself, "Yes, it must be, though the scar is as fresh as if the blow was given yesterday. The red iron burns not deeper into the flesh than unrevenged wrongs into the heart of the warrior."

"You were speaking of my sister."

"True. The eagles watched faithfully, but a serpent came—a false, crawling, pale faced serpent. Silent as the night shadows was his approach. The parents saw but

thought him harmless. The eaglet listened to his soft and cunning words. She believed them—and he stung her to the heart. He fled when his work of ruin was accomplished, and she followed many days towards the rising sun."

"And found him?"

"It might have been. I do not know. She came not again. The spirit was broken within her—the light in her eyes faded,—she died."

"Alas! my poor sister."

He resumed his paddle and forced the canoe on in silence. The recollection of the great, unrevenged wrong done him banished all other thoughts for a time. Even the ever present fear of what might befall his remaining child was forgotten. At length, however, he commanded himself and continued:—

"Has the Swallow drank in the words of her father?"

"Yes." The tears were yet swimming in her eyes as she thought of how dearly she would have loved the one that was gone.

"Have they sunk into her heart?"

"She will not forget them."

"When the pale face comes let her ear be like lead, and her moccasins fly as swiftly as she would from the great bear of the mountains."

"The words of wisdom shall not be forgotten."

Fair promises, but would they be kept when love had thrown its glamour over the soul? Would not the remembrance of her sister's wrongs and her father's sorrow fade from out of memory like a dream? The rosy shuttle, flying fast from heart to heart, will cover with its golden threads all the sombre ones that care or misery can weave there! But she was honest in her promising—she had never known what temptation was. If any of the braves in her tribe had sighed for her beauty, and longed to woo her to their wigwams, it had been in silence. The flute that was to be played by her lodge might have been tuned, but it had never been sounded—the presents prepared, but they had never been laid at its door. Her simple and pure mind was ignorant of the admiration she excited in the bosom of the

opposite sex, and the envy in those of her own. The power that was to wake in her the strongest emotions of the human heart had never crossed her path.

"About her cabin door
The wide old woods resounded with her song
And fairy laughter all the summer day."

And the swift winged birds after which she was named were not more heart-whole. The plummet that was to fathom the fountains of her soul appeared uncast, or if it was, the line had never been let down into the depths.

Of this her father was satisfied and regretted that it should be so. To have seen her married to one of her own color would have satisfied him. Then his cares would have been at an end. Now he was constantly on the *qui vive* for danger. To warn her against the spoilers of their hunting grounds and homes, and to sound her mind if such a marriage as he proposed would be repugnant to her, was his purpose in taking her with him that day. But he wisely held his peace until she had become calm, and other topics had somewhat driven away the sombre one upon which they had been talking, from her mind. Indeed, it was she that first broke the silence.

"Father," she said, "look how the smoke rises from the pipe of the Great Manitou, who sleeps on the lone rock of Gargantua."

"It is not the calumet of the Manitou, but the breath of the fire canoe of the pale face. The plantain will soon grow upon the entire shore."

He knew, if she did not, that it was the belief of his race that wherever a white man trod, a plant of the genus *plantago* would appear. Consequently it was called "the pale man's footstep."

To satisfy her curiosity he described a steamboat—a new thing upon the lake. He had seen it while at the *Sault* to receive his annuity, but she never. That done, he cautiously turned the subject to marriage.

"It is the custom of the Ojibwas," he said, "that when a young brave has won his name, or a daughter seen eighteen winters, that they should marry."

With wide-eyed astonishment she heard

but answered not. The subject had never entered her thoughts. Love's young dream was as fabulous to her as any of the unseen monsters of the deep to us.

"You have arrived at that time, my child," he continued, "and your mother and I would fain see you settled before we go to the Country of Souls."

"Father, do not talk of death."

"I am not, but of you and your happiness. Tell me if any brave of the tribe has ever whispered sweet words in your ears?"

"Never!"

"But they will."

"I will not hear them."

A sly smile, transient as summer lightning, played over the face of the chief. He knew too well how sharp were the arrows of the rosy boy-god.

"Do you never intend to marry?" he asked.

"No! What should I do so for? I will live with you always."

He saw that her time had not yet come, and taking from her the pipe she had been filling, lighted it, resigned the paddle into her hands and himself to thought. Deliberately he mentally scanned every young brave with the view of selecting the one that would be the most fit husband for his daughter. At length he settled upon a warrior or hunter rather, for the days of blood were about ended, who he fancied would be the most worthy of any. He was brave, young, active, and a skillful hunter (wealth fortunately had nothing to do with the matter) and more kind-hearted than any of the rest. Not that he considered even him actually worthy of his jewel, but he was the best, and she must have a husband. He felt that it was giving the dove into the care of the hawk to save it from the eagle, but the necessity of the case demanded it. There was no other choice left him.

Having thus decided upon *Shoon-ka-ska*, or White Dog, he began thinking of the best means of giving him an inkling of how the matter stood—of telling him by actions, rather than words, that he would be a favored suitor for his daughter's hand. He would not beg a husband for her—he was far too proud for that—but he would smoothe the

path so that there should be no stumbling blocks in the way. First, however, it would be well to learn if the one the most interested had any feelings of antipathy against this particular man.

"Did you see *Shoon-ka-ska* this morning?" he asked, as an entering wedge to the conversation.

"He started early upon the hunting trail," was the reply.

"He is a great hunter, and his name will yet be heard mentioned with praise by the nation. He is—"

The rest of the sentence was lost in the report of a rifle, and the old chief fell forward with a groan. A groan that was answered by a shriek from the lips of the girl, as she threw aside her paddle and flung herself wildly upon the seeming corpse of her father.

CHAPTER III.

PITT MONCRIEF.

TRUE to his promise the Beaver was waiting by his canoe at the appointed spot, and at the appointed time. He had thought over the matter long and deeply, and decided to go. That done it required but a few hours to make the necessary preparations even for a longer absence than he anticipated. To gather up the furs and peltries he had on hand, sail to the *Sault*, and barter them for the few articles that he considered requisite, occupied but little time. Then he returned again to his cabin and amused himself until night, after his accustomed manner—slept—arose—gave it into the charge of a friendly Indian, and started to keep his word.

As he was passing around the point that would shut it from his sight, he paused to take a long, last look. It was hallowed by years of occupancy, and when would he see it again? When light a fire, cook a rude meal, and throw himself down to rest upon the bed of skins? The eyes of the old man grew misty as these thoughts forced themselves upon him. He raised his hand, wiped

away a tear, and then as if ashamed of so much effeminacy, he turned his head away, grasped his paddle firmly, and made the ripples dance from under the bow of his canoe. Home had never a better tribute than he had given his little one, and for many long, weary weeks, he remembered that last look.

Reaching the head of the portage he drew the light bark ashore, seated himself upon a huge boulder, lighted his pipe and waited patiently the coming of those who had engaged his services. That they might fail in keeping the appointment, never entered his mind. He knew that he was honest, and reasoning from that stand point considered every one else so. For an hour he remained almost as motionless as the stone upon which he sat, except that he now and then glanced up to watch the progress of the sun whose blood-red disc was creeping above the tree tops. Then he was aroused by the sound of footsteps and a cheery, ringing voice. In a moment after a young man stood by his side, and a hand was laid familiarly upon his shoulder.

"So you are the Beaver, are you? I would have known you anywhere by the description I received."

The old man looked up, and the plate of memory received this photograph—one that would never be effaced.

A young man of perhaps twenty-two years stood before him. His dress, though evidently fashioned after that of the west—Daniel Boone might have furnished the model—was of fine, dark green cloth, trimmed upon the seams with red fringe, and displayed to advantage the slight figure. The face was smooth; the cheeks ruddy with the crimson of health; the hands white, and feet petite as those of a woman; the forehead expansive, the eyes blue as woodland violets; the hair curling chestnut, and covered with a jaunty velvet cap of the same hue as his garments, the lips red as coral, and ever parted with a winning smile that revealed the regular teeth; the nose and chin perfect in their carving, and the voice musical in its every intonation.

The old trapper rubbed his eyes like one suddenly awakened from a dream, and looked

again. He had failed to satisfy himself at the first glance that it was not a girl that stood before him. And this was still more the case when he contemplated the toy rifle (compared to his own), the fanciful bullet pouch and powder flask, and the flashing rings that circled the delicate fingers. "Be you a woman?" he asked, almost dropping his pipe from his mouth.

"Not any more than you are," was the reply, and the blue eyes danced with merriment at the idea.

"Wal, I should think yer whar from yer looks. What do yer expect ter do with that ar pop gun? Shoot grasshoppers?"

"You will find that it will carry as far, and that I can shoot as straight with it as you can with your cumbersome weapon. But that is nothing to the purpose now. Are you the Beaver?"

"Ahem."

"All right. My name is Pitt Moncrief, and I am going to be your companion for the next few months."

"You?"

The trapper would not have been more astonished if a baby had been brought to him, and he told that he must take it with him in his wanderings. He knew the hardships that must be undergone, and the dangers that must be braved, and to think that so girlish a form could successfully pass through them was simply impossible.

"Certainly," was the smiling reply. "Do you see anything preposterous in the proposition?"

"No—but—"

"You think I am not strong enough to endure the fatigue. Is that not it?"

"Ahem."

"But has not your experience taught you that the nimble and slender-footed deer can travel as swiftly and as far as the heavy elk?"

"What do yer know about sich things?"

"More than you would give me credit for. But get your canoe ready and we will be off. I am tired of city life, and long to be away from brick walls."

"Whar is the other man?"

"He is not going. I will be your only companion."

"The stubborn old man would not have stirred a single step, had not he who engaged him come up at this moment.

"Good morning, Beaver," he said. "Well, Pitt, is everything all right?"

"I think so, except that this giant don't like the idea of having so slight a form as mine for a companion; and, come to think of it, we would make a capital cast for Valentine and Orson. Explain to him, if you please."

"Yes," and turning to the trapper he continued:—"Since I saw you, my friend, I have ascertained that it will be impossible for me to accompany you. My companion will voyage with you around the lake—you will go by the Canadian shore—and I will meet you at Copper Harbor. You know the spot, I presume?"

"Kewawana Pint? Yes."

"And have no objections to the arrangement?"

"No, only this ar gir—boy."

"You must make a man of him, Beaver. You will find him learned, brave and active. There is far more of strength and endurance, too, in that little body, than you would imagine."

"I could crush him with a single grip of my hand."

"If you had a chance," laughed Moncrief. "You settle the preliminaries with him. Colonel, while I take a look along the shore."

That was an easy matter. There was nothing grasping in the nature of the Beaver, and the sum offered for his services was far beyond his expectations. So much so, that he grumbled about receiving it.

"We can well afford to pay it," was the answer; "and here comes the outfit. I think you will find everything you need, and if not, your companion has letters to the Governors of the various trading posts, that will secure it."

The canoe was soon loaded, and the old trapper, with his young companion pushed off from the shore to ramble for a time far away from comfort, luxury, and civilization.

"Bon voyage," was called out from the shore.

"Je vous souhaite bonjour," was answered

back by Moncrief, with a graceful wave of his hand.

This was was their parting, but who could tell if ever they would meet again? We can read the pages of the past and learn what has been, but of the future none can know—the volume is closed to us.

"Do you speak French?" asked the old trapper of Pitt.

"Certainly, and you will find that I can do many more things that will astonish you."

"Wall, I'll tell you one thing yer must do, and that ar ter take them boots off yer feet."

"What for?"

"Ter keep from kickin' ther bottom out of ther canoe. I'll try and make yer er pair of moccasins ter-night when we camp, though I don't know what kind of er job I'll make of it, fer I never tried sich baby things as them'll be."

"I shall be thankful to you."

"They won't be sich fine things and all kivered over with beads and quills as they keep for sale at the Soo, lettin' on that they are Injin manufacture when the French girls made every one on 'em, but they'll do you er great deal more service."

"I have no doubt of it."

"Yer never need doubt what I say, fer I allers speaks ther truth."

"Your honest face is proof enough of that. Give me a light, please."

He had been filling a pipe, and extended his tobacco pouch at the same time he held out his hands for a light.

"Yer smoke too!"

"Yes, that is one of my numerous 'accomplishments!'"

From that moment the feeling of almost disgust that the trapper had entertained towards his companion on account of his size, began to fade away. There must be something good, he thought, in any man who could talk French, smoke, and was liberal with his tobacco. The latter action especially won him, for the sparseness of that article made it almost as valuable as water in a desert. Indian tobacco (the bark of the willow or the leaves of a shrub resembling our garden box) was to be had for the seeking, but the pure article was as rarely met with as gold.

"Yer have never bin here erfore?" asked the Beaver, after he had puffed for some time in silence, and with the most evident gusto.

"Never. It is my first visit. You have always lived here, I believe?"

"As fer as I kin remember, and that ar er pooty long trail come ter look back at it."

"And of course are intimately acquainted with the Indians?"

"Sartinly."

"Are they dangerous?"

"That depends ontirely upon how yer use 'em. Ther white man haint never treated them none of the best, that am er fact, but I reckon they won't trouble us none."

"Are there any pretty girls among them? I have often heard and read of Indian beauties but never saw one. The specimens at the Soo are disgusting enough."

"Ahem!"

"I have been told, however, that those who dwell away from civilization are far better looking. Is that the case?"

"More'n likely. The Injins that is er loafin' eround ther forts and tradin' shops haint no more like er wild one than er eagle in er cage is like one at liberty. It haint in ther natur of things that they should be."

"But are any of the girls remarkably beautiful?"

"Ahem!"

It was a point the Beaver did not like to talk about. He had said (to himself) when he had first heard that a young man was going with him, that he must keep him from seeing the Swallow, and he was determined to do so. And this resolve was rendered ten times as strong now that he knew Pitt Moncrief. He was satisfied that he could win the heart of any squaw in the tribe without an effort. If the daughter of Ah-ne-mee-kee was beautiful for a girl, so was he for a man, or rather would be when his frame had become somewhat expanded by exercise and his skin darkened by exposure. But he could not lie about the matter, and so had answered by his favorite curt ejaculation.

"Why do you not tell me?" persisted his companion, "if there are any beautiful girls among the Chippewas."

"Do yer think these ar old eyes am lookin

arter pooty gals?" answered the Beaver with a sly glance at the face of the young man.

"Certainly, enough to see whether or no they are pretty."

"Ef yer want ter see pooty gals, yer must go ermong ther Kenucks."

"I know better perhaps than you that many of the French Canadians girls are very beautiful, but that is not answering my question."

"Well, yer'll have ter judge fer yerself about that ar matter, though ef yer take ther advice of er old man yer'll let them erlone entirely. Ther Injuns are mighty jealous and ferce jist now, and ef yer want ter hunt arter copper in peace and without any danger of losin' yer scalp, yer'll treat 'em kindly, and give ther squaws er wide berth."

"You talk as if I intended to fall in love with them or to treat them badly."

"No man kin tell what he will do ontill he's tried. Who knows but I might have bin as bad as some of ther traders, ef I had lived erway from ther woods and ther great lake and ther blessed sunshine."

"That is all true, but as I don't propose to entangle myself with any of these woodland nymphs, I shall certainly keep my eyes open."

"Better be blind as er bat in ther day time and deaf as er adder," growled the old man, trying to argue with his conscience and satisfy it that it would be right to take the young man past Michipicoten without stopping.

"Now," continued Moncrief, "I've half a notion that you have a beauty hidden away somewhere, and I am determined to find her out. Let me but clap my eyes upon her, and see how soon I'll steal her away!"

All this was said jokingly, but it grated upon the old man's feelings. He was aware of the difficulties they would have to encounter even without exciting the ill will of the Indians, and if they should become angry the trail might even be stained with blood. Then, too, he thought of the beauty and innocence of the Swallow, and how one who was evidently fond of girlish loveliness as was his companion, would be attracted by her.

Suppose he should honestly make her his

wife—should be kind and true to her—should treat her as such a companion ought to be, would he not soon tire of a wild-wood life? Would he not become disgusted with the brutality and filth around him? Would even the strongest love of an educated man survive more than one of the terrible winters of hardship and something very near akin to, if not actual starvation? Would he not long for the companionship and luxury of civilization and return thither? And in that case would he dare to take his squaw wife with him? She might be very beautiful to-day, but she was utterly ignorant, and the records of the race show that their girlhood fades almost as quickly as the summer flower, and the belle changes in a very short time into almost repulsive ugliness.

Such thoughts flitted like lightning through the brain of the old trapper, and he was right. History furnishes but one example of a Pocahontas. The circumstances—the time that made her stand out from the rest of the red sisterhood, will never be known again.

"Yer all wrong," replied the Beaver, for he could not let even the implied imputation upon his character remain unanswered. "Yer all wrong. I've seen many er squaw that was called good lookin' in my day, but never one that I ever hankered after fer er wife."

"Still you will not deny that there are some beauties among them?"

"I can't tell how that mought be."

"And I can't understand what makes you so reticent upon the subject. Thank goodness, I have sharp eyes and can judge for myself."

"Sharp eyes, have yer? Wal, kin yer see er leetle pint of land jest ahead?"

"Certainly."

"Wal, thar's whar we are going ter camp."

"And commence our explorations?"

"No. Thar's no kinder use of beginnin' to look after copper for two or three days. I'll show you whar ther fust spot is."

For three days (with the usual rest) they continued their way. On the fourth morning they rounded the point of Cape Gargantua and commenced the traverse of Michipicoten

Bay. Thus far, the subject of their conversation had not been renewed. If the Beaver feared any such thing, he cunningly avoided it by telling stories of his roving life and the manners and customs of the red man. Now, however, as they were gliding along Pitt Moncrief startled him by asking again about the Indians.

"When are we coming to a camping ground of the Chippewas?" he asked. "I am very anxious to see some of their beauties."

"Ahem!"

"Is there not one of their villages somewhere in this bay? If my geography is not at fault there ought to be."

"Do you see that loon way out yonder?" asked the Beaver, determined not to be forced into an unpleasant position.

"Yes. What of it?"

"Wal, yer said that ar pop gun of yer'n would carry as fer and shoot as strait as mine. Let me see what yer can do. Ef yer kill ther bird, I'll make yer the handsomest kind of er pouch out of ther hide, and say that yer needn't fear ter try yer hand ergin any one on the whole lake."

With a glare of pride upon his handsome features, Pitt Moncrief raised his weapon. It was a new invention—such an one as the trapper had never seen—and he knew its capabilities.

"Throw the head of the canoe towards the shore," he said. "There; keep it so."

"Jest as still as er rock."

The old man was indulging in intense satisfaction, as he thought of the failure of his companion, and how he could prove the superiority of his own weapon. So much was this the case, that he failed to look in the direction of the proposed shot—failed to remember the old hunter maxim, "to look at the range as well as at the mark," failed to see a canoe that was passing slowly along. Not so, however, with Moncrief.

"It strikes me, Beaver, that there is something swimming beyond the deer. It might be a deer. Look and see."

"Deer don't swim so fur from the shore. Ef it whar later in ther season it might be er cariboo, but they are fur up among ther mountings now. Shoot if yer ar goin' to."

"Look where the ball strikes."

"Sartinly."

The trapper turned his head and in an instant his listless manner changed to one of great excitement.

"Fer ther love of heaven, don't shoot," he exclaimed with the full strength of his powerful lungs, and reaching out his hand to strike down the weapon.

The warning came too late. The fatal spring had been touched and the bullet was speeding upon its errand. It missed the intended mark, glanced upon the water, and they saw one of the forms in the canoe fall as if he had received his death wound.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAMP ON THE ISLAND.

"MAY the good Lord be merciful to us," was the characteristic exclamation of the Beaver, as he saw the result of the shot.

His first impulse was to whirl the canoe around, and hasten away. Thereby he would conceal all knowledge of the unintentional harm, and keep clear of any of the fatal consequences of Indian vengeance. But it was a cowardly thought, and instantly banished from his mind. To leave a human being, suffering and in danger, was not according to his nature. If his own life should be the forfeit, he would do what his conscience told him was right. Had he not tempted his companion to shoot, and did not the blame rest entirely upon his shoulders? He thought so, and no one could have convinced him to the contrary.

"May the good Lord be merciful to us," repeated the old man. "What shall we do, Pitt? What shall we do?" His own mind was fully made up, but he wished to test his companion—to see what metal he was made of in the midst of danger and excitement.

"Do? What would you do but go to the rescue? May heaven forgive me if I have committed a murder by my careless-

ness. Come, let us be quick. A few moments' delay might be fatal."

With tears in his eyes, the Beaver grasped the hand of his young companion and wrung it heartily. From that moment all his first impressions of dislike vanished, and he would be his firm friend to the death.

"Yer heart is made of jest as good stuff as yer rifle," he said, "and ef ever yer git into trouble, call on ther Beaver."

"Thank you. I could not call upon a better man. But we are losing time."

At the same instant their paddles touched the water and the light bark shot forward like an arrow from a strongly strained bow-string. Tiny foam wreaths rose up in front, and a wake, like a serpent's trail, was seen behind. In a race for life they could not have exerted themselves more.

"It am ther Thunder and ther Swallow," exclaimed the Beaver as the two canoes lay side by side.

"A red Venus!" murmured Pitt Moncrief under his breath, as his eyes rested upon the girl.

But she neither saw or heard him. All her attention was given to her father. He lay as he had fallen, except that his head was pillowed in the lap of his child, and she was vainly striving to stop the blood that was rapidly oozing from a wound below the arm, and in dangerous proximity to the heart. Accustomed to such things, the old trapper gave directions for his instant transportation ashore.

"May the good Manitou be thanked," whispered the Swallow, but without raising her eyes from the pallid face she loved so well. "May the good Manitou be thanked for your coming, Ah-meek."

"He must not be stirred," interrupted the sweet voice of Pitt Moncrief. "To move him now until the bullet is found, or at least the blood stancher, would be his death."

There was a firmness in the tones that made even the Beaver stare with surprise, while the girl raised her head for the first time and looked upon the stranger. Looked and saw such a face as she might have dreamed of but had never seen.

"Do you know anything about doctoring?" asked the trapper.

"Yes. It is my profession, although I am here in the character of a geologist."

"And you think it won't do ter move ther chief? He would never feel ther motions of ther canoe."

"Let me examine the wound," and he proceeded to do so, while his patient lay in a stupor.

He saw at a glance that a long and difficult operation would be necessary to extract the ball. It was deeply buried,—the fountain seat of life near—the slightest mistake fatal, and he dare not trust himself with the egg shell of a bark rocking beneath him.

"You are right, Beaver," he said sadly, after stopping the effusion of blood as well as was possible. "We will have to take him ashore. How far is it to where he lives?"

"Ther island is much nearer. We had best ter take him thar ontill he gits better."

"To the island then. You get in and paddle. I will take the girl—poor child—in ours."

"To this arrangement the old man would have made serious objections had not the girl herself interfered and settled the matter."

"Shaw-Shaw will stay with her father," she whispered in the ear of the trapper, in her native tongue.

"What does she say?" asked Moncrief.

"That she haint er going ter leave ther old man. I'll take them ashore and you kin bring our canoe."

The island reached, they carried the wounded man up the shelving bank and laid him upon their united blankets. The insensibility that had followed the first shock of the wound had passed away—he had opened his eyes and knew all that was transpiring around him.

"Where are you child?" he asked.

"Here!" and she bounded to his side, raised his head and pressed her lips upon his forehead.

"And I am here too, my old friend," whispered the trapper, at least he thought he was doing so though in reality his tone was anything but soft.

"And who is that?"

The chief raised his hand and pointed to

Moncrief, who was engaged in taking the necessary instruments, the old trapper called them "scalping knives" from a case, and preparing them for use.

"Er young Medercine. He'll soon have yer all right ergin."

"Who fired the weapon that was aimed at the heart of the red man?"

A very difficult question that to answer, and the old trapper colored like a school girl. Had not his companion come to his rescue he would certainly have betrayed himself.

"Does the wounded man speak French?" he inquired.

"Sartinly. All ther Injuns erlong ther shore do that."

"Then I can talk directly to him."

"Ter be sure yer kin."

Moncrief addressed himself to the chief, explained the position of the bullet, and what measures would be necessary to extract it and perform a cure. Then he was going on to tell him that it would be very painful, when he was cut short with an emphatic wave of the hand and—

"The red man is not a sick squaw. Let the pale-medicine go on."

"But your daughter? Had she not better go away?"

"She is the daughter of a chief! Ask her," was the proud response.

"She will stay," was the scarcely heard decision of the Swallow.

Pitt Moncrief looked at the face of the Indian girl. It was pale as ashes, the eyes were filled with tears, but every muscle was firmly braced, and the lips pressed together with an iron resolve. It was wonderful to him that one so young could have such perfect self-control. His hospital experience had convinced him that very few women (except perhaps trained nurses) could bear the sight of blood. For a daughter then to hold her father's head while an operation that might be fatal was being performed, was wonderful. He could not believe that it would last, and calling the trapper aside whispered:—

"Be ready to take the girl away. Her fortitude will not stand this cruel test. Be on the watch, and as soon as she shows signs of fainting, carry her away and take her

place. Strange! strange," he muttered to himself, "that such beauty could be the child of an Indian."

"Never yer fear. I'll be on ther look out, but she wont faint. Go on and git done jest as quick as ever yer kin. Ther pain am mighty hard on ther old chief and yet, come ter think of it. I believe that his darter suffers ther most."

"There can be no doubt of that, poor child."

If the trapper had been astonished before at Pitt Moncrief he was doubly so now. There was something supernatural to him in the rapid movements and firm and delicate touches of the little hands he had laughed at. Something surpassing belief, that so frail a form should be nerved with steel, and the heart he had fancied girlish, be far more manly than even his own.

The bullet was at last reached, and successfully drawn forth.

"Show it me," commanded the chief.

The Beaver would have interfered. It was his intention to have secured it and thrown it far out into the lake, but he was too late. The precaution he had in his mind had never for a moment entered into that of his companion. Moncrief could imagine no reason why it should not be given. Such a request he knew was common among soldiers wounded in battle, and he had seen the battered lead preserved as a sacred relic. So he gave it.

The Indian eyed it narrowly, looked from one white man to the other, placed it carefully in his pouch, and then directed his daughter to go to the woods and gather certain herbs and roots.

"It is unnecessary," interposed Moncrief. "I have everything that will be required. I do not doubt the efficacy of what you propose, but I can save your daughter the trouble."

"You kin trust him," was the endorsement of the trapper, in the Indian tongue. "I've sounded him and found thar whar no lies hid erway in ther bottom of his soul."

"It is well," replied the chief, and resigned himself completely into the hands of the "pale medicine."

Having administered the proper antidotes

against fever, Moncrief stated his wishes to the Beaver.

"We shall have to build a shelter of some kind," he said. "It will be impossible to remove him for days, and it may be even weeks."

"And do yer propose ter stay and tend him?" was the questioning answer; and the old man looked at the younger one as if his keen black eyes had power to pierce through the covering of flesh, and discover what was passing in the heart.

"Certainly. You would not have me leave one that I came so near murdering, to die for the want of assistance?"

"But yer can't be er sarching arter copper at ther same time."

"That is very true. I shall have to somewhat neglect business."

"And ther Kurnal—him who got me ter go—how will he like that ar kind of doings?"

"I am my own master!"

"Wal, wal, yer know yer own business best. And yer think it may be weeks before yer kin safely leave ther chief ter ther care of his darter?"

"More than likely. If inflammation should set in, it would require careful nursing and skillful treatment to carry him safely through. I wish I had more experience. I shall do my best, but I have great—very great fears."

"That am er fust rate sign. I've always noticed that when er man don't think tu much of hisself that he's mighty sartin' ter be knowinsome. What whar yer sayin' erbout puttin' up er wigwam?"

"That both the Indian and his daughter must have shelter from the hot sun and the damp, chilly night air."

"Ther Swaller will take keer of herself if—" he checked himself suddenly, looked embarrassed, and continued—"It wont take very long ter put up er shanty of some kind."

"It must be warm and comfortable."

"Sartinly. Come with me," and having stepped to the canoe and taken his axe, he led the way into the bushes.

The Indian had suffered very much from pain—from the extraction of the bullet even though skillfully performed, and especially from the loss of blood. With his lips com-

pressed and his hands tightly clasped together, he had lain while the white men were discussing his fate. The instant, however, that they had passed from sight, and their footsteps could no longer be heard his entire manner changed.

"Daughter?" he whispered.

"Father?" and she knelt by his side.

"Where have the pale faces gone?"

"To gather poles and bark for a wigwam."

"Are you sure they can neither see or hear?"

"Yes, father."

"Go to their canoe and bring me their fire weapons. Be swift as the lightning, and silent as the coming of death."

To hear, with her was to obey. She had been trained in a school that admitted of no questioning, and scarcely had she heard the command before it was executed.

"Here they are, father."

He endeavored to sit upright, but could not do so. Then, with great difficulty he raised his head upon one hand.

"Bend the muzzles down, my child, so that I may look into them."

She did so. He tried first that of the Beaver, with his finger, and it was drawn out unsoiled. Then that of Moncrief, and it was begrimed with powder. Evidently it had but recently been fired. Yet still he was not satisfied.

"Take the bullet from my pouch and see which it fits."

"The little one," was answered with a sigh.

"It is well," he said with a grim smile of triumph lighting up his savage features. "It is well! Hark! The pale faces are coming. Back to the canoe with the fire weapons, and let no one know that you touched them. Place them just as you found them. Quick!"

She knew now his object—knew that he had fastened the crime upon the beautiful young stranger. This was the very thing the cunning old trapper had feared and was determined to prevent. He was resolved that when the heavy slumber of exhaustion came, to steal the erring bullet away. To more fully carry out his plan of concealment,

the first action after his return was to direct Moncrief to wipe out and reload his rifle.

"We'll have ter be er lookin' out for somethin' ter eat," he said, by way of explanation, "ef we ar ergoin' ter stay here very long, and one kinnot tell ther minnit when er flock of ducks may come flying over, or er rabbit poke his nose out of them bushes."

The idea was plausible. Moncrief did as he was directed, and then assisted the trapper in the construction of a wigwam from the materials they had brought. First a ring of poles was stuck into the ground—then the tops (left with the branches on for the purpose) were woven together, and then the structure was covered with sections of wide bark stripped from the canoe birch. This, with the fire in the centre, was the usual arrangement—and all of it, but the Sybarite ideas of Moncrief required more. An Indian, or a trapper, would have flung himself to rest upon the bare ground with a blanket only for protection from the damp. He urged and insisted that it should be deeply carpeted with the fragrant and springy boughs of the fir trees.

"The wounded man," he said, "required a soft bed, and his daughter—"

"Don't be er troublin' yerself erbout her," growled the Beaver. "Ef yer Medercine, cure ther chief jest as quick as yer kin so that we may git off. You don't know how short ther summer is here, or yer wouldn't be er foolin' erway yer time, I kin tell yer."

"I shall do the best possible, that you may depend on, but I can see no good reason why they should not be comfortable."

"Nor I, nuther; but ther gal knows more erbout getting erlong in the woods in a minnit than you've larned in yer hull life time."

"Very likely."

"Then jest let her erlone. She kin paddle her own canoe. And come ter that, I don't see no kind or manner of use in our stayin' here—leastwise, no longer than tomorrow mornin'. Ther chief will either be better or dead by that time. Besides, these redskins have er way of thar own of doctorin', and er mighty good way it am tu. Ef it's er fever yer erfeared on, they'll soon

drive it erway with wolf's bane, or some sich yarb, and thar's nothin' better on ther face of ther arth fer dressing er wound than spider webs and balsam fir gum and green plantain leaves, and they know it."

"But you would not leave her alone with her sick father?"

"Sartinly. Nursing's thar very thing of all others that wimmin folks whar made fur. It comes just as natural ter them as breathin. They begin it when we're born, and keep it up until we die."

Without knowing it, the old trapper had imbibed this same notion that has been made immortal by the pen of the poet. What is it the loving and lion-hearted Ionian slave girl, Myrrha, says to Sardanapalus?

"The very first of human life must spring from woman's breast, Your first small words are taught you by her lips, Your first tears quenched by her, and your last sighs Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing, When men have shrunk from the ignoble care Of watching the last hour."

"But you would not—could not think of leaving her thus. Suppose that he should die? What then?"

"Why, she'd just roll him up in his blanket, put him inter ther canoe, and paddle him over ter whar ther tribe is. Then they'd have er grand pow-ow—sing and dance and cut up all kind of kerlicues—put him inter er birch bark box, lift it up onter four stakes—they call that buryin', ther beathens, when ther body hain't within more'n four feet of ther ground—light a fire, put his canoe and bow and arrers and camp kettle and some provisions under it, and say that he had gone ter ther spirit land."

"What do they put such things there for?"

"That he may not starve upon ther journey, and have er boat ter cross ther river of death."

"Then they think the journey will be a somewhat lengthy one?"

"Thar appears ter be er difference in er-pinion ermong ther tribes erbout that ar. Ther Ojibwas now believe that the spirit journeys for four days and nights. So they light ther fire four times, so that it may cook its food and not be er travellin' round erbout in ther darkness. But I hain't time ter tell yer more now. Ef ther wigwam am finished

ter yer likin, we'll carry ther chief inter it, end let his darter take keer of him while we go huntin'. I don't know how yer feel, but I think somethin would taste most mighty good about this time."

The recollection of what the Beaver had said was not banished from the mind of his companion. He thought of the hours the girl would pass in watching her father—the long, weary days and the terrible nights. And then if he should die! He could not even reflect upon it without a tear. The hour that saw her sitting beside the dead camp fire and the form of her dead father, would be as much intensified by grief as ever visited a human soul. God help her then! Sitting alone through the cold night by the colder form, or paddling with it over a weary stretch of waters with the waves, perhaps, swelling around, and the howling storm singing a requiem. Yes: God help her then! He could imagine nothing—had never dreamed of anything even half so terrible, and swore in his innermost heart that it should never be.

"What ar yer dreamin' erbout, Pitt?" suddenly asked the trapper.

"Nothing—only." The voice at once recalled him from the contemplation of his ideal picture of misery, "Nothing—only—"

"You were in er most mighty hurry ter git ther wigwam finished er leetle bit ergo. Now yer act just as if yer'd forgotten all erbout it."

"I certainly have not. Come, let us carry the old man in out of the sun."

A grateful smile rested upon the face of the Swallow, as she saw the preparations that had been made for the comfort of her father. At the moment she thought not of herself. Knowing the old trapper as she did from her earliest infancy, she felt that it was to be attributed solely to the thoughtfulness of his younger companion, and frankly placing her hand within his, she thanked him.

"The heart of Shaw-Shaw warms towards him of the hair, like the feathers of the partridge," she said. "She will never forget him. Had she been alone with her father he would have died. The Great Spirit will bless the pale face for his kindness to the red man."

"There is no occasion for thanks," he replied, looking at the beautiful eyes brimming over with tears, and contrasting them, far from unfavorably, with those he had been accustomed to see. "Any one would have done the same."

"You know not the hearts of the pale men who come to the great lake. But my father!" and she sprang to the side of the wounded man at the first utterance of a sound from his lips.

The restless eyes of the chief had seen the warm hand pressure and heard the words. The great fear of his life that had been driven away by his sudden and severe injury, arose again within him, and he gave utterance to a groan that bodily pain could not have wrung from him. He saw how strikingly handsome Moncrief was—felt under what favorable circumstances he had met his daughter—knew her loving and impulsive nature, and wisely dreaded the effect upon her.

"Let my child sit by my side," he whispered, "and keep the leaves dipped in the cool water, upon my head. It is as hot as the summer sun."

"Yes, that's about ther best thing yer kin do," also urged the trapper.

He felt about the young people being together very much as did the chief, and arranged his plans so that they would not be alone.

"Suppose yer take yer rifle and go and see ef yer kin not find somethin' good in ther woods," he suggested. "Ther Swallow and I will keep watch. Ther used ter be er famous place erbout er couple of miles from here fer game."

The eyes of the girl seconded the request, and Moncrief nothing loath to show his skill as a sportsman, and feeling satisfied that there could be no more use for his medical services for hours, departed.

He gone, the old chief grasped the hand of his child within his own, and sank into a heavy slumber. He was satisfied as long as she was near him, and was resolved to tell the Beaver of his fears at the very first opportunity.

It was near evening when Pitt Moncrief

returned, bringing with him a fair string of game. These he gave into the charge of the old trapper, but he had also, carefully enveloped in green leaves, a few flowers—the first offerings of Spring to the Sun. These he laid in the lap of the Indian girl, who looked her thanks but spoke not. Fortunately too, perhaps for them, the old man still slumbered and the trapper was busy inspecting the game.

"Hit every one on them in ther head, didn't yer! I couldn't have done better my own self. Ther must be some good in that thar little rifle of yourn arter all. I must try it myself some day," he said.

"It is at your service. How does the wounded man get along?"

"Wal, for ther most part he has slept like er baby. Yer kin see fer yerself while I go and dress ther birds and rabbits, and git supper ready."

In the pride of exhibiting his culinary skill he forgot the caution he had promised to exercise, and had they been lovers, the Swallow and Moncrief could not have wished for a better opportunity to have poured out the pent up emotions of their hearts. But they were not so yet, whatever might come in the future.

"Your father is doing well," he said, "after a careful counting of the fluctuations of the pulse, 'and appears to sleep heavily.'"

"His eyes have been closed since the pale face took the hunting trail," was the low voiced reply.

"So much the better. Is it very far from here to where you home is?"

"The smoke rises from the wigwams. It is plain to be seen."

"Then you live at the head of the bay?"

"Yes."

How long the conversation would have continued could not have been determined, had not the watch dog of a trapper suddenly recollected himself.

"Here, Pitt, Pitt!" he exclaimed. "Come here and build er fire. Yer kinnot larn younger how ter live in ther woods."

Although disgusted in having his tête-à-tête thus unceremoniously broken up, Moncrief obeyed, and the Beaver saw that he had no

opportunity to renew it until night came. Then he took upon himself to arrange the watches.

"Ther Swaller and I will take keer of ther chief while you git er nap; you must be tired with hunting," he said, "arter er spell we will call you. So fix yerself jest as comfortable as yer like; that ar shelvin' rock is as much protection as any man oughter have, and somewhat arter midnight we'll rouse yer."

"You must do so if the slightest change occurs," and after preparing some medicine and giving particular directions, Moncrief strolled to a little distance, rolled himself up in his blankets and sought repose.

And rest he might have gained, but slumber fled for a long time from him. The nearness to which he had taken a fellow mortal's life, his strange surroundings and especially the beauty of the girl, were things that he could not banish from his mind. Fain would he have watched the little group within the wigwam, but could not. The curtains were closely drawn. He could see the light of the fire flashing through the openings in the bark, but that was all. He could hear, for a time, the low hum of voices, but could not distinguish farther than that it was, to him, the strange language of the Indians. But, at length, the poppy leaves fell around him and his spirit, freed from the trammels of the flesh, wandered far away from the wild and rock-bound shore, to the loved ones at home.

CHAPTER V.

SHOON-KA-SKA.

THE young brave whom the father of the Swallow had selected as a fitting mate for his daughter, was among the most noted of the tribe. A chief by the right of birth, he had already won a name second to none of his age, and could confidently look forward to the time when he would wear the highest honors. Had his tribe been upon the war

path he would have fought desperately for scalps. Now, in the more peaceful pursuits of hunting, fishing and trapping, he made amends as far as possible, for their loss.

Gifted by nature with a strongly muscled frame, and a bold heart and determined will; skillful with the paddle and rifle; keen eyed as the lynx, and with a foot swift, tireless, and noiseless as the wolf, it was not strange that he should be praised in the locality where men were measured by the physical and not mental abilities. Somewhat, too, of rude beauty there was in his face, although strongly marked with the prevailing traits of cunning and revenge. Evidently Nature had intended him for a warrior, and the force of circumstances that robbed him of that bloody pastime, fretted his proud spirit. The long line of ancestry had reveled in scalps. They were the medals they loved to hang about their necks, and the decorations they coveted for their wigwams. And that disposition made Shoon-ka-ska treacherous in the extreme. If he could have committed murder and secured a white man's scalp without fear of detection, he would not have hesitated for a single moment, and once obtained he would secretly have hugged it to his heart as a miser does his ill-gotten gold.

The ambition of his nature to be the head of his people tempted him, also, to look upon the most honored and beautiful girl as the one to fill his wigwam. No other would satisfy him. Not that he had any particular affection for the Swallow, or that her rare loveliness had touched his heart as it never failed to do that of others, but she stood the highest and would, more than any other, minister to the haughty feelings of his heart.

More than once he had been tempted to tell her of his affection, by placing presents at the door of her wigwam in the dead hour of night. More than once the words of passion had trembled upon his lips, but he thought the time was not yet ripe. He feared somewhat the complete idolization of her father, as well, perchance, as the innocence and girlish nature of the Swallow herself, and dared not risk a refusal, that would have been death to him. His proud heart would never have recovered from such a blow.

And so he had loitered in his love making until the white men began to crowd the shores of the lake—to invade even the red man's home. But wait no longer he would. Whatever was to be his fate he would know quickly.

On the very morning that the Thunder and his daughter were floating in their canoe far away from the wigwams of the Ojibwas, he was seeking the girl. Her mother wondered at his questioning, but told him they had gone away from home—where, she knew not. He paced uneasily through the encampment but found her not. He sought the shore—there was no canoe in sight. Had there been the slightest particle of a trail he would have followed it like a hound, but there was not.

Water and air never leave any. The circle fades from the stream as the cloud from the sky, and no trace remains.

Enquiry having proved useless, there was nothing left but search; and any one but an Indian would have shrunk from such a task. Leaping into his canoe he began paddling slowly along the shore and carefully examining every part. But there was neither the print of a moccasin or the mark left by the landing of a boat, and not time enough had elapsed for the waves to have washed out the latter from the firm sand. Seaward there was nothing in sight save the gulls, intent upon procuring food, and now and then a flock of other aquatic birds skimming from point to point. To have followed farther upon such an uncertainty did not suit his habits of indolence, for the Indian, except when under excitement, is far from being active in his habits. The women are literally the "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

There was nothing for him to do but wait, and turning his light bark to the shore of an island that perfectly commanded the water at every point, he hid it in the bushes, and concealing himself from all but the most minute observation, began his watch.

Unintentionally he had landed upon a point, that was used by the tribe for a burying ground, and soon his attention was drawn to something or somebody moving around beneath the upraised graves. Was it man or beast? Human or a ghost? Look as he

would he could not determine for a time. Then he saw that it was a very old squaw, who enjoyed the doubtful reputation of being a Wabe-no or Magician—in plainer terms, a witch.

All uneducated, and consequently superstitious people, have those among them who boast of skill at divination—at telling both the past and the future—who sell charms to win love, and tell where hidden treasures may be found. Though known by different names, all the aboriginal tribes of America have them, and they occupy almost as commanding a place as the Great Medicine themselves, although their movements are carried on in secret; for they love "the darkness rather than light."

For a long time he watched her closely, as she raked around with her long, skinny fingers among the ashes of the dead, that had fallen from their unearthed tombs. Clad in garments of wolf skin, and with the head covering of that animal so arranged that it could be drawn as a hood over her own, she looked, crawling about as she was, more like a veritable monster of the genus *canis*, than anything human. That she might be looking around for the valuables with which the dead warriors were frequently buried, never entered his mind. He knew that the rank mandrake was the abode of the noisome toad and hissing serpent, and what could woman be doing there except for some foul purpose?

With feelings of awe, almost of fear, he saw her approach, raise up her head and look towards the spot where he was concealed. Had she discovered him, and was she angry at having her solitude disturbed? It might be so, and his heart sunk within him. He could distinctly see her face, (horrid with its countless wrinkles), framed in straggling locks of snow-white hair, and the eyes that still flashed undimmed and fiery. Age—a century almost, had not tamed them, and they told of a hell of passions burning in that withered frame.

Still groping she came towards him. He almost held his breath. She was passing, and his heart beat more freely—its wild beatings were becoming still. Strange that one who fears nothing mortal can be made

to tremble like a child by anything having the slightest semblance of the supernatural. But in an instant all his fears returned. She stopped directly in front of him, appeared to transfix him with her eyes, and almost screamed, "Come forth! What do you here, in the dwelling place of the dead? Is this a place for your moccasins to leave their imprint? Hark! how the bones rattle in the coffins!"

He sprang to his feet with the first word. Often as he had seen her around the wigwams, he had never met her alone in the forest, and especially amid such ghost-provoking surroundings.

"You are seeking for the living and not the dead," she continued in her strained and unnatural voice. "They are not here. Go elsewhere and seek them."

"How do you know that?" he stammered in astonishment. He had not the slightest idea how closely she and her spies had watched all the younger portion of the tribe, with the view of some day making them pay tribute.

"How do I know that the trail of the White Dog is upon the ground and the flight of the swallows through the sky? The spirits of those who are sleeping here tell me all things."

"Here is tobacco — wampum. Tell me where I will find her I seek, if you know."

"If I know? Beware how you doubt my word. There are those within my call that would strangle you as soon as I could this serpent," and she took one from the bosom of her dress, and swung it in dangerous proximity to his face.

"I tell you I know all things that have been and will be."

"Then tell me where I will find—"

"The Swallow? What do you seek her for?"

"Why need I tell you?"

"You would make her your wife. Beware that the pale face does not steal her from you."

"I know that they are coming in great numbers, but why should I fear them?"

"Because one is with her now!"

"With Shaw-Shaw?"

"With the Swallow. He is sitting by her side and whispering in her ears."

"Where? Tell me where?"

"The hour has not yet come. Sit down and wait."

Though more than half inclined to doubt her word, yet he dared not to give utterance to his thoughts. That she had been upon the island when and where the wounded chief was carried, he could have no means of knowing any more than that she had seen him land, and purposely thrown herself in his path. Yet so it was, and she used her information to impress him with her power.

Motioning him to a seat and bidding him wait until her return, she was starting away.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Wait and see. The spirits of the earth and air and water come not at the call of mortals. Spells must be used to compel them. If you would know more, wait. If not, to your canoe and away with all speed."

"I will wait."

He was fast overcoming his fear, and curiosity as well as the hope of learning something of the Swallow, urged him to remain. "A pale face was with her and whispering in her ears." So she had told him. He would learn, if he could, and woe to any one of a white skin that should dare to come between him and the object on which he had set his heart. But when and where had they met? There had been no white man around the encampment for days. They must have met before, and this was by appointment. Yet why was her father with her? Was he privy to the arrangement, or had he only been used as a blind—she deserting him when it suited her purpose so to do? It was all very strange to him; he could not understand the matter at all, and the black and devilish fires of jealousy awoke in his heart for the first time. He could but wait, watch and bide his time for revenge.

The old squaw passed from sight around a point of rocks, but almost instantly returned. She brought with her a little kettle, built a fire, placed the utensils upon the flames, and threw in a handful of herbs. Then she circled around singing a wild, weird song. The witches on the blasted heath, that tempt-

ed Macbeth to his doom could have found a fitting partner in her, albeit she was but a counterfeit.

"The charm works," she said, clapping her skinny hands above her head, and throwing herself upon the ground, she lay like one asleep for a long time.

So long indeed, that the Indian became impatient. The effect of the mummary had begun to lose its effect upon him. He was tired of waiting and longed for action. He became restless and moved about. He was determined to waste no more time, and was already unfastening his canoe, when the witch arose and firmly demanded:—

"Where is the White Dog going? Is his nose so keen of scent, that he can follow the trail after there has been blood spilled upon it?"

"Blood? Whose? Not that of the Swallow?"

"Your own eyes must learn. See! the shadows are gathering. It will soon be night. When the owl leaves the hollow in the tree, and the whippoorwil sings, a light will arise that will guide the White Dog."

Cunning old woman! She knew that a camp fire would be lighted, and that it could be seen plainly from where they were standing.

"And I must wait until night comes?" he asked, impatiently.

"So wills the spirits. They whispered it to me in my sleep."

He saw nothing to do but obey. He had trusted her thus far, and it was too late now to change his plan. Following her example, he filled and lighted his pipe, and for a time they smoked in silence. Smoked until the sun had entirely disappeared behind the western hills, and dark shadows had gathered around. Then she arose and pointing to a little spark of fire that gleamed as a star upon the water, almost whispered:—

"Let Shoon-ka-ska go, but be watchful as the wild cat when guarding her young, and silent as when it is stealing upon its prey. Go! I would be alone to talk with the dead."

Without even a word of thanks he stepped into his canoe and shoved off. Whatever the secret of the light, he was determined

to understand. A wild, mocking laugh rang upon his ears. He turned his head, saw the old witch woman standing as he had left her, and waving her hands wildly around her head. Then she suddenly disappeared. It seemed as if the earth had opened and swallowed her, and he struck the water more rapidly with his paddle, and forced the light bark onward.

Had he but waited and watched for a little while, he would have seen the old woman steal away in her canoe from the opposite side of the island, and direct her course towards the encampment of the tribe. Witch or not, she had no desire to pass the night amid rattling coffins, fleshless bones, and the dust of the dead.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WIGWAM ON THE ISLAND. A DEADLY SHOT.

ALTHOUGH the chief had received almost immediate attention after his injury, it was evident even to his uneducated watchers that it was much more serious than they had suspected.

The wound caused by the conical ball partook both of the character that surgeons would call lacerated and contused. Its edges were jagged and unequal, and violent inflammation could not but follow. The hemorrhage too had been great, had not totally subsided under either the inward remedies or external applications, and was evidently of an arterial character. This, had they been the least versed in *Materia Medica* they could easily have told from the light color of the blood, and its issuing in rapid jets in contradistinction to the dark purple, and smooth, uninterrupted flow from the veins.

But though not thus wise the old trapper had seen enough during his wandering life both in accidents and during the battles of the Chippewas and Sioux to convince him that something more than ordinary treatment was required. For the girl, she sat in stony si-

jence with her eyes never wandering from her father's face, or without changing her attitude except when she went to procure fresh leaves and water from a neighboring spring.

During one of these brief absences the old trapper cautiously removed the bullet from the pouch of the chief, and digging a hole with his knife in the floor of the wigwam, buried it forever from sight.

"It wouldn't do him ther least grain of good," he muttered between his compressed lips, "ter know how he got hurted. It war er chance shot. Ther bullet struck ther water and glanced. I mought have been jest as onlucky myself, and ther boy hadn't orter suffer for what he didn't mean ter do—and shan't nuther."

"What were you saying?" asked the Swallow, who came in at the moment.

Her footsteps had been so light that even his watchful ears failed to hear her. Taken completely by surprise, and fearful that he had been overheard, it was a moment before he could collect his thoughts sufficiently to answer.

"I—I—" he stammered, "I talking?"

"Yes. I heard you distinctly."

"What war I er sayin'?"

"I could not catch the words. It was the language of the pale faces."

"So! That's jest like me. Old fool, that I am, I am always er talkin' ter myself when thar hain't anybody else eround."

"But what were you speakin' about? Was it of my father?"

"I reckon it must have bin, though I disremember now. Did you pass near ther young medercine?"

"Yes."

She blushed as she answered, for she felt guilty for having stopped to look at him as he lay sleeping with his head pillowed upon his arm. To look, and even compare his face to what she fancied the Manitou might be!

"Whar he er sleepin'?"

"Yes."

"Wall, we'll have ter call him arter a lee-tle."

"Then you think my father is worse?" she exclaimed in alarm.

"I didn't say that," he replied, seeing

how agitated she was. "I didn't say that, but it's best ter allers be on ther safe side, and he knows more'n we do by er long shot."

"I will call him now."

"No. Let me go."

He was too late. Her active feet, hastened both by fear and love, were beyond the limits of the wigwam before he had arisen. There was nothing left for him to do but to sit down again, and the more especially as the wounded man was groaning heavily and demanded instant attention; some strong hand to keep him from turning upon the injured side and displacing the bandages.

As the Swallow had said, Pitt Moncrief lay with one arm beneath his head. His cap had fallen off and his curling auburn hair glittered in the soft starlight like strands of gold. His face was upturned so that she could distinctly see every feature, and marvelled at the beauty of the white brow, the veined lids, the soft cheek and the red lips parted with a sweet smile. She bent low over him, and would have called his name, but she had never learned it. Then by an irresistible impulse of her affectionate nature, she bent still lower and touched his cheek with her lips. It was as light as if a butterfly's wing had just brushed it in passing, or as if an angel had left a holy impress there. Then as if startled by what she had done, she drew back and looked wildly around at the wigwam, the forest, and the gray old rocks; rocks primeval with the creation and bearing still the marks of the Noahic flood. Reassured by her scrutiny; satisfied that she had not been seen, she approached a little nearer and said in a tremulous voice:—

"Let the pale Medicine arise. The Beaver would see him."

"Beaver? Whom? What?" questioned Moncrief springing to his feet and rubbing his eyes.

"The Beaver. The one that travels with him in the canoe. Him that has many traps. Does the young pale face not remember?" repeated the girl.

"Yes—yes."

The rifle he had grasped as he started up, was instantly lowered and his wild look changed into the sweetest smiles. He was fully himself in a moment.

"Is it you, Swallow? Have I slept so long? How is your father?" he asked in rapid succession.

"The black Manitou of fever is busy with his heart."

"Come," and he walked rapidly by her side.

The girl had fancied she was entirely unobserved when she gave the kiss (it was one of gratitude and not of love) to the sleeping man, but was she right? The instant she had moved away a dark form arose from behind the rock that had partially sheltered the sleeping man. There was an unsheathed knife in his hand, and the star-light, as it fell upon his face, showed that it was black with passion. Like an angel of mercy, the Swallow had come between that savage heart and murder. But the White Dog had seen the kiss she pressed upon the cheek of the pale face, and it had sealed his fate! Thus far the words of the old Indian witch had proved true, but where was the blood upon the trail she had spoken of?

Carefully he watched Moncrief and the girl until they disappeared in the wigwam. That structure was a puzzle to him. Had they already gone to housekeeping? Had the Swallow builded it and then come to ask the pale face to share it with her? It might be. He had heard words pass between them but could not distinguish what they were, for they had been uttered lowly. Find out he would, and throwing his blanket over his shoulder, and placing his hatchet ready for instant use, and his knife in his teeth, he knelt down and crept slowly forward. In the movement all the cunning of his race, and all his experience upon the hunting trail, were brought into use. Sometimes the snail was not slower in its movements, and then the fox not more swift. Every stone, inequality of the ground and bush, was taken advantage of. Nothing that could hide his form was neglected. Of a necessity his progress was very slow, but at length he reached the wigwam and crawling beneath some of the debris that the old trapper had left scattered around, he placed his eye to a little opening and peeped within.

The chief lay at full length with his

daughter kneeling on one side, and Moncrief on the other, while the old trapper was standing at his feet, leaning upon his long rifle. A beautiful tableau, as the red fire-light flashed upon it. The skulking Indian on the outer side bent down his ear and listened.

"Ther Thunder haint so well, am he, Pitt?" asked the trapper.

"So," thought the White Dog, "the Beaver is there, and it is the father of the Swallow that has spilled his blood upon the trail. The old witch was right. Henceforth I will believe every word she says."

"Violent inflammation has followed as I supposed," was the answer of Moncrief; "and it will require active measures to subdue it."

"Will he live? Oh, my poor father!" whispered the girl.

The young man hesitated about answering, and the trapper did it for him.

"Life am ther gift of ther Great Spirit, Swallow. It am him that gives and him that takes it erway ergain. But what do yer think ther chances ar, Pitt?"

"I think—hope that he is not dangerous. He will require constant care and attention, however. Can you not fix a place for this poor girl to lie down? She will need all her strength. It may be days before there is any change."

He was about to say for the better, but checked himself. He would not hold out hopes that might never be realized. Better for her that she should become accustomed by degrees to the idea of death, than that it should break suddenly upon her.

"I cannot—cannot sleep," answered the girl, looking, as she ever did, her thanks. "Let the Beaver rest. When the sun shines again, I will sleep—if my poor father is better."

"I believe she is right," replied Moncrief. "You lie down, Beaver. There is far too great a strain upon her nerves now, to rest. In the morning you can relieve her."

"Wal, I don't know but that am ther best thing that kin be done; but you must call me ther very minnit that yer think I kin be of ther slightest use. You'll promise me that, won't yer, and not fergit it nuther?"

"Certainly."

"Then I'll jest go and throw myself down in ther spot that you did—it's warm, haint it?—and take er leetle nap."

Left to themselves, the white man and girl, after first giving their attention to the sufferer, conversed in guarded tones. To say that he was simply interested in her, would be short of the fact.

"Is your father a chief, as the Beaver calls him?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you have always lived here?"

"Yes."

"And never been among my people?"

"No, not even to the Soo."

"Your mother, is she living?"

"Yes."

"Then we must send for her at once."

"You will not leave my father?" she asked anxiously.

"Not until he is beyond danger. Have no fear of that. How long have you known the Beaver?"

"Since I was a little pappoose."

He saw that she evidently was loath to converse, and allowed the conversation to flag, attributing it to the anxiety she felt for her parent. In the main he was right, but there was another cause that made her reticent. Suddenly and for the first time since they met, she thought of the warning of her father, "Beware of the pale face! His tongue is false as that of the serpent! He speaks lies!" She thought, also, of the fate of her sister, and trembled to reflect how much she had become interested in one of white blood. But could such a fair form and face conceal a black heart? She would almost have doubted it if even the Manitou had whispered it in her ears.

With broken conversation upon uninteresting subjects and attention to the chief, the night passed away, and the sky, like plagionite, proclaimed the coming of another day. Then the quick ear of the Swallow was attracted by something stirring without. In an instant she was by the side of Moncrief, who had sat in a nodding attitude for the last hour, had laid her hand upon his arm and whispered in his ear:—

"Does the pale face not hear something?"

"No. What is it?"

"I don't know, but I am certain that something was brushing against the wigwam."

"It was probably the Beaver. I know by experience that he is given to rambling around in the night."

"It was not him," she replied, looking out and pointing to where he was seated with his rifle in his hand, and evidently watching something.

"Beaver?" called out Moncrief. "Has something aroused you too?"

The reply of the old man was by raising his rifle to his shoulder and firing into a clump of bushes that grew upon a rock whose shelving edges overhung the water. Then he bounded forward hatchet in hand. Very soon, however, he returned grumbling:—

"Ther raskel got erway from me arter all. I had bin er watchin' him fer er long time, and ef yer had only kept still I could have waited until he got in ther open space and fetched him jest as easy as could be. Now he has gone, hook and line, bob and sinker. It's too bad."

"What was it?" asked both in a breath.

"What yer don't often see. Er big black timber wolf."

"Are you certain?" questioned Moncrief.

"Am I sartain! Jest as ef I wouldn't know er wolf arter so many years. I'll bet my life ergin er shot gun that I drawed blood, and I'm ergoin ter look fer it jest as soon as it gits er leetle lighter," and he filled and lighted his pipe to smoke away his discontent.

He was right in supposing that he had drawn blood, but it was not the blood of a wolf, but that of a man. The White Dog had remained concealed, and watched every movement within the wigwam as long as he dared to do so. The fast coming light warned him that it would be dangerous to stay any longer, and his movements while retreating had aroused the trapper as well as those within. This he was cunning enough to understand, and drawing his blanket closely around him (a dark one as it happened) he imitated both the growl and gait of a wolf, and stole away towards the bushes. His

speed, however, was accelerated by the bullet of the trapper. It cut deeply enough into the fleshy parts of the shoulder to draw blood but not to produce any serious results, and plunging into the water he hid beneath the overhanging rock with only his mouth above the water, until all was silence again. Then he swam softly along the shore for a considerable distance, and then again hid himself in the dense woods. Death he had escaped, but it was solely by accident. The old trapper rarely missed his aim, and had not his bullet hit a branch, his heart would have been cleft in twain, and he have sung his last song, either of revenge or victory.

To that he gave no thought. His blood had been shed by a pale face, and like the beast he had imitated does that of a wounded deer, he would follow the trail of the Beaver until it was amply atoned for. The fact of its having been done by accident he gave no thought to. The incarnate vengeance of his savage nature knew but one way of being appeased. "Blood for blood," was the only law he recognized.

Little, however, did any of the other interested parties think of such a thing. The trapper had sought the rock with the first clear light of day—had found blood upon it and was satisfied. He never reflected for even a single moment, that he might have been deceived, well as he knew the character of the red man, and often as he had played the same game. He was convinced that the wolf he had shot at was dead—had fallen from the rock, been swept away by the waves and was now food for the fishes. And that was all he cared about the matter, except the loss of the skin.

"It haint often," he muttered, "that yer find er black one, although ther ar plenty of grey ones about. It would have made er rare mat fer yer ter have taken home, Pitt, or I could have sold it at ther Soo, for as much as two dollars. Yes, yes, it war too bad that I didn't git it arter all. Howsomever, it haint always that luck am ergin me."

But soon he forgot his chagrin in tending upon the injured man. As Moncrief had feared, the wound proved troublesome, and the patient anything but easy to control. In

the delirium of the fever he would tear off the bandages, and even when himself, submitted with a bad grace, very much preferring such treatment as was usual among his people.

For days he was never left alone even for a single instant. By turns his daughter, the trapper and Moncrief kept watch, relieving each other as occasion required, and never going to any distance away from the wigwam. Fish were plentiful and easily to be secured. A line let down at night and baited with almost anything, would furnish them with the large, golden fleshed trout, and an half an hour with torch and spear, yield a bountiful return of white fish. For other food they had the stores they carried, and consequently there was no fear of starvation.

The proposition to send for the wife of the chief had first been vetoed by the trapper, and then by the elements.

"She would only be in the way," he said. "with her old fashioned squaw notions. Ef ther Swaller and yer and I haint enuff ter save him, ther hull tribe couldn't do it. Besides, who am ter go?"

"You must certainly do it, if any one," replied Moncrief.

"And I shan't—that's flat!"

"Would it be possible for me? Remember that I have never been there, and do not know a single one of the tribe. Do you think that it would be best for me to go? If so I will venture."

"And git knocked in ther head fer yer pains."

"Then we must remain as we are. I would not ask the daughter to leave the father at such a time, even if I thought it was safe for her to paddle a canoe so far alone."

The trapper thought differently. He knew that the girl would be as safe upon the water as the land, and was not long in expressing his opinion.

"She kin paddle er canoe jist as well as er duck kin swim," he blunted out in his usual brusque manner. "Yer needn't have any fears erbout her. Besides, ef she should git upset she kin swim like er fish, and nuthin wouldn't hurt her ther least grain."

"For shame, Beaver!"

The hot blood rushed to the face of Moncrief, and his hand was clenched as for a blow.

But though passionate, he had the rare gift of self command, and instantly restraining both his voice and actions continued:—

"Whatever comes, the Swallow shall not go alone."

Ah! how sweetly the black eyes looked upon him at the words. The pale face was placing her in a far higher position than she had ever occupied—was lifting her in her own estimation—was treating her as if she had not been born to be the slave of a man, but his equal. Even more, his speech and manners were even tender and respectful. No woman, no matter how uneducated, can but feel such attentions, and to those who receive them for the first time they are particularly pleasing.

"Wall, yer needn't git mad erbout it," replied the Beaver. "I didn't mean any harm. Only ef yer know'd ther Injins as well as I do, you wouldn't be erfeared of trustin' her in er canoe."

"It will be days before any one can go," interposed the Swallow, and at once settling the matter. "See how the black clouds are gathering and the gulls flying inland. Hark to the roaring of the wind and the waves in the hollows of the rocks."

"She am right, Pitt, she am right!" answered the trapper, after a more than usually careful survey of the sky. "We argoin' ter have er regular old-fashioned Nor' wester, and no canoe would live on ther lake for er single minnit. These redskins ar mighty knowin'some about ther weather."

The result proved that they were right in their conjectures. A wild and protracted storm followed, that kept them for days snugly housed. Then the sun broke forth in regal beauty, the water became like a sea of glass, and scarcely a cloud flecked the sky. But fierce as had been the tempest without, it was rivalled by that within the wigwam, where life and death were contending for the mastery.

Many a time it appeared to the anxious watchers that the struggle had ceased, and the dark angels of dissolution triumphed. The Swallow sat in tearless silence. Her eyes became like balls of fire. She refused food, refused to rest, refused to be comforted. Atrophy appeared to have fastened up-

on her, and Moncrief trembled more on her account, than he did for her father. He felt that unless relief came she could not long survive the terrible excitement she was under.

"Thank God! he is better.—The crisis is past," he said, as he entered the wigwam one morning, the very one on which the golden sunbeams pierced the dark clouds.

"And he will live?" asked the Swallow, breaking the silence that had held her like a spell for hours.

"He will live."

"May the Great Spirit be thanked," and kneeling down she breathed a voiceless prayer to Him whose voice she believed to be the thunder, and whose eye-flashes the fitful lightning.

"Yes, thank God," repeated Moncrief.

He saw that the eyes of the girl were running over with tears, and knew that she was saved as well as her parent.

"Now you will take rest and food," he said kindly, taking her by the hand.

"Let the pale medicine speak. The child of the red man will obey."

He saw that she was supplied with fitting nourishment, gave her some quieting medicine, and having prepared a comfortable couch, was more than gratified to see the long strained nerves relax and the heavy eyelids fall.

"Now yer had better git er nap yerself," whispered the trapper. "I wouldn't er thought that er human bein' could have kept up so long. It's wonderful, wonderful what strength thar am in yer leetle body."

"No, I will not rest yet, I feel more like exercise. I will take my rifle and stroll about a little. Then I will lie down."

"Wall, jest as yer have er mind ter. I will sit by ther chief until yer come back."

Moncrief gave a somewhat hasty glance at the father, but a lingering one at the daughter, and then departed. Hardly, however, had he disappeared in the woods before the trapper heard first the report of his rifle and then his voice calling for help. He rushed wildly out and saw Moncrief, whom he had begun to love as if he had been his own child, staggering towards him.

"In the name of heaven what am ther

matter with yer?" asked the excited old man.

"I am wounded. See!" and he pointed to an arrow that was sticking from his side.

"Who did it? Who did it?"

"An Indian."

"An Indian! Didn't yer shoot him?"

"I fired, but do not think I hit him."

The outcry had aroused the Swallow. She came hurriedly from the wigwam—saw at a glance what had happened, attempted to withdraw the feathered shaft, and murmuring: "It is a poisoned arrow! He will die!" fell at the feet of Moncrief as if her heart had ceased to beat for all time.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POISON OF THE CROBALUS.

THERE are moments in the life of every man, when all the fears of his nature are awakened, and all his dreams of agony are condensed into a single instant, and this was the feeling of the Beaver, when he heard the exclamation of the girl. For a moment he stood as if suddenly struck dumb and robbed of the power of motion. He had seen death in almost every shape—had shook hands, as it were, more than once with the grim skeleton of the scythe and hour-glass; but never had anything so thrilled him to the very core of his heart.

But not long can mental stupor retain its hold upon such men. Their lives are one of unceasing action, rather than thought, except when it is forced upon them, and when a decision must be instantly made—when to deliberate would be certain death. The one whose canoe is overturned in the swift and rocky rapids—who meets a bear, wolf or panther disputing his path—who is thrown down, and about to be gored by the horns of an angry stag, has no time for cool deliberation, no time to form plans of escape. The resolve and the execution must be both instant and simultaneous.

And it was this life-time habit, this second

nature, that enabled the Beaver to soon throw off the chain that bound him.

"Pisened! pisened by er Injun!" he muttered, and the words recalled him to himself and the exigency of the case.

Without paying the slightest attention to the fainting girl, he lifted up Moncrief in his powerful arms, as if he had been an infant, and carried him to the shadow of the wigwam. Then he began to open the clothing.

"Is it true," asked Pitt, "what the Swallow says?"

"Wait er minute. I'll tell yer jest as soon as I see."

The very first glance had satisfied him that the girl was right. He knew that if the head, barbed on either side like a fish hook, was buried beneath the flesh, that it could not be withdrawn like those used in hunting, but would have to be cut out before anything could be done towards antidoting the virus.

"Wait er minit," he repeated as soon as he had obtained a clear view of the wound.

He tried to withdraw the frail shaft. The fastenings that held it to the stone head parted, and he threw it in disgust way. But his worst fears were realized.

"Tell me quickly," almost commanded Moncrief. "Tell me, Beaver, is the arrow poisoned?"

"Yes. May ther Lord help yer, Yes."

"Can you not draw out the head?"

"I am tryin' ter do it, but can't."

"Get my case of instruments. You will find pinchers there."

"Natur gin me jest as good a pair, and I know how ter use 'em better nor any of yer doctor things," and he bent down, fastened his teeth firmly upon the part of the flint that was unburied, and after a mighty effort, tore it away.

"Is it out?" asked Moncrief.

"Yes. What have yer got ter say ergin them kind of instruments?"

"Nothing—but—"

You jest keep quiet until I suck out ther poison."

"For the love of heaven do not attempt such a thing!" exclaimed Moncrief with startling earnestness, as he pushed him back.

"If you have a slight scratch upon your

lips or tongue, or a defective tooth, it would be certain death."

"Yer right thar, my boy, but I've done it often. My lips and tongue are all right, I reckon, but I don't know erbout ther teeth. They haint as good as they whar when I war er boy, that am er fact."

"Let me do it," whispered a soft voice by his side.

"You, Swallow!"

"The pale face saved the life of my father, and—"

"That is no reason why you should risk your own. Go, Beaver, heat red hot anything you can find in the shape of iron, and bring it to me. You, Swallow, bring me the flask of what you call 'fire water,' out of the wigwam."

Both commands were obeyed as quickly as possible. Yet it was some time before the trapper could get the head of his hatchet, (the only thing that he could think of that would answer the purpose,) hot enough to be of any use. He, as well as the girl, had learned to obey the orders of Moncrief, while attending upon the chief, and they did so without questioning, although they had as little idea of the practice of counteracting poisons by means of ardent spirits and radiating heat, as they had of the revolutions of the earth.

"Is the poison mineral or animal?" asked Moncrief of the trapper, when he had returned and was holding the hot iron (as he directed him) as near to the skin as possible, without burning it.

"It was from the pisen tooth of ther rattlesnake. Thar can be no manner of doubt of that ar."

"Give me the brandy every five minutes, and keep up the hot application."

"Yes, but—"

The trapper failed to finish the sentence, for once at least in his life, he was deep in thought.

So long a time had he necessarily been absent, that despite the spirits Moncrief had swallowed, the pains were shooting, very severe, proceeding from the wound, and running in the direction of the heart. The wound itself was marbled and swollen, and

there were violent symptoms of vomiting and vertigo. In fact, upon the side of the man as far as could be seen, the spots of the loathsome reptile were being reproduced in all their deformity.

This was too much for the trapper. In an instant he had thrown the hot iron from him.

"Sich new fangled notions haint ergoin to save yer," he exclaimed, "and yer shan't die ef I kin help it;" and he disappeared in the direction of the woods.

"Beaver! Beaver!" called Moncrief, and seeing that he was not answered, enquired of the Swallow where he had gone.

"To gather the weeds that will render the bite of the serpent as harmless as milk to the babe," she replied, suppressing by a mighty effort the wild emotions of her heart, and compelling her trembling voice to obey her will.

"What is it? Do you know the name? Will he soon be back? Oh, heaven! that I should die thus."

The tears of the girl fell so fast that she could not answer. He die! The thought was like the banishment of all of sunshine from her future sky.

"Swallow," he repeated, "do you not hear me? Will the Beaver be back very, very soon?"

"Yes, yes."

"What has he gone after? O, that he should leave me when my flesh is on fire—the blood running like moulten lead through my veins, and my very heart burning up. I shall die! I shall die! There is no help for me now."

She crept still nearer to him. She smoothed the hair, damp with the dews of death, from his forehead; clasped both of his hands within her own to stop the convulsive motions, and pressed them to her lips again and again. If she could have died for him, how willingly she would have offered up her young life as a sacrifice. Like one gazing upon the fabled basilisk, she could not withdraw her eyes from his face. Yet it was horrible to look upon. The cheeks were livid, and the lips purple. Upon the fair, white throat she could see creeping the loathsome likeness of the serpent's spots. The

pupil of the eyes were like sparks of fire, surrounded by an iris of blood, and the lids were swollen and forced upwards.

"Oh, my God!" he murmured faintly; "have mercy. Forgive all my sins. Mother, dear mother, I am dying—dy—"

She had given him the very last drop of stimulant. All the gold in the world could not have procured another, and she could only sit and wait the return of the trapper. But would he come back in time? Would a single spark of life remain, and if so, would his wild-wood pharmacy be of any avail against the subtle poison that was running riot through his veins in sufficient quantities to have caused an hundred deaths? Would the antidote provided by Nature against the bite of the hideous *Crobalus*, be swift enough in its action, administered, as it would be, so late, to stop its progress towards the heart?

If it reached that—the citadel—then farewell life, and swing open wide the gates of the other world, for the entrance of another soul freed from the clay fetters of earth.

"Oh, God, spare me, spare me!" was the faint prayer gasped from the swollen and blackened lips.

The heart of the Swallow more than echoed it, and if ever the petition of a soul struggling in agony was heard by the Great Spirit, it was that. But she could look no longer. Her head was bowed down upon the wildly-heaving bosom—her long, black hair hung like a pall around it—and it required all her strength to even partially control the workings of his fingers. Then came a mighty, convulsive shuddering of his entire frame, and all was still.

"Dead! Dead!" she murmured, and her form rested upon his. It was the dying upon the dead!

"Am I in time? Am he alive?" shouted the trapper, rushing up at the moment, breathless with exertion, for he had run fast and far.

"He has gone to the spirit land," was the reply of the Swallow, but it sounded more like a wail of agony than a human voice.

"It cannot be! The Good Lord will not permit one so young and good ter die."

The honest old man thought not at the

moment that he was calling in question the will of Him "who doeth all things well."

"There will be mourning and blackened faces in the wigwams of the pale faces," continued the girl. "The mother will look in vain for the coming of her son, and the father, for him who should take his place upon the war path when the snows of many winters have lodged in his hair, and his arm is weak as the papoose, and his steps unsteady as the wounded buck."

"Not dead! Not dead! It shall not be!" and the trapper knelt by the side of the disfigured and distorted body, and pressed his ear to his side, to listen for the beatings of the heart.

In an instant there was a great change in his manner. He started to his feet and exclaimed:—

"Take these ar leaves. Bile 'em jest as quick as ever yer kin, and bring them ter me. He haint dead yit, and ef ther good Lord wills, he shan't be, nuther."

Saved! One would about as soon have thought of attempting to save a man who had been decapitated by the guillotine, or who had fallen in battle, pierced by a hundred bullets. Saved! An army of physicians would have voted any one insane who would have dared to advance such an idea. But the trapper stubbornly clung to the belief that he had the means of almost resurrection in his hands.

He crushed a portion of the leaves he had brought with him, and forced them into the fixed jaws. Others he reduced to a pulp between his teeth, and applied them to the wound, after wiping away the green ooze from the ragged lips.

"Swaller! Swaller!" he shouted, "haint yer ever er comin'?" The passage of a single moment was, to him, like the creeping of the hands around the entire dial.

"Yes, I am here."

"Thank heaven!"

She gave him a little cup of bark brimming over with the steaming liquor—steaming, but not so hot as to be scalding. She was far calmer now than he, for the hour of her terrible anxiety had past, and had sufficient forethought to cool it somewhat. And well it was that she did so, for without a mo-

ment's reflection he pried open the mouth with his iron fingers and poured a portion therein.

"Is this all you have got?" he asked, noticing how inadequate the supply was to what he thought would be required.

"There is plenty on the fire," she replied.

"Good. Keep it er bilin'. Ther stronger ther better."

He bathed the wound with what remained, and then handed her the cup to be refilled. But many times both actions were repeated before there was any change, and when at last it came, the eyes of the Swallow were the first to discern it.

"Look! Thank the Manitou! Look!" she exclaimed, though her voice was still restricted in its volume. But there was a great joy in it. The wail of death had changed into the pean of thanksgiving for life.

"What am it, Swallow? what do you see?" he asked, wondering at the entire change in her manner.

"Are you blind? Can you not see?"

"What are yer er talkin' erbout, child?"

"The spots are fading away!"

"They would do ther same thing ef he wer dead."

The plummet of agony descended again into the heart of the girl. The hope that had been raised fell as suddenly as the high flying bird, when it is pierced through by the arrow of the hunter. Again she veiled her eyes and remained silent, until the voice of the Beaver was heard in as exulting tones as she had used.

"Yer right, Swallow, right!" he shouted, his voice ringing like a trumpet blast of victory. "Yer right. Ther spots am fadin' out! His heart beats fuller—he's bergun' ter breathe easier. Thank heaven! he will live yet."

Dubious as had been the ending, there was no question in his mind about it now. The fair flesh was rapidly resuming its accustomed whiteness. The spotted discolorations were becoming less perceptible. There was a nervous twitching about the mouth and eyelids, and even a faint flush upon the cheeks.

"He will live!" replied the girl, after she

had closely marked the change—very closely indeed, for to have been deceived again would have been like a death blow. "He will live! The Good Spirit has heard our prayers," and she darted away, her feet light as air now, although they had been before like lead, to bring a fresh supply of the medicine that had acted so like a charm.

And charm it was, though hours were required to complete the cure. Hours for the wrecked form and tortured brain to become calm: hours for the swelling to pass away from lip and lid—hours for the snake-like glare to fade from the eyes—hours for the parched tongue to cease to overfill the mouth almost to suffocation—hours for the contracted throat to swallow easily, and hours for the mind to react from the horrors it had passed through.

But the westering sun saw him free again from pain, and able to sit up, although the ordeal was far more terrible than the most fiendish revenge could wish to have fall upon even the most bitter enemy. May heaven in kindness save yours and mine from such a fate.

When they had fully discussed the matter—when the trapper had told how he had found him, upon his return from the woods—had described (without the aid of botany, to which he was a stranger,) the low growing plant that had been the means (under Providence), of saving his life—had told him in what situations it could be found, and related numerous instances of its life-saving efficacy—when he had spoken of the wild anguish of the Swallow, until her cheeks burned for very shame, their thoughts naturally turned to the cause of all this suffering and anxiety.

"Yer said it whar er Injin that shot yer," asked the Beaver.

"Certainly. I saw him just as plainly as I see you," replied Moncrief.

"How did it happen. Tell us all erbout it, will yer, Pitt? Who knows but we may find some startin' pint fer er trail that we may run down until we have arthed the reptile."

"I had scarcely got inter ther woods before I fancied that I heard a sound. Thinking that it might be a rabbit, I half concealed myself behind a tree, hoping to get a shot.

In a moment I saw an Indian rise from among some fallen timber almost directly in my path. I was about to speak to him when he saw me, raised his bow and fired. My rifle was ready, and though I felt that I was wounded, I returned the shot, and he bounded away. I knew that I was unfit to follow him. My weapon was empty, and he could have killed me a dozen times before I could have loaded it again, so I hastened toward the wigwam, shouted to you and—you know the rest."

"I know that if I had let yer had yer own way of doctorin', yer wouldn't have bin er-live now."

The old trapper could not but glorify himself a little over what he had done. It was but natural that he should do so, though far from ordinarily being a braggart.

"I must confess that I owe my life to you and this good girl, but all I can do now is to thank you. Hereafter I may be able to do more."

"Thar! Jest stop that kind of talk, will yer. I'm more'n paid already, and I feel ter believe that ther Swallow am."

Her eyes expressed what her lips failed to utter. The softer sex of her nation are proverbially silent when men are talking. Besides, she had reason to be reticent, for she had shown more of her heart in her actions than she would willingly have known.

"Still, I would not have you think me ungrateful," answered Moncrief.

"You saved ther life of the chief, and that pays ther Swallow," continued the trapper, taking a very matter of fact view of the case. "But she am entitled ter yer thanks jest as much as I am, and I hain't mean enuff ter try and cheat her out of it. As fer myself, I don't want any more said erbout it," and as if to cut off any farther mentioning of the subject he asked again:—"So yer saw ther Injin, did yer?"

"Yes, but it was a flying glance. You may be certain that he did not wait long for inspection."

"No, that hain't ther natur of ther beast. I wish I could have clapped my two eyes on him, that's all. What sort of er lookin' reptile whar he, onyhow?"

"Tall and young, I should say, and that is about all the description I can give of him."

"Whar he painted?"

"Now that you speak of it I remember that his face was black."

"That meant death!"

"And the symbol came very near proving true. To my latest day I shall never think of this one without a shudder."

"And well yer may. Could yer tell ther Injin again if yer whar ter see him?"

"There is not the slightest probability of it. I should as soon think of picking out from a drove the deer I had shot at."

The trapper was nonplussed. He had hoped to obtain sufficient information to guide him in a search through the tribe, but totally failed. Like a baffled hound he hung down his head and reflected for a few moments. Then he raised it again with a clearer light in his eyes and a less troubled expression upon his face.

"Swallow," he said, "jest look around sharp and see ef yer kin find ther shaft of ther arrer, will yer, that's er good gal. I whar an old fool or I wouldn't have thrown it erway. Ther head am here somewhar. I'll search fer it while yer hunt fer the other thing."

For a time both were unsuccessful, but at length the girl returned and laid the wished for article in his hands. He examined it with the utmost care, joined it to the flint head he, also, had found, and then handed it to the Swallow. Evidently there was nothing that would enable either of them to fix the guilt upon any particular person.

"It's many er long day," he said, "since I've seen one of these ar devilish things."

"Then they are not common among the Indians?" asked Moncrief.

"Not ermong ther Ojibwas—leastwise not at ther present time. When I whar a good deal younger, and used ter be out ermong other tribes I saw them, but not lately. I must show it ter ther chief and see what he thinks of it. Thar wharther Snakes had been. Yer don't know that ther name of each tribe means something, as Camanche, Snake, Pawnees, Wolves, and so on?"

"I was not aware of it. You think the chief can tell us something about the arrow?"

"He can tell in er minuit whose make it am."

"Then let us go to him at once."

With flashing eyes Ah-ne-mee-kee heard the story of what had transpired. He raised himself upon one arm so as to look Moncrief fully in the face, and questioned him closely as to the appearance of the Indian who had shot him.

"Thar's no use in yer axing sich questions," interrupted the trapper. "I've bin erpon the same trail before, and couldn't find out anything. What we want ter know is who made ther arrer? Kin yer tell us that?"

"Sioux—Cut Throats!" was the instant response.

"I thought so myself, though I didn't say it. How do yer know that yer right, chief?"

"The stone of which the head is made grows not within many miles of the great lake, or where the timber is thick. It is found only upon the broad prairies, beyond the big river Mich-is-i-pic."

"Ther Mississippi? Yes, I know ther spot."

"And none of the tribes that dwell there dare set their foot upon the hunting grounds of the Ojibwas."

"Then some rascal of yer own people has bin playin' false. But whar could he have got ther arrer?"

If the chief knew, he did not see fit to inform his questioner. Whatever there was working within his subtle brain would be kept from all eyes. So the Beaver continued:—

"What could he have had ergin the boy? That's more'n I kin tell."

He was not alone in either his opinion or want of understanding. That one who was a total stranger could have enemies among the Indians, was almost past belief, and it was a matter of deep thought to all until other excitements drove it for a time from their mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ABODE OF THE WITCH-WOMAN. NEGOTIATIONS.

THE skulking Indian Shoon-ka-ska, after he had so narrowly escaped from the bullet of the old trapper, was not long in hiding in the woods, and binding up his slight wound. That done, he sought his canoe and left the island, while there was enough of darkness to hide him from observation.

He was fully resolved to revenge himself both upon the Beayer and Moncrief; the one for the shedding of his blood, and the other for having come (as he believed) between him and the girl he had destined to be his wife. But how he should put them out of the way without being suspected, was a matter that required thought. He knew that the trapper was universally beloved by the tribe, and was satisfied that the younger man would be as soon as it became known that he had saved the life of Ah-ne-mee-kee. If he shot them at all, it must be from an ambush, and it would not do to use the weapons he had with him. The heads of his arrows, like all others of his brethren, had a peculiar mark upon them, so that the hunter could readily distinguish who struck down the game, where many had made it a mark at the same time. To find some other means was consequently his first object, and as he floated by the grave yard where he had met the witch woman, his thoughts naturally turned to her.

The light of the rising sun showed him every part of the habitation of the dead, and he soon satisfied himself that she was not there; that is, he was convinced as far as eyesight was concerned, for nothing would have tempted him to have wandered around among the fleshless skeletons and mouldering dust, seeking for her. Of any other haunts she might have he knew nothing, and so turned towards the village. But would it do for him to take his canoe there? It might be noticed that he had been absent, or he might wish to depart again without being observed; and landing at a point some distance away he drew up the light bark upon the rocky shore, carried it into the dense un-

dergrowth and hid it from all but the most careful search.

From that spot to where the smoke of the wigwams rose curling like azure serpents far up into the clear air, the trail was a difficult one, and but rarely used. A hurricane sweeping through it many years before, had prostrated the trees for a mile in width, and their trunks lay woven together, covered with a dense second growth. Still the adventurous hunter could thread the labyrinth, and care and time would surmount every obstacle. There was an open path, it is true, along the shore of the lake, but that was exposed to observation and but little likely to be taken by any one desiring concealment. Without a moment's hesitation, therefore, the White Dog struck into the wilderness of verdure and crept as best he might amid the mossy trunks, the splintered branches, the gnarled roots and almost impenetrable forest of young shoots.

But it was a wearisome task, and very glad was he to reach an open space, where the rocks were bare, and sit himself down to rest. Almost without his knowledge he had been ascending, and from the point where he loitered he could see for many miles around. Before him, dotted along the shore with islands, the blue lake stretched away, until sky and water appeared to meet. Behind him the mountains rose dark and frowning. On his right was a gloomy range of forests, and on his left the bay and the cluster of wigwams. As a point for a look-out it was unequalled; as a hiding place few, if any better, could be found. Originally it might have been one monster rock, rearing its head above all surroundings; now, by some convulsion of nature, it lay scattered in huge masses around, with dangerous paths between.

This much the Indian noticed, as he sat there breathing after his unwonted labor. Then a slight rustling disturbed him, and turning his head suddenly he saw the witch woman of the grave yard, standing beside him!

"*Loss-a-keed!*" (Conjuror) he exclaimed, starting up in astonishment, and looking for some path of escape.

"I knew you would come," she replied, without any notice of either his alarm or anything but complimentary manner of address. "I knew you would come, and have been waiting for you."

"I did not know that you were here. I was—"

"You was seeking me."

"How can you know that?"

"How did I know that a pale face was sitting by the side of the Swallow, and that there was blood upon the trail? Did I not tell you so, and was not it the truth?"

"Yes, yes, but—"

"Come with me."

"Where?"

"It is not far. Those who would talk of revenge, must do so beyond the reach of human ears."

"Revenge!"

She had penetrated his very thoughts again—told that he was seeking her, and the object of his coming. If she could thus read what was passing within him, surely she also had power to compel him to obey her.

"Do you not hear?" she asked, screaming until the very rocks rang around. "Do you hear? I tell you to come with me, and you must. Does the snake gender its poison, or the wolf suckle its cubs in the bright sunshine? Does the toad breed its venom, or the spider its spite, except amid the black darkness? Come!" and she waved her skinny hands in a threatening manner.

"Go on," he replied, not daring to disobey.

Without looking back, she led the way through one of the most dismal, and apparently dangerous paths, for a short distance, and then, stopping suddenly she withdrew a handful of bushes from an opening in the rocks.

"Enter," she commanded, pointing to what well might have been the portal of a tomb.

She saw that he hesitated—saw that he was becoming as deeply impressed by fear as she wished him to be, and after a wild, fierce laugh, herself led the way. Undecided how to act—whether to follow or flee—

he remained motionless, until a bright light within showed him a clean path. Then he choked down his fears and entered.

Wild as were the outside surroundings, there was nothing within to alarm him. It was simply a cave in the rocks, the counterpart of which might have been found in almost any locality. Not a great, rambling cavern, but so low and small that every part could be distinctly seen, without leaving any nooks or corners in the shadow to awake suspicion. Hanging upon pegs driven into the seams were bunches of dry herbs, a few skins, and articles familiar in every wigwam. In vain he looked for dead men's bones or any other of the loathsome objects with which fancy has embellished the resorts of those who deal in mystery. Had he met her for the first time and been taken thither, he would have thought her a simple-minded, or demented woman—one harmless and to be pitied rather than feared. But now suspicion was awake, and his mind was continually on the alert against surprise.

"You found them," she said, after he had taken a seat to which she had cunningly pointed, so that the light would flash upon, and reveal the workings of his face, while her own was in the shadow, "You found them as I said."

"Yes. The pale face stealing away the heart of the Swallow and her father wounded."

"And you longed for revenge, but dared not strike the blow."

"Even so, though I received one."

"So!" It was news to her, but she craftily took advantage of it, and jumped at a conclusion which proved to be the true one. "So! The bullet of the pale face came near the life of Shoon-ka-ska."

"It was from the rifle of him we call the Beaver."

"I knew it. The owl whispered it to me. You would be revenged. Let my son speak. My ears are open."

Without reflecting that he was telling her the very things she pretended to know long before they had happened, the Indian related all that had transpired on the island. Very much he dwelt upon the conversation he had heard in the wigwam—of his cunning in

crawling so near and retreating again, but his brow grew the darkest when he pointed to the mark of the Beaver's bullet through his hunting shirt and blanket.

"The White Dog had his bow and arrows," she replied, when she had learned all that was possible.

"But I dared not use them. They were all hunting arrows."

"And might have told of the hand that shot them? My son looks far ahead. He will yet be among the wise men of the nation. Had he come to me I would have given him such a skin as I wear."

"I did not need it."

"Still you were seeking me and wished no one to know that you were here."

"I had no thought of finding you in such a spot as this."

"Why then did you hide your canoe?"

"That no one could tell which way I was travelling."

"And you thought that I had arrows that would not be known?"

"Have you?" he asked with his face lighting up at the prospect of securing weapons that he could use without the fear of discovery.

"I have one arrow."

"Only one?"

"That is enough if the hand that draws the bow is firm, and the eye true."

"It may not reach the heart."

"If it but touches the skin it will bring festering corruption to the blood. It is poisoned!"

"Poisoned!"

"Yes. I may not tell where I got it from. For many moons I have kept the secret. There is not another in all the wigwams of the Ojibwas. Would my son like it?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"And never tell where he got it from, no matter what torture he might be put to."

"Yes."

"And if he failed to keep his word?"

"May the Watcha Manitou keep his spirit from ever entering the happy hunting grounds."

"It is well, but he must bring many skins of the beaver and the otter to my wigwam. He must give enough of the meat of the deer

and the bear to keep me through the long winter."

"I will. Go to my lodge and take all you can find there, and I will bring you much more."

She was satisfied, and raising the flat stone upon which she was sitting, bade him put down his hand and draw forth the coveted weapon. He bent forward to do so but drew back with horror. The little *cache* was filled with hissing serpents who sounded their rattles, raised their heads, and darted forth their tongues spitefully. Far sooner would he have thrust his arm into the fiercest flames. Indian though he was, the antipathy to the scaly monsters of the woods was very strong within him.

"They know you not," she said. "They are the guardian spirits of my hiding place," and without the slightest appearance of fear she toyed with the serpents as if they had been the most pleasant playthings in the world.

"For the love of the Manitou, don't!" he said. "They will sting you to death."

"Not me. I am their master!"

"See! They are twining around your arm."

"They want to be kissed," and she lifted the largest and placed its head to her lips.

There was something so horrible in the action, that the Indian drew back trembling. That a human being, and more especially a woman, can do such things, is almost beyond the bounds of belief. But as if enjoying his alarm she continued her horrible play for a time. Then she tossed it back, thrust the other unceremoniously aside, raised a second stone, and from among a mass of other articles drew forth the fatal weapon, carefully enveloped in bark.

She knew that the snakes were as harmless as worms, for with her own hands she had removed the poisoned teeth.

"There!" she said triumphantly. "There is the arrow. I have revealed to you the secret of my hiding place, but woe to you or any one that attempts to enter it. A thousand deaths are concealed within."

"Give me the arrow and let me be going."

He had no wish to remain in such close proximity to a den of rattlesnakes, even though there was a stone between him and them.

"Never remove the covering from it until the instant of use. You might be forgetful or careless, and kill yourself."

"I will remember."

"Then leave me alone. I have charms to prepare that no one must see."

"Where will I find you, if I should wish to see you again?"

"Tell me from which quarter the wind will blow to-morrow, and I might answer."

"Will I find you at the encampment?"

"Who can tell? Where the spirits call me there I am. Go!"

He had secured a far more effectual weapon than he had had any idea of, and was in haste to try its power. Still he would not have dared to stir until she gave him liberty so to do. Now he bounded from the cavern, glad to be again away from its noisome damps and foul air.

"Yes, go," she repeated to herself. "Fool! fool!" and following him out into the sunshine, she sought a spot where she could, herself unseen, watch his departure from the shore.

But she was destined to have her patience sorely tried. Until the evening he remained hidden in the woods. Then he leaped into his canoe and paddled swiftly away. It was his intention to have stricken down the old trapper, and he had crawled very near the little wigwam for that purpose, when Mon-crief came in sight, and he could not control himself. His arrow had been true to its aim, but failed in producing the death he had anticipated. Of this, however, he knew not. The shaft dispatched, he fled to the most dense thicket he could find, and waited for an opportunity to send the Beaver following his companion upon the dark journey every man has to perform, and from which there is no returning.

CHAPTER IX.

SHADOWS ON THE PATH OF LOVE.

THE recovery of Ah-ne-mee-kee was very slow. Such frames, although they may possess vast recuperative power and resist successfully for years the inroads of disease, are shaken to the very centre when it has fastened upon them. Though far from being fit to endure fatigue, he would have started home had not Moncrief told of the fatal consequences that might ensue, and the Swallow pleaded with all the earnestness of a daughter's love for delay.

This view, also, of the matter was taken by the old trapper, though more for the sake of his young companion than any particular regard for the Indian. Not that he loved "Rome less, but Cæsar more." Very much, however, he chafed under the want of something to do. To remain idle for any length of time was not according to his nature. Fight as he would against this feeling it grew upon and at length mastered him, and having determined to let Moncrief and the Swallow "paddle their own canoe" a very wise proceeding as he could not help it, daily absented himself from the camp to return again in the evening loaded with game or fish.

There was something of this feeling, too, in the heart of the chief. The wise restraint that Moncrief had imposed upon him both as regarded exercise and food, accorded but illy with his usual habits of life. For though the Indian will endure hunger for a long time, yet gluttony is a part of his nature, and never restrained except for the want of means to satisfy it. To this was added the constant recurrence of the great fear of his life; but the circumstances under which they had met and the time they had enjoyed each other's society without interruption, rendered it very difficult to separate Moncrief from his daughter. He was satisfied that he owed his life to him, as well as that he had been the means of his injury, though why or how he had never ascertained. But the treatment he had received had in a great measure dispelled the feelings of revenge he had at first entertained, and try as he would (especially af-

ter the endorsement of his life-time friend, the Beaver) he could find nothing against him except that his skin was white. Still he was determined to invent some excuse for their separation. To that end he strolled from the wigwam one evening, to where the trapper was dressing some game, and lighting his pipe, took a seat near.

"The Beaver," he said, opening the conversation by well-directed flattery, "is a great hunter. The swift winged duck and the quick rabbit fly in vain from before his fire weapon."

"Wal, it hain't er bad day's work," replied the gratified old man, "considerin' how scarce ther game am in these parts. Howsomever, Thunder, many's ther time we have travelled tergether and not got half as much."

"My brother speaks ther truth."

"I allers try to do that ar thing."

"Has he ever used the fire weapon of the young Medercine?"

"No, never."

"Can it kill from afar?"

"I haint never tried it, as I told yer."

The subject was a dangerous one to talk about, and the old man wished to avoid it altogether, especially with the one who was now questioning him.

"He has seen it shot?"

"I—I—disremember."

"Is the bullet like that of the Beaver?"

"Ahem!"

"It is not round, but shaped like an acorn?"

"How kin yer posserbly know that?"

"The Beaver and Ah-ne-mee-kee have ever travelled the strait trail together. Let not their tongues become crooked now."

"What do you mean by that ar?"

"The weapon of the young Medicine came very near sending the red man to the spirit land."

"You must be er dreamin'."

"While the pale faces were gathering poles and bark for the wigwam, the Swallow brought the fire weapons from their canoe. The bullet fitted the little one!"

"Wal," replied the trapper with a forced laugh. "I thought I whar smart, but you whar too much for me, so I mought jest as

well own up. I'll tell yer all about it, Thunder," and he proceeded to do so, taking the entire blame upon himself.

"My brother thinks," answered the chief when he had concluded, "that there is blood to be shed between the young pale face and the red man. It is not so. There is nothing growing upon the trail between them. It is open for either to travel."

"May ther good Lord be thanked for that. I whar fearful that you would be er feelin' like revenge. Will yer gin me yer hand that yer wont try to harm him?"

"Is Ah-ne-mee-kee a dog?" was the proud reply. "Is he a serpent that he should sting the one that had saved his life?"

"No, no! I know that yer jest as true as steel, chief, and shall sleep contented arter what yer've said."

"Does my brother remember the sister of the Swallow?" asked the Indian, suddenly changing the subject.

"Ter be sure I do jest as well as ef I had seen her yesterday, but what brought her ter yer mind now?"

The answer was the pointing of a finger to the wigwam in which the Indian girl and Moncrief could be plainly seen sitting side by side.

"I know what's in yer thoughts now," continued the trapper, "and I don't blame yer for it nuther. This man haint ertall like the tother, and yet it would have bin mighty well ef they had never met."

"They must part!" was the stern answer.

"I've bin er thinking erbout that same thing, and whar only er waitin' fer either you or him ter git well enuff."

"Ah-ne-mee-kee leaves to-morrow."

"I dont rightly see how yer kin git erway. Yer haint well, and I'll tell yer how we kin fix it. But come inter ther wigwam out of the night air. There goes ther young folks fer er walk, and we'll have it all erlone ter ourselves."

When they were seated again, had filled and lighted their pipes, and satisfied themselves that they were safe from being overheard, the trapper resumed:—

"I'll tell yer what we'll do, Thunder.

Ter-morrow I'll git Pitt ter go with me lookin' arter copper; that's what we come fer, yer know; and manage ter keep him out until arter dark. In ther mean time yer kin slip erway, and he'll be none ther wiser."

"My brother speaks well."

"I haint got nothin' ter say ergin yer darter, fer I think more of her than any gal I ever saw, but I dont want her ter git mixed up too strong with Pitt. I dont think that ther good Lord ever intended sich ones ter marry, fer he made as hard a mark between them as he did between ther sheep and ther deer."

"She shall never marry a pale face."

"Jest stick ter that and yer'll be all right."

"Far better that she died by the hand of her father, Beaver," and the chief spoke with the terrible earnestness that showed the stern resolve of his iron will. "Beaver, before she shall love any one whose skin is like the snow, this knife shall pierce her heart."

"Wal I don't know but that it would be better in ther end, and yet I'll advise yer ter banish all sich thoughts from yer heart. They haint natural, and ar jest as onchristian as kin be."

The Indian had relieved his mind—had had his say, and henceforward his lips would be closed upon the subject. It was a terrible resolution for a father to form, and yet it relieved the honest trapper from all fears on account of his favorite. Under ordinary circumstances the white man would have been the one to be murdered. Now he was safe from vengeance. He might mourn for a loved one, suddenly torn from him by death, but would never have it in his power to do that loved one wrong. Yet it was a terrible resolution to be coolly formed and talked about, for not the trembling of a nerve or the working of a muscle of the face betrayed the intense emotion of the Chief. Outwardly he was calm, but within there was a fire raging wild as that bursting from an outlet in the volcano's heart.

And very different would have been the conversation of Moncrief and the Indian girl if they could have had the slightest inkling of the Virginius-like determination. Glad to escape from beneath the watchful eyes of the

father and the trapper, they left the wigwam and wandered along the shore. Warm and beautiful weather had followed the storm. It was the "moon of flowers," according to the nomenclature of the red man—the month of roses, or June, according to ours. The moon travelled through an unclouded sky, and the stars shot their golden arrows undimmed to earth. The wind had sunk at the going down of the sun, and the waves broke in the tiniest of ripples on the beach of sparkling sand. From the woods came the faint perfume of the few flowers of that far Northern latitude, commingled with the balsamic odors of the evergreens. It was just such a night as lovers would have chosen for the utterance of vows that would bind them until "the silver chord was loosed and the golden bowl broken."

"Swallow," said Moncrief, after they had got to a little distance from the wigwam, "let us walk along the shore. It is very light and pleasant there. The woods are heavy with dew and—"

He paused so suddenly, that the girl looked up in alarm, but instantly seeming to read his thoughts, answered:—

"You are thinking of the last time you were there?"

"Yes, and how nearly fatal it was to me."

"The pale face must thank the Manitou and the Beaver for life."

"And you, Swallow?"

"I obeyed the will of the Beaver."

It was a very modest answer considering all that she had done. At least he thought so, and continued more warmly:—

"I shall never be able to repay you. Words are but a very poor recompense."

"The Swallow wants nothing more."

"Yet let me give you some token to remember me by."

"Is the pale face going away?" she asked with a start that he could not fail to notice, especially as she had laid her hand upon his arm and he could feel it tremble.

"I do not know—I am not certain. It may be that I shall be forced to do so for a time, but it will not be long before I return again."

"And the Swallow will be forgotten," she

replied, withdrawing her hand and bowing down her head.

"Not so, by heaven! I shall never forget you. I could not do so, even if I tried. But take this ring and wear it for my sake," and he withdrew one from his finger and offered it to her.

"The daughter of the red man cares not for the yellow earth of the pale face. She needs nothing to keep him in memory."

"But you must take it."

"No! No! I should not dare to wear it even if I did. The people of my tribe would say—"

The thought of what would be charged against her, if seen with such a costly jewel, made the hot blood well up from her heart in torrents, and crimson face and neck so as to be plainly visible, even through the olive skin.

"What would they say, Swallow?"

"Don't ask me. The tongue cannot utter such thoughts. They would think bad."

Though he did not closely comprehend her meaning, yet he ceased to press the bauble upon her. He saw that she was very much disturbed by it, and that was sufficient reason for his desisting.

"As you will, Swallow; but tell me if you will be sorry when I am gone away?"

She raised her head, and the long, curtaining lashes from her eyes, and looked him fully in the face, and without a shadow of concealment, replied:—

"I shall be very sorry."

"Why?"

"Because you have saved my father's life, and been very kind to me."

Who could help but be kind to you, Swallow? I have seen many who called themselves beautiful, in my own land, but never one who was as gloriously so as you.

"Let us go home. My ears must be shut against such words."

"No, rather let us sit down and talk. Here is a good resting place. I am not as strong as I thought I was."

It was his turn to blush now. Though he had not actually told a falsehood, he had used subterfuge to accomplish his object, and he felt that it was unworthy of him. The

hint, however, was sufficient for her. To have urged him to walk farther after he had complained of fatigue, would have been foreign to her nature, after what he had suffered, therefore she took the place he had pointed out, and he one by her side, upon a rock whose background was a tangled maze of spruce.

"I was saying," he resumed, "that you were more beautiful than any one I ever met."

"Let us talk of the pale man's home."

She was very anxious to change the subject, for at that instant the memory of all her father had told her of the sad fate of her sister arose before her, and his warnings and her solemn promises.

"What makes you tremble so?" he asked. "Are you cold?" and he wrapped her in the heavy shawl he carried in the place of a blanket.

Both were natural questions, but how could she answer the first? Deny it though she might, she had learned to love him madly, and to tell him what her father had said—to rehearse to him her sister's wrongs would have been *mal apropos* at such a time. The second, however, gave her a loop hole for escape and very gladly she availed herself of it.

"The damp rises from the lake," she said, "let the pale face take back his blanket. He has been very near the jaws of the Manitou of death."

"No, I am sufficiently warm. You asked me about my home. It is very far away."

"Are there any sisters there?"

"Yes, one, but I was not thinking of her. From the very first time that I saw you, Swallow, I have been comparing you with the girls I am acquainted with, and there is no one that is—"

"Look!" she said again laying her hand upon his arm so as to command immediate attention. "Look! Do you not see the shadow of something crossing between us and the moon?"

"It is the reflection of a cloud."

Apparently satisfied, the Indian girl made no farther reference to the matter, though she continued watchful, while Moncrief, far more

interested in the matter about which he was talking than anything else, continued:—

"I am not telling you an idle story, Swallow."

"The daughters of the pale face are very beautiful," she replied, "with skin like the snow, eyes blue as the summer skies, and hair like the silk of the maize in the autumn time."

"Yes, there are beauties among them, but as I have said, I have never seen one that could compare with you."

"Would the pale Medicine make a fool of the poor Indian girl?" she asked with the soft light of her eyes rendered still more so by the fast gathering tears.

"A fool of you, Swallow? What can you mean?"

"The daughter of the red man knows that her skin is more brown than the chestnut when the fingers of the frost spirit has opened the burrs and they come rattling to the ground."

"It is not so. You do yourself injustice. There are very many among my people within whose veins there runs nothing but white blood—brunettes we call them—whose skin is not so soft and fair as yours. But that is nothing to the purpose. The eye of the true man looks deeper than the outward covering, no matter how attractive that may be."

"The pale Medicine has rested," she said rising. "Let us go back to the wigwam."

"Not yet, Swallow. Sit down," and he took her hand and gently drew her to a place by his side. "Do not go yet. I have much to say to you."

Instinctively she knew what was coming, and would have avoided hearing it if she had been possessed of the power to do so. The mighty love that had grown up in her heart was more potent in that hour than the memory of all her father's words, had forced her to remain, and hear the words she shrank from. Had she known that they would have made her future stagnant as Lethe and bitter as the waters of Marah, she could not have torn herself away from the honeyed pleasures of the hour. Talk as we may of paternal love, there comes a time when the

slightest words from another's lips have more potency than all their advice, warnings, and even prayers.

"Swallow," continued Moncrief retaining the trembling fingers in his warm grasp, "you must listen to me. From the moment that I first saw you I have been attracted, and now that I have learned how truly good you are—I love you."

"Not that! Oh! not that. Better that I should have seen you die from the poisoned arrow than that you should have lived to utter such words," and she bowed her head into her lap and veiled her face with her long, inky tresses.

"Why? What do you mean?" he asked in amazement.

"Because there has always been enmity between your race and mine."

"There is not now."

"Are you not taking away their hunting grounds? Are you not driving them far away from the graves of their forefathers?"

"No, we do not seek to harm them. Even the Beaver will tell you that."

"The Great Spirit gave to them the forest for a home, to the pale face he gave great cities."

"And you shall go and see them when you are my wife, and—"

"The Swallow can never be your wife," she replied, shuddering at the thought.

"Why?"

"The Manitou has forbidden it."

"I do not understand you. I can see no reason why you should not be my wife,—that is, if you love me. Tell me if all the affection of my heart is thrown away? Am I mistaken in believing that you look upon me as you have never done upon man before?"

"I do love you. Oh! how much," she replied, nestling still closer to his side and allowing him to twine his arm around her. "I do love you. The Great Spirit knows it."

"And yet you would refuse to be my wife?"

"The sun has shone upon the path of the poor Indian girl, but henceforth all is darkness—darkness."

"You shall not thus wreck both of our

lives. Tell me—I have a right to know—why you refuse to be mine."

"The father of the Swallow would not give her to one in whose heart flowed a single drop of the blood of the Long Knives."

"What can he have against them, against me especially?"

"Let him ask of the Beaver."

"No. One who has led such an isolated life from all of womanly sympathy, could never understand a love like ours."

"Then of my father."

"You say that he is prejudiced. If so, he would not judge impartially. Let me hear from you own lips the reason. If it must be as you say, far better that I should go away without any one else knowing of what has passed between us. Swallow, you must tell me the reason—I know it is a false one—why you will not be my wife."

Thus urged, what was there left her to do! in a voice broken with emotion she told the sad story of her sister's wrongs and early death. It required all the self-command of Moncrief to hear her to the end, brief as was the narration.

"By heaven!" he exclaimed. "By heaven! that shall not part us. Because there are bad men among my race, is no reason why all should be so. Are there not false-hearted ones among yours, Swallow?"

"Oh! yes, many."

"But all are not so?"

"No."

"Do you believe that I am like the base man you have been telling me about?"

"I believe that you are as true as the Manitou."

"And yet you would make yourself as well as me miserable? It is not just to either."

"But my father?"

"If I can gain his consent?"

"Would you take me to your home if I were your wife?"

"That was one of the questions far more easily asked than answered. For the first time Pitt Moncrief reflected upon the matter. He thought of a proud mother—proud of her name and position in society—of his sister and his companions, and how they would jeer

at him if he should bring a squaw home for a wife. Strip off the tinsel of her beauty and what would there be left? An uncultivated Indian girl who had been born and brought up amid the most rude associations—without the slightest knowledge of civilized life and one (no matter of how loving a heart) that would constantly bring the blush of shame to his cheeks—shock his propriety and render him miserable. Indeed, it was a home question that she asked. One that was to his love like the frost to the flower. The rough diamond might be polished, but could she ever?

Still an answer was forced upon him. Her eyes were fixed upon his face—he could almost feel their gaze. He realized that he could not speak false words without her being aware of it, and yet he was forced from silence.

"Would you be happy there?" he asked, in order to evade her question and to gain time.

"I do not know. My moccasins have never travelled any trail but that of the forest."

"Then I could live here with you."

"You would soon tire of the ways of the red man. You know nothing of how different they are from you—you have never lived among them—nothing of the hardships you would have to endure when the long winter comes, the lake is covered with ice, and the snow piled up around their wigwams like mountains."

"You are mistaken, Swallow. I should be very happy—with you."

"You think so now," and she shook her head mournfully, "when the bitter weather came you would—"

"Love you all the better."

"The butterfly thinks so as it swims around in the golden sunshine when the flowers are sweet and bright. When the frost comes—it dies."

"Then we will be like the bees," he replied with a smile at her fanciful comparison, "and lay up stores against the time of want. But seriously, I can see no force in your argument. You say I will soon tire of wild-wood life. I do not think so, but should it be so, we can easily make some other arrangement."

"Will the pale face dare to take me by the hand, lead me to his mother's wigwam and say 'here is your daughter?'"

That fear more than any other had taken possession of her. She appeared to have no hesitancy in trusting her fate in his hands—no thought that he might prove false. Had she believed—could she have been convinced that he would have been contented to remain in the woods, or that she could share a home with him amid civilization, she would cheerfully have given all the promises he asked. But it was not so. She doubted not for herself, but him.

"We will talk of that another time, Swallow. Let us allow no skeleton at the feast now. This hour should be sacred to love alone."

Well would it have been for their contentment, if such a thing could have happened. But there can never be perfect love without confidence and trust.

"The pale Medicine must answer," she continued, attempting to withdraw herself from his embrace. "He cannot love the daughter of the red man, if he would be ashamed to take her to the wigwam of his mother."

"Ashamed?"

"His tongue refused to utter the thoughts of his heart."

"No, Swallow. I was not thinking of myself, but you. Would you be happy there? You said you did not know, when I asked it before. Think how very different it would be from your own home—how strange everything would be to you. But why must we talk of these things now! We shall have plenty of time in the future."

"I must know," she said firmly, but sadly.

"Swallow, you do not love me, or you would trust me."

It was cruel to break down the defences she had raised around her heart in this manner, cruel to use the deep affection of her nature thus, and the sad look upon her face, and the tearful eyes told more truly than the most verbose confessions, how completely she was absorbed in him. And, true man and gentleman that he was, he saw it, and hastened to correct the wrong into which his feelings had carried him.

"Forgive me, Swallow," he said folding her more closely to his bosom and kissing her for the first time. "Forgive me, I did not think what I was saying. Not for all my future hopes of happiness would I have brought tears into your eyes."

"The words of the pale Medicine were like the poisoned arrow to the heart of the Swallow," she replied, trying to still the emotions that were heaving her breast like the waves of the ocean. "He knows how well I love him. But look!"

"What do you see now?" he asked somewhat petulantly at thus having his love-making constantly interrupted.

"Hist!"

She placed the fingers of one hand upon his lips to compel him to silence, while with the other she pointed to where the shade of some object rested upon the open space between them and the water.

"It is some night bird flying over. Don't tremble so. What danger could possibly come to us on this lone island?"

"It is that of a man!" was the whispered response.

"If so it must be the Beaver," and he called the old trapper, but without gaining any reply.

"Have you forgotten him who shot you?"

"No. But he would not dare come again. However, I will go and see."

"Not for your life!" and she clung to him in a manner that was the most positive proof of her affection.

"Why not?"

"He might kill you this time, and then I—I should die!"

Sweet words those for a lover to hear at any time, and especially so when there was danger near. When the one we love becomes so entirely wrapped up in us, as to be forgetful of self, we may safely trust that affection, through any changes that can come. Sweet, too, was the task of reassuring her, and trying to prove that the fears she entertained grew only out of her fervent passion, and had no foundation in reality.

"See, Swallow," he said, "the shadow does not move. It is nothing but a tree, after all."

"If it were the wind, it would toss the branches and it would be irregular."

"Your eyes are dimmed with tears, darling," and he bent over her and kissed them away. "Now look again. You will see clearer."

Both did so, but it was gone. An unbroken sheet of moonlight glittered between them and the lake. He thought it a confirmation of his first opinion that it had been caused by a cloud, but the fear in her heart grew stronger.

"Let us go home," she urged.

"What, fearful still? Do you not see that the frightful object has disappeared? Wait a little while. When another cloud passes between us and the moon, you will be satisfied."

"No, no! Let us go now."

"Are you anxious to separate from me? To go again to the wigwam where we cannot talk unheard? Ah! Swallow, if you feel as I do, the great happiness of this hour, you would not be thus anxious to go."

"I feel—I know all but—"

"But still will let the shadow of a tree or cloud come between us and our love."

"My father, the Beaver, will wonder at our stay."

"No danger of that. They are fighting their old battles over their pipes, and oblivious to all of earth."

"But you have been very sick. For my sake, you will not remain," and she looked imploringly into his face.

If he could resist that after what had just passed between them, he would have been as cold as ice, and far from worthy of the love she had lavished upon him.

"I would—will do anything for you, Swallow. For *your* sake I will go in. Tell me however, one thing. Shall I go at once to your father, talk to him of our love, and ask him to give me your hand, as you have done your heart?"

"No, not yet."

"And why not?"

"I have told you of my sister, and how very bitter he is towards all of your race that even dare to look upon me. Wait until he knows you better. The feelings of a heart

like his are as the roots of the oak, not easily torn away."

"Perhaps you are right. Promise me one thing, and then we will go to the wigwam."

"What more could I say? I have given you my hand and heart and could not take them back, if I would. If you prove as true to the daughter of the red man as she will to you, not a single shadow will ever cross your path."

"True; I would to heaven there was some power stronger than words to convince you of it. But why speak of shadows again?"

"Because there is one falling upon the very path we are going. May the Great Spirit preserve us from its being an omen of our future."

He looked and saw that her words were true. Looked at the sky and failed to find a single cloud between them and the moon. The silver light was pouring down with unbroken lustre. He looked at the woods. There was not a tree that could possibly cause such a gloom. But if neither cloud or tree, what could it be?

"Let us stand still for a moment, and see what shape it takes."

"It is a man—an Indian!" was all she could murmur, with hushed breath.

"Then let him beware!"

"Let us fly."

"No. It has gone again. Kiss me darling. Nothing shall ever come between us and our love. Now—one kiss more—we will go."

"Come into the woods, then. We are in plain sight here, and could be shot down as easily as wolves in a trap."

It was a wise thought—one purely Indian in its conception, and he saw that it was the best thing that could be done. Still, it was a cowardly action—one repugnant to his manhood, and had it not been for the loving girl, he would have investigated the cause of her alarm, and braved his fate, whatever it might have been.

Cautiously they moved along, keeping within the shade of the bushes until they reached an opening. That gained, hope rose in their hearts.

"We are safe," whispered the Swallow.

"Yes, thank Heaven! Oh, horror!"

An Indian, armed to the teeth and grotesquely painted, had risen directly before them. With screams for help, the Swallow threw herself before her lover, to save him from harm, offering her heart as a shield against the knife, hatchet or arrow.

CHAPTER X.

ADVICE. SEARCH. THE WAIF'S FRIENDSHIP.

THE continued absence of the chief and his daughter could not but be talked of among the tribe at the village of Michipicoten. Various were the conjectures, and as is usual at such times, all were very far from the truth. But more than all the rest, the wife and mother was troubled. The husband and child were all that were left for her to love in her old age. She had given her heart to the chief many years before, and though their record was one of hardships and suffering, they had not crushed out affection. And her daughter, the one lamb left her, she worshipped far above all earthly things—worshipped more perhaps, than even she did her God.

Day by day her anxiety grew more intense. She wandered restlessly about unfit for any occupation, and vainly trying to find the peace that fled from her. At first her fears were scoffed at. What danger could possibly come to one who had ever been familiar with the management of a canoe—who knew the water and the wind in their every phase—to whom every foot of both the main land and islands had been as a play ground? There were no enemies around—all was peace with them and their former enemies, the Sioux, and from the white man they had no fear.

But vainly they argued with the poor, old squaw. Her heart mourned for the lost ones, and, like Rachel, she would not be comforted. For a time she searched alone, but at length others became interested. Very soon, however, they became tired, and said they must have perished in the late storm,

and relaxed into their usual indolence. At this juncture, and when she had prepared to put on the weeds of childless widowhood, Shoon-ka-ska made his appearance again in the village. As if by accident, almost his first stopping place was at the wigwam of the absent chief.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked as he saw the mother of the Swallow seated with her blanket drawn over her head.

"The chief, my daughter, are both dead," she replied, ceasing for a moment the ever repeated cry of "wahono'win! wahono'win."

"Dead? How do you know?"

"We have searched for them in vain. Where have you been that you have not heard of these things?"

"Piloting the pale face to the mouth of the Kamanisbique."

She looked at him sharply from under her grey lashes, and seemed to doubt his word. But the story was plausible enough then, although a year before she would have known that it was a falsehood. He gave her no time, however, for reflection, but continued:—

"How long has Ah-ne-mee-kee and the Swallow been gone?"

"The sun has risen and gone down many times since she saw them last."

"Where have you looked for them?"

"All along the shore."

"And found nothing?"

"Not a broken paddle or a piece of the canoe."

He called her within the wigwam, carefully drew the skin curtains, furnished her with tobacco, and continued in low whispers:—

"Shoon-ka-ska loved the daughter of Ah-ne-mee-kee. If she has gone to the spirit land his heart will be covered with ashes."

"Is it so. Then he will seek for her?"

"As the bear for the trees where the honey is hidden."

"Does he know which way the chief travelled?"

"How should he? He was many miles away."

"Where will he look?"

"If the shore has been searched, he will turn to the islands."

"Why should they have gone there?"

"Who can tell. They might have been

looking for the yellow rocks the pale face loves, or the storm might have thrown them ashore."

"When will the White Dog go?"

"This day. And if he finds the Swallow?"

"She shall be his wife."

"What if she has given her heart to another?"

"She dare not disobey my commands."

"But should she refuse?"

"I will make her."

"And if a pale face has been singing sweet music in her ears?"

"I would strangle him with my own hands!"

Her actions and voice told that she was terribly in earnest. Without the strength of will to control her passion that was possessed by her husband, her anger against those of white blood was allowed to run riot—unchecked. True she might fail in her purpose of revenge, for when such

"Anger rushes unrestrained to action,
Like a hot steed it stumbles in its way."

but yet no kindness could change it. "The man of thought strikes deepest and strikes safest," but his clear judgment will, also, admit of conviction. Not so she. She would never forget and never forgive. Of this the cunning Indian was satisfied, and determined to bind her to him by every means in his power, and thus have a friend near the throne as powerful as him that sat upon it.

"Shoon-ka-ska would be a kind husband to the Swallow," he resumed after the hand of the squaw had been unclenched and the fire in her eyes somewhat died out. "He has loved her since they played together when little papooses. His wigwam is ever filled with game, and—"

"Yes—yes," she replied impatiently, "but the pale face? What makes him think that a pale face has been whispering in her ears like the black snake in that of a bird?"

"He heard them talking about her—how beautiful she was, and—"

"Let them come here if they dare! But she is gone—gone!"

In the moment of her anger she had forgotten her loss, and now it returned to her with double force.

"We will see if that is so. But if I find her you will not forget your promise to give her to me as a wife?"

"No. I swear it by the great Spirit."

"It is enough. Let her prepare for the journey. Soon the canoe will be ready."

Thus far the object of his return had been fully accomplished. With the mother upon his side it would go hard if he could not succeed, and with a gratified air he walked to his own wigwam to see how it had fared during his absence.

He found the rude habitation standing—the poles and bark covering remaining, but that was all. Every other thing had been carried away. Not a single particle of food, blanket or skin remained. Even the medal he had received from the "Great Father at Washington," and which was worth more than all his other possessions, was gone. Robbed was he to the very last extremity, and trembling with anger he was about to rush out and proclaim the outrage, when the bark covering was drawn aside and the witch-woman stood before him.

"My son promised me food. I am hungry. He was to give furs. I have come after them," she said as quietly as if she felt that her errand was the most welcome one in the world.

"Promised you!"

Her words were adding insult to injury, and he could hardly keep from rushing upon her and striking her dead at his feet. There were no wild surroundings—no bones of the dead—no subterranean abode or shadows of night to intimidate him now. Like Rob Roy when far from the dismal walls of the Talbooth, he could have exclaimed, "My foot is upon my native heath and my name is McGregor!" At the instant her life trembled in the balance, but second thought convinced him that murder would not do in the midst of the encampment—neither would it restore his lost treasures. At another time and in another place, he could be fully revenged, and so choking down his wrath he continued:—

"Yes, mother, I promised them to you, but you must be satisfied with what you have taken, until I go hunting again."

"How long am I to wait? Not until you win your love. I would starve."

"To-day I must go with the mother of the Swallow, to find her. But it will be a long search. I do not know where she is," he continued with a sly leer.

"And she will be your wife."

"Who told you so?"

"Do I not know everything? You must be quick or you will not find her. Two suns will not rise before she is here."

"Have you been to the island?"

"The Spirits told me, as they did that your arrow failed to accomplish its work."

"Failed! I saw the pale face reel beneath the blow. Failed! You said there was an hundred deaths upon its point."

"So there was, but he still lives."

"Then,"—he was about to say "all that you have taken and all that I have promised has been in vain," but her sharp eyes were upon him, baneful in their influence, and he could not entirely shake off his fear, and continued:—"Then other means must be tried."

"The knife is silent in its work."

"Yes. How came he to live? I know that I hit him. I saw the poisoned arrow sticking in his side."

"Had he been alone, the carrion buzzards would have been fattening upon his bloated corpse. But he was not alone."

"The Beaver?"

"He knows every secret of the woods as well as I or the Great Medicine. Had my son been cunning, he would have watched and seen that he never returned with the herbs that render the poison of the rattlesnake harmless."

"His time will come!"

"What does my son intend to do after he has taken the mother to the daughter?"

"I shall bring them back here."

"And the pale face and the Beaver?"

"They will go away searching for copper."

"But if they do not?"

"I do not know."

"Is my son certain that the young man loves the Swallow?"

"Yes."

For a time the old woman sat as if lost in thought. Then she crept to the door of the wigwam, and having satisfied herself that

there was no one in hearing, returned to his side and whispered in his ear:—

"If my son will keep his promises I will tell him."

"I will."

"He must make friends with the pale face, and lure him far away to search for the yellow rock, or upon the hunting trail."

"What for?"

"Is he blind as the mole? He can easily lose him in the forest, or tempt him into one of the caves of the mountains, and shutting the door leave him to die."

If ever man had a devilish prompter, the White Dog had in the pretended Witch woman. Not that she cared about him, but she hated the pale faces, and more than all saw a way of making the Indian her slave, and forcing him in the future to supply the wants she had heretofore struggled against.

"It is good," was the reply. "Now I must go."

"I shall watch for your coming, my son."

Well, indeed, she would have done so, if she had known the thoughts that were busy in his brain. He would watch for her too, but it would be to clear her from his path, and to free himself forever from her power. Yes, he would watch for a fitting opportunity to murder her!

A brief walk around the village to learn what was the general opinion with regard to the absence of Ah-ne-mee-kee and his daughter, and he summoned the mother and pushed his canoe from the shore, taking the direction of the islands. More than one was looked over in vain. He was too crafty to go directly to the spot where he knew he would find them. The old squaw would have seen in an instant through such a proceeding, and his object was to impress her with the importance of his services. All the afternoon, therefore, he consumed in paddling from shore to shore, but when night came, he, as if by accident, discovered a light at a little distance, and turning thither soon led her to where her husband and the Beaver were deeply engaged in conversation—plotting how to separate the lovers, as if there it was not true that

"Love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey."

Very few were the words spoken between the chief and his wife, for though the Indian will unbend from his haughty demeanor when in the seclusion of his own wigwam, he never shows the slightest affection before the eyes of others.* Then he fondles his children and bends to the sway of his wife. There he is the tender husband and loving father.

The first brief welcome and explanation over, she took her place near the chief and attended to the filling of his pipe, as if they had not been separated. But if her tongue was at rest, her eyes were not. She looked around in vain for her child, and the pale face of whom her conductor had spoken. But there was no one there but the Beaver, and it could not be him. So, too, was it with the White Dog. The etiquette of Indian life would not permit him to wander away in search of her. He must either wait her return, or be directed to go after her, though his blood was boiling with the thought that she might be even listening to the love vows of his rival, submitting to his embrace, and giving back warm kiss for kiss. As if a millstone had been lifted from off his heart, these were the words of the trapper:—

"White Dog, suppose yer go and look arter the Swaller and Pitt. They've bin er wandering round er long time, and had oughter be home. Ther night air is gittin' ter be mighty cold. I kin feel it myself, old and tough and well as I am."

"Shoon-ka-ska is not a dog that he should follow in the steps of a squaw," was the proud reply. Impatient as he was to go, he knew that he had a cunning part to play, and that it was requisite to keep up his dignity as a brave.

"Wall, yer needn't git mad erbout it. Thar whar no harm in axin yer, as I knowed on. I kin go myself."

"Shoon-ka-ska will go," commanded the chief.

That was sufficient, and he walked swiftly away until out of sight of the wigwam. Then his motions became as subtle as the

* This point is often disputed. But the evidence of Mrs. Schoolcraft, herself the daughter of a full blooded Chippewa woman, with the unpronounceable name of "Oshanguscodaywaygua," and granddaughter of the famous chief "Wa-ba-jick," is perfectly satisfactory in the matter.

ox. Dropping to the ground, he wound his way along, until their voices gave him some idea of their locality. But he could not see them and was forced to rise. Thus it was that his shadow was seen—thus it was that it disappeared as he dropped again and crawled within hearing distance.

At length he obtained a position where he could both see and hear, and all the passions in his savage heart boiled for revenge, as he witnessed their endearments. And well was it in that hour that the witch woman had advised as she did. Otherwise, knife and hatchet in hand, he would have rushed upon Monerief, and glutted to the full, his vengeance with his heart's blood. But the moments were to him like hours—his mental suffering equal almost to those of Prometheus when bound upon the rocks of Caucasus—he could not have endured them much longer. Again he rose—again his shadow was thrown alarmingly before them. Then he hastily drew forth his pouch, painted himself and threw himself in their path.

"The Swallow need not fear," he said.

"Her mother waits for her."

"Shoon-ka-ska!"

"Her mother mourned for her as one dead. Shoon-ka-ska sought long before he found her."

"Now we are indeed safe," murmured the girl, and side by side they returned to the wigwam.

CHAPTER X I.

THE COPPER ROCK*

THE return of the trio to the wigwam was the occasion for a general conversation, although the trapper somewhat monopolized it. He told of all that had happened upon the island; of the illness of the chief (concealing the cause) and the attempted murder of Monerief. Loud, too, was he in

* The author is perfectly aware that he has taken a great liberty with Nature in transferring the noted copper rock from its location upon one of the branches of the Ontonagon River to the north shore of the lake.

praise of the White Dog, who had successfully searched for them after all the others had failed. In fact, the rest were but little better than listeners, save as they now and then answered his questions. The chief had no inclination to talk; his wife was closely watching Monerief and her child; the Swallow modestly sitting at her mother's feet, the young white man dreaming love dreams, and the White Dog plotting for the future.

"Thar ar one thing that puzzles me," continued the trapper, going over the subject for about the fifth time, "and that am who could have shot the pisoned arer. Ther chief says that it whar made by ther Sioux, and he am mighty knowing in sich matters, but I dont see how one of them thar cut throats would dare ter come in these ar parts. Have yer seen any strange Injuns erbout, White Dog?"

There was one from the Prairie, with a party of pale faces, at the mouth of the Kamanisbique."

"So yer have bin thar, have yer? That whar ther the reason why yer didn't take ther trail and find us sooner, I 'spose?"

The Indian nodded his head but spoke not. He had especial reason for remaining silent, and he felt that the eyes of the chief were fixed upon his face.

"From the Perarer? That am Perarer du Chien, yer mean? Wall, he mought have bin er Sioux, that am er fact. I conceit that his trail won't be er very long one, before I run him down. What kind of er man whar he?"

"I only saw him in passing the canoe. He looked tall and young."

"That's exactly yer description, Pitt. I shouldnt wonder of it whar ther same reptyle. Howsomever, I'll fix his flint fer him, before I am many days older. But why he should have shot er arer and er pisoned one at that, is more'n I kin tell. By ther way White Dog, yer know all erbout ther country back of Michipicoten, and as far up as ther Pic River, and Neepigan Bay, don't yer?"

"As I know the trail to my own wigwam."

"Wal, yer jest ther man we want. My

young friend here am out er huntin fer copper, and ef yer know of any he'll pay yer well ter pint it out ter him."

Here was a chance to gratify both his avarice and revenge, and the Indian instantly replied:—

"The big copper rock?"

"That's ther very thing! Strange that I haint ever thought of it erfore. Pitt, ef yer kin only find that yer fortin am made for sartin. I've often heard of it but never have seen it. Ther fact am ther Injuns have kept ther way ter it mighty secret, fer they believe that er great Manertou lives thar, or something of this sort. Do yer know the way, White Dog?"

"My father showed it to me when I was a little boy."

"And yer kin find it ergin?"

"The trail is grown up. No moccasin has travelled it for many winters."

"Jest as I told yer, Pitt. They whar erfeared that ther white man should discover it and carry it erway. But I reckon they couldnt do that ar thing. How large mought it be, White Dog?"

"More than ten times as big as the wigwam of the Beaver."

"Ten times as big as my cabin! I don't believe it. Howsomever, we'll git ther chief ter give us liberty to go, and I reckon ther White Dog kin find it ergin. Trust er Injun fer that. He don't never fergit er trail that he's once travelled ef it's twenty years arterwards. You kin find it, can't yer, White Dog?"

"The eyes of the Shoon-ka-ska can track the dun wolf in the darkest night."

"I thought so! I thought so," exclaimed the excited trapper, "and kin find er copper rock when thars plenty of 'ishcodawan'bo' depending upon it."

"The red man cares not for fire water."

"Yer all say the same thing! No matter. I'll bet my rifle ergin er shot gun, and that am mighty long odds—that he will take yer strait ter it, Pitt. But I'm gittin sleepy. Come, we must gin up ther wigwam ter ther chief and ther wimin folks," and setting the example, he went out and prepared a place for passing the night."

His example was followed by the others.

A fire was kindled, the trapper gathered a few branches and threw down upon the hard rock for Moncrief to lie upon, as he had been sick, and then they all wrapped themselves in their blankets, and with feet turned to the flames, sunk into silence if not into slumber. But waking or dreaming how very different were their thoughts? The mind of the honest trapper was filled with the glories that would ensue to his friend upon finding the long sought for copper rock. Moncrief was reflecting upon the beauty and love of the Swallow, and the Indian fighting against the temptations to kill him as he lay defenceless by his side. Most truly his slumber when at length he did so was "not sleep, but a continuance of enduring thought—" the black plotting for another's blood.

But no murderer's hand was raised that night. All was tranquility. Brothers could not have rested more securely, and the first glistening of the morning sun saw them making preparations for departure. The trapper was as happy as a miser who had discovered treasures that had long been buried in the earth, and to which there could be no claimant. The others were thoughtful and silent.

"We'll leave ther wigwam er standin'," said the trapper, after they had broken their fast and launched the canoes. "It be kind er useful fer some of yer people, Pitt. They'd be just fools ernuff ter come here lookin' arter copper, though I'd as soon think of sarching fer beaver in er rat hole."

"It would be useless labor to tear it down," replied Moncrief. "I may wish to come this way again some time."

"What fer! Ter be shot?"

"Certainly not."

"Wal, I hearn tell there is some kind of er God—I disremember his name now, that shoots jest as strait as Injuns," answered the old man with a sly laugh.

Moncrief knew that he referred to the rosy son of Mars and Venus, blushed, and instantly turned the subject, by saying:—

"The rest are embarked and off. We shall have to paddle swiftly if we intend to keep them company."

"Yes, thar they go, the chief and the White Dog in one canoe, and ther Swallow, and mother in the other. Wal, I haint easily

beat with ther paddle, but as it'll be two ergin one I'll show 'em er leetle of er white man's contrivance."

The bark afloat, the old trapper examined carefully the direction from whence the wind came, and having satisfied himself that it was directly aft, he raised a slender pole, fastened his blanket to it in the place of a sail, and soon overtook and could have passed them had he desired so to do. Well he knew that it was a dangerous experiment with such an egg shell of a craft, and with the wind from any other quarter would not have dared to undertake it. Now he had but to steer carefully and could enjoy his pipe at his ease.

And very swiftly they sped along until they were passing the grave yard, when Moncrief, who had never seen one before, enquired concerning it.

"It am er Injing buryin' ground," replied the trapper, "but what in thunderation am that er prowling eround under ther corpses?"

"A wolf," replied his companion, raising the glass he carried with him and adjusting the focus.

"Er wolf! Then I'll jest show yer what this here old rifle of mine am good fer. I'll try and make as good er shot as you did, even ef I don't hit er chief."

Before the words had fairly been uttered, the report of his rifle was heard, and the bullet had sped over the waters. All saw the shot and all saw the beast roll over and lie still. They knew that death had followed.

"What do you think of that ar, White Dog?" shouted the old man.

"It was a great shot," was the reply, and his heart leaped for joy, for he knew that what had been mistaken for a beast, was in reality the witch woman, and that both he and his secrets would be safe in the hereafter.

"Yes, it whar a capital shot ter make with er canoe rollin' under yer, and ef I had time I'd go and git ther skin, though it haint of much ercount this time o' ther year."

"I would like to see where your bullet struck," said Moncrief. "It must have been either through the head or heart, to have caused such instantaneous death. Let us go down and see."

"So we will. Wait, chief, for er few minutes."

"Has the Beaver forgotten the big rock of copper," asked the White Dog, who felt as if he was wearing the shirt of Nessus while the conversation was going on. "If we do not take the trail soon, some others may be the first to find it."

"So they mought—so they mought. It haint no ercount whar I hid ther beast, Pitt. It am dead as er door nail, and that's all I want ter know," and he threw the canoe again before the wind, and continued with unchecked speed until they had reached the wigwams at the mouth of the Michipicoten River.

A crowd had gathered to receive them. The story was soon told, (excepting always that which could have been uttered by the White Dog,) and Pitt Moncrief became the lion of the hour, for such man-worship cannot be claimed entirely by the demi-gods of civilization! But more than all, he was feted by the old Medicine. Trickster as he was, he yet wished to learn something of the manner in which the chief had been so successfully treated, as well as some new charms, if possible, that would render his name still more famous among the nation. But though disappointed in the latter, Moncrief willingly explained as much as he was able to comprehend of *materia medica*, and gladly escaped from the wigwam, hoping to see the Swallow. In this he was disappointed. Her mother kept her closely under her watchful eye. Then, as evening was drawing near, he sought the wigwam that had been assigned him, and found the trapper in earnest conversation with Shoon-ka-ska respecting the famous copper rock and its location. Gladly almost as he had escaped from the jargon of the Medicine, would he have done from them, but finding it impossible, he lighted his pipe and sat down to bear the infliction with the best possible grace.

"Yer say it am on ther branch ef er big river, didn't yer," continued the old man, resuming the conversation that had been broken by the entrance of Moncrief.

"Yes. It rises in the mountains," was the response of the Indian.

"Is it er very long way from here?"

"Six days."

"Er week almost, and all ther way through ther woods?"

"Half."

"That will be er long journey fer yer ter undertake on foot, Pitt. I wish I whar er goin with yer."

"And are you not?" asked the young man in astonishment.

"No."

"But I thought you were to continue with me during the entire summer?"

"So I am arter I git back, and that'll be by ther time you ar."

"Whar are you going?"

"Wal, ef yer must know, ter find ther red devil that fired ther poisoned arrer."

"What difference can that make now?"

"Wal, ther chief and I have bin er talkin' over ther matter, and come to the conclusion that ef sich things ar ter be, thar won't be any safety on ther lake any more. So I am going ter hunt up ther raskil."

"Will the chief go with you?"

"No. He's got enuff ter tend ter at hum."

"And White Dog is to be my only companion?"

"Sartinly, and er good one yer'll find him tu. Thar hain't er honester Injin—yer needn't blush, White Dog, though no one could see it through yer skin, that am er fact—ther hain't er honester or more trusty Injin in ther hull tribe."

"I am satisfied. When shall we start?" he asked, turning to his newly appointed companion.

"When the sun has risen and set two times."

"That suits me exactly. I feel the need of rest before starting upon so long a journey."

"Wal," interrupted the trapper, "you kin fix up things, just as yer have er mind ter, I shall be off early in ther mornin', and now 'spose we go ter sleep," and suiting the action to the word, he prepared himself for rest.

The hint started the Indian, and Moncrief was left alone with his thoughts. For two days he would have an opportunity to see the

Swallow and renew his vows of affection, and with her fully occupying his mind he, also, passed into that mysterious state which is the counterfeit of death.

The suffering he had recently undergone, fatigue and excitement, told heavily upon him; and long before he was awake the trapper had started upon his journey. This was a great disappointment. He had intended to see him alone, and question him more closely respecting Shoon-ka-ska. There was something—he could not tell what—that he did not like about him. The eye of the Indian appeared to shun his, and he never looked him squarely in the face. Somewhat a believer in the doctrine of the attraction and repulsion of spirits, it was a source of anxiety to him. With the trapper gone, he had no one to utter his thoughts freely to, so banished them as well as he could.

The care of the chief had provided him with breakfast, rude it is true, but sufficient for hunger. That finished, he turned his steps to where he hoped to see the Swallow. Nor was he disappointed.

The curtains of the wigwam of Ah-nemee-kee were drawn back, and the girl was seated within, busily engaged in making moccasins. She looked up and greeted him with a sad, sweet smile, but a rapid motion of her fingers told him that there were listeners near, and turning his head he saw the mother at but a little distance, engaged in the usual housewife avocations. Compelled thus to give utterance to nothing but the most commonplace sentiments, he talked of their late and of his prospective journey.

"Do you know anything of the famous copper rock?" he asked.

"Nothing, though I have heard my father and the old Medicine talk about it," she replied.

"Then they have seen it?"

"I think so. Does the Beaver go with you?"

"No. He started up the lake very early this morning."

"Who goes with you besides Shoon-ka-ska?"

"No one. What sort of a man is he, Swallow?"

He fancied that he saw her form tremble

at the question, but could not be certain, for her mother entered at the moment and called his attention to her as she replied in the place of her daughter:—

"There is none better or braver in the whole tribe of the Ojibwas."

One glance at her face was sufficient to convince him that he was no favorite with the old squaw, although he could think of no other reason than her savage remembrance of the wrongs done to her daughter by one of his color.

"Where is your father, Swallow?" he asked.

"By the water."

"I will go and seek him."

"When do you start for the copper rock?"

"Day after to-morrow morning."

He bowed himself out and sought the chief, passing with him almost all the entire day, sometime in his wigwam, (to be near his loved one even if he could not talk to her) and sometimes wandering around the encampment "sight seeing."

The second day was but a counterpart of the first one. He could find no opportunity to converse with the Swallow alone save for a single instant. Either her mother or the White Dog appeared the moment he approached her side. But the one occasion he was fortunate enough to secure he was not slow in improving to the utmost. He reiterated his lasting affection, and slipped the ring she had heretofore refused, upon her finger, and moved rapidly away so that she could have no chance to return it.

Very early the next morning he was awake. There was no one stirring. He threw off his blankets and in doing so a pair of moccasins fell to the ground. His heart told him whose fingers had formed them. He took them up and inserting his hand within so as to admire the workmanship he found a piece of bark. Drawing it out he examined it closely, but could make nothing of the figures traced thereon—two hands rudely sketched, in close proximity, and a serpent sticking at the about to be interlocked fingers.

"I wish the trapper was here. He could tell me what this means," he exclaimed aloud.

"Shoon-ka-ska will interpret for the pale face," was answered in his ear, and turning

he saw that the Indian had entered so silently as not to be heard, and was looking over his shoulder.

"Well," he replied, having been taken completely at a disadvantage and seeing no way of escape. "Well, tell me."

"The two hands are the Beaver and the pale Medicine. The serpent is the poisoned arrow. The Swallow is congratulating them upon their escape."

This to one unacquainted with Indian picture writing was satisfactory enough, and as the White Dog urged immediate departure, and Moncrief could offer no good reason for remaining, they entered a canoe and started in search of the copper rock. The bark; however, he secretly concealed about his person, determined to ask the trapper at the very first opportunity, if the interpretation given had been the correct one.

The naturally unsuspicious and buoyant nature of Moncrief soon recovered its healthy tone, and his dislike to his companion entirely vanished before the end of the first day. The Indian was thoroughly versed in woodcraft, and apparently took great pleasure in imparting it. Freely he told the secrets of trapper and hunter life, and the lessons experience had taught his tribe, making them wonderfully at home when all of theory and written lore would have failed. In every manner he assisted Moncrief, and once when the canoe struck a hidden rock in a swift rapid and upset, he clasped him in his strong arms and swam with him safely to the shore. In every danger he was the foremost—in every labor assumed the whole, and when their lonely camp fire was lighted for the first time, the white man felt that he had a firm friend in the red one, and willingly told him so.

"To tell you the truth, White Dog," he said, "I did not fancy going alone with you. Somehow—I cannot tell why—I had taken a strange dislike to you. Now I do not know a man—not even the Beaver—that I would more willingly trust with my life."

"The pale faces," replied the Indian with flashing eye and dilated nostril, "have ever looked down upon the red man; but their skin often covers as white a heart as if it was pure as snow."

"I believe you. Taking you and the chief as examples, there can be no truer men."

"There are crooked trails and many choose to travel in them. Shoon-ka-ska has ever looked for the strait one. His heart is opened. The pale face can read it like their written talk."

"So the Beaver says. He speaks well of you."

"He is a great hunter, and his praise is as sweet to the ears of the red man as the rain to the dry earth."

"Yes, and he is honest. And that reminds me of the errand he has gone upon. Do you think that he will find the Indian?"

"He might as well look for the track of the gull through the sky."

"What could have been his motive in shooting me?"

"Has the pale face never stepped between a red man and her he loved?"

"Me? No!"

More he would have said, but the cunning Indian had completely turned the tables upon him. He knew that Moncrief would like as little to talk of the Swallow as he would of the affair of the island. So both relapsed into silence, and soon after, into the sweet slumber that labor ever brings. The last thoughts of the Indian was as to when and how he would accomplish his revenge; and those of the white man, by one of the strange paradoxes of our nature, of an old squaw whom he had saved during his visit at the village, from being beaten by a gang of half grown boys. She was trying to escape them, and they following her with sticks, when he had interfered. But from that moment it had passed entirely from memory until now.

In his dreams, he saw her again. He fancied that she came toward him, threw back her blanket, and revealed her strikingly ugly face, pointing to the sleeping Indian, made a motion of warning, shook her fist, and just as he was about to question her, disappeared. So life-like was the illusion of slumber that it awoke him. He looked anxiously around, but no one was in sight. At a little distance he thought he could see the bushes disturbed, as if some one had passed quickly through. But he could not be cer-

tain. Even if it was the case, it might have been caused by the wind or some night bird, and so he banished it from his mind and knew nothing more, until the Indian shook him by the shoulder, and called him to the breakfast he had prepared.

Another short journey by water and they left the canoe and struck at once into the woods, beginning in reality the hardships of the undertaking. The trail soon became very difficult. Now through a tangled swamp of larch they were forced to cut their way, and now to creep over high and dangerous rocks. Here Moncrief found the moccasins presented him by the Swallow, and the hand of the Indian, his best friends. Had it not been for them he would have fallen many a time, and been dashed to pieces upon the ragged points below.

On the summit of a hill they paused on the evening of the third day, and prepared their camp. From it they could look over a wide range of territory, but so winding had been their trail that Moncrief thought it very doubtful if they would be able to find their way back again. To guard against this, he drew forth a little compass he carried, and began to take observations. The Indian observed him closely, wondering for a time, and then as he began to somewhat understand the object, a dark scowl settled upon his features, and almost without his knowledge his hand rested upon his knife.

"What is my pale brother doing?" he asked.

"Making sure that we do not get lost on our return."

"Will that tell him the way to go?"

"Yes. How do you find which way is North when you are lost in the woods?"

"By the moss upon the trees in the day time, and the stars by night."

"This is a more certain method," and Moncrief explained at some length the principle of the magnetic needle.

"And you could always find your way if you had this with you?"

"Certainly."

"Whether the sun was bright, or the moon and stars hid behind the thick blanket of the storm?"

"That would make no difference."

The Indian stood for a long time. Then he turned away and resumed his labors, but as the sun was shooting its last golden arrows to the earth, he asked Moncrief to see the "Manitou that told the pale face the trail."

"Be careful of it," was the answer as he placed it in his hands. "A very little thing would ruin it. Be very careful that you do not let it fall."

"Without the rocks give way beneath the feet of Shoon-ka-ska, it will be safe in his hands."

It seemed as if there was something prophetic in his words, for even as he was uttering them, the jutting point upon which he was standing, crumbled away, and he only saved himself by clinging to the roots of a tree that grew upon the very brink. As for the compass, it must have been hopelessly destroyed. Nothing of the kind could have helped being crushed into a shapeless mass, falling so far, and the Indian mourned its loss as deeply as the white man.

"Shall I go and look for it?" he asked, after expressions of great sorrow.

"No, it would be useless. The battered fragments would serve no other purpose than to remind me of my loss. Henceforward, White Dog, I must trust entirely to your guidance."

The Indian bowed acquiescence. He had accomplished his object, and wished not to converse upon the matter. With the compass the pale face could readily find his way out of the woods; now he was entirely in his power. The act of falling and dropping the instrument, he had premeditated from the moment he had learned its use, and while Moncrief was engaged, he had loosened a stone so that it would easily slip, and so give the color of truth to the accident. But all through the evening he mourned for it. So much so, that if the white man had been as well versed in the character of the Indians as the Beaver was, it would have fully aroused his suspicions.

"Can the pale face get another Manitou like the one that fell down among the dark rocks?" he asked, when they were enjoying their pipes after the evening meal.

"Certainly, as many as I choose. It is not the worth but the want of it I regret."

"Shoon-ka-ska is very sorry. He must hunt and get many beaver skins, and buy the pale face another."

"No need of that. It was an accident, and all of us are liable to such things. But tell me, how far we are now from the 'big copper rock' as you call it."

"My brother shall see it soon after the sun rises again. It is not more than two leagues away."

"So near! I wish we had pressed forward to-night. Why did you not do so? There was plenty of time."

"Shoon-ka-ska must go and take offerings to the Manitou before he dare go any farther."

"What kind of offerings?"

"Tobacco."

"Well, you shall have a bountiful supply. Where does the great Manitou dwell?"

"In a cave, near the big rock of yellow earth."

"And unless you make him propitiatory offerings, he will not permit you to visit it? Is that what you mean?"

"Yes."

"Is it true that a white man has never seen it?"

"The moccasin of one has never been nearer than the lake before."

"I will go with you and tender the offerings. Is there anything besides tobacco, that would make the Manitou look with favor upon our undertaking?"

Moncrief had learned enough of the superstitions of the red man to humor them, and was determined that nothing—no matter how much he might laugh at it when alone—should keep him from being unsuccessful after so long and tedious a journey.

"Yes, he loves pipes, iron and beads."

"Then I am sorry that we did not bring a supply. The next time we come, which will be very shortly, if I find the reality at all like the description, we will load him down with presents."

A sinister smile rested upon the face of the Indian, but he blew a cloud of tobacco smoke between him and the white man, so

that it would not be observed, and as usual urged the necessity of going to rest. Very anxious to see the object of which he had heard such glowing accounts, Moncrief consented, and it was not strange that he dreamed of a mountain of native copper, with an Indian Manitou, whose features strangely resembled those of the White Dog, sitting upon it as upon a throne of burnished gold, and smoking a huge pipe!

Long before he was awake, the Indian had stolen softly away into the woods, and when he returned Moncrief was still sleeping. Pleased that his absence had not been discovered, he sat about building a fire, making ten times the usual amount of noise. If the object he had in view was to awake his companion it succeeded, for raising himself and rubbing his eyes, he asked what the matter was.

"My brother would be upon the trail?" demanded the Indian.

"Yes."

"Then let him eat."

Not long does it take to dispatch a meal under such circumstances. There was no ceremony to be observed. To supply the demands of hunger in the least time, was all that was required, and that done they continued their journey for an hour, when the Indian suddenly paused and pointing to a rock, whispered:—

"There!"

"Is that the big copper rock?"

"Yes."

By the aid of his glass Moncrief could plainly distinguish that it was a huge piece of virgin copper, ramified through a mass of stone, intermixed with calcareous spar. This the first glance showed him, but before he could carry his observations any farther, he laid his hand upon his arm and continued in a mysterious whisper:—

"There is the cave of the Manitou!"

Moncrief looked and saw a rock at a little distance, or rather the face of the wall rock, with an opening near its base. This was the *Manitoulin* rock, and it required no stretch of the imagination for an uneducated and superstitious man, to fancy that the rushing in of the wind at the opening, with a dismal sound, was a voice of a Manitou.

"Here is the tobacco," said Moncrief, filling the outstretched hand of the Indian.

"Now we will go and make the offering."

"Shoon-ka-ska must go first. When he returns then his pale brother can go."

"Can we not go together?"

"But one at the same time. The Manitou will be angry."

"As you please."

He saw the Indian creep in at the opening, and amused himself until his return, in taking a general survey of the country with his glass. But so long was he alone, that he begun to be troubled, when the White Dog reappeared.

"What kept you so long?" he asked.

"The great Manitou was talking to me."

"Talking to you! What did he say?"

"The pale face will hear with his own ears."

"How far in the mountain does he keep himself?"

"As far as the weapon of the pale face will carry."

"A long rifle shot! Well, suppose you take care of my weapon until I return. I shall not need it, I presume."

"Shoon-ka-ska left his bow and arrows behind. Will my brother let me look at his eye that draws things from afar?"

"My glass, certainly. How will I know when I come to the spot where the Manitou is to be found?"

"There are four stones standing side by side. That is the house of the Manitou."

Moncrief, to carry out the mummery, filled his hand as the Indian had done, with tobacco, took the flambeau of resinous bark that was offered him, and at once started to look upon the home of an Indian god!

The entrance was low and narrow. He was obliged to crawl for some distance. Then he was able to rise and walk more swiftly along a rough and winding path. But search as he would, he could find no such stones as had been described; and, disgusted with the entire proceeding, vexed that he had lent himself to such foolishness, he turned about to again seek the air and glorious sunshine, when his light was extinguished and he was groping about in the most dense darkness—groping in an unknown cavern, and amid he knew not what horrors!

CHAPTER XII.

A BLIND TRAIL.

With scarcely a pause for rest, the old trapper paddled his canoe from the mouth of the Michipicoten to that of the Kamanisique river. The few he fell in with, whether white men or red, were closely questioned, but he could gain no satisfactory intelligence with regard to the strange Indian he was in quest of. Almost every exploring party had one or more of them in their employ—that was all he could learn, but whether strangers to, or dwellers on the lake, was a point no one could answer.

With anything but patience he paddled away, until he reached the spot spoken of by Shoon-ka-ska, and sought the wigwam of the chief of the portion of the tribe who resided there. Scarcely waiting until the customary pipe had been smoked, he broached his errand.

"Have yer seen anything of er Sioux Injin erbout here?" he asked.

"The cut throats are dogs!" was the sneering reply.

"I know that jest as well as you do."

"The Ojibwas would send them howling away."

"That haint nothin' ter ther purpose. What I want ter know, am ef yer have seen one on 'em here lately."

"They hunt in packs like wolves. There is not one of them that dare take the trail alone. The carrion buzzard has not a blacker heart."

"Wal, they're all yer say, chief, but jest answer my question ef yer kin."

"His scalp would be hanging in the wigwam of the Ojibwas if—"

"Yer don't understand me. He came here, ef he came ertall, with a party of pale faces huntin' arter copper."

The words, "pale faces," and "copper," aroused the ire of the chief, and it was a long time before the trapper could reason him into sufficient coolness to talk of any other subject. At length, however, he succeeded, and obtained a distinct answer to his enquiries. No strange Indian had been there, as far as he was aware of, and that

he was right, was attested by all the tribe. If there had been he could not have passed unnoticed, for, though they were bound to peace by the formal treaty of 1825, made at Prairie du Chien, between the Chippewas, Sioux, Sacs and Foxes, Iowas, Menomonies and Winebagoes—though they then and there buried the tomahawk and shook hands as friends, yet such an opportunity to have taken a scalp for some unforgotten injury could scarcely have been overlooked.

Disappointed thus, the old trapper sought one after another of the mining parties that were scattered along the main shore and the southern point of Isle Royal, but with a like result. "Ther White Dog couldn't well have bin mistaken," he muttered to himself as he again turned his canoe southward. "He is er knowinsome Indian, and his eyes am jest as sharp as lynx's. Ther raskil of er pisen-shootin' redskin must have crossed this lake in the big vessel I learn of, and I mought as well give up ther chase. Howsomever, I'll keep er sharp lookout, fer thar's no tellin' when or whar he mought turn up again. I only wish I'd er seen him, that's all."

Driven ashore by a storm and detained for fully twenty-four hours in repairing the damage done to his frail bark, the temper of the trapper grew still less amiable. But in two respects it did him good—it afforded him time for rest and thought. Forced to the latter, he reviewed all that had transpired since he had taken Moncrief as a companion, and many points arose that he had failed to notice before. But far from complimentary were his conclusions about the White Dog. His coming alone with the mother of the Swallow—his being so long finding the girl and Moncrief—his story about the strange Indian, all told against him, and for the first time something like suspicion arose in the mind of the Beaver.

Why should he take such an interest in the chief and his daughter? Others did not! Could it be that he loved the girl? That thought was the match that fired the train. All the rest followed as a natural sequence. The Indian that had fired the poisoned arrow was "tall and young." So was Shoon-ka-ska! He had said that he had been at

the mouth of the Kamanisbique, but no one had seen him there. Either the entire tribe or he had told a falsehood. And if false in this, might he not be in others? Loving the girl, he would naturally be jealous of a white man, and now he was wandering with him alone and far from all others! That was giving the wolf as a shepherd to the lamb, and the seconds the old trapper was still forced to remain became as hours.

At length, however, the wind lulled, the sea became calm, and he was able to proceed. Then he pressed forward and without another pause reached the wigwams at Michipicoten. It was night, the curtains of the wigwams were closed, the fires out, and nothing save the half wild dogs with their pointed noses and fox-like ears, were stirring. They were snuffing around to find something that would appease their never-satisfied hunger. Kicking them from his path he hastened to the wigwam of the chief, and rousing him from his slumber he demanded if Moncrief had returned. No, he had not, and nothing had been seen of him since his departure with Shoon-ka-ska.

"And yer haint heard nothin' of him nuth'er?" questioned the trapper.

"Not one word. Who should have told of his wanderings to the Ojibwas?" asked the chief.

"I don't know! I don't know!" replied the anxious old man. "I kinder thought that yer mought have hearn somethin' of him somehow. But come with me, I want ter tell yer somethin'."

"Let my brother rest until the morning light."

Even he liked little to have his repose thus broken, and he dragged from his comfortable quarters into the chill night air and damp woods at midnight.

"I can't wait, I tell yer. It's most mighty important that I should talk ter yer right now."

"There are no tongues here that will repeat what the ears hear."

With more of delicacy than could have been expected from so rude and uneducated a man, the trapper thought of the Swallow, and how his fears would distress her if, as he supposed, she was in love with Moncrief, and

insisted upon going entirely out of hearing before he spoke a single word upon the subject for which he had aroused the chief.

"Yer see," he said, "it's er matter that's ontirely between us, chief, and though I don't believe that yer wife or darter would go around tellin' it, yet I know it haint ther fashion of yer people ter let the wimin folks come inter ther council lodge."

"My brother is right."

The point was well taken, for all Indians are very tender about having themselves thought to be influenced in the slightest degree by the squaws, and without another word he wrapped his blanket around him and followed the trapper to the shore, and then by means of the canoe to a lone rock, midway in the stream, where none could approach them without being observed.

"Now," he said when they had seated themselves, "Now let us light our pipes, and—"

"Has my brother forgotten his cunning?" asked the Indian, looking up in astonishment.

He was aware that a quick eye would detect the little spark of fire in the bowls, and keen nostrils scent the smoke as far as the buzzard would carry.

"I believe I have! The fact am, I been mighty troubled lately erbout ther young Medercine, as you call him."

"Has he wandered from the strait trail?"

"Not as I knows on. No, no, that hain't it, but I'm erfeard that something has happened ter him."

"Does my brother smell blood in the air?"

"I hain't quite hound enuff fer that, but I'll tell yer ther bull matter, and then yer kin judge fer yerself."

"The ears of Ah-ne-mee-kee are open."

"Yer recollect erbout ther pisenen arrer, and that Pitt said that ther one that shot it whar young and tall. Now that am just what ther White Dog told us erbout ther strange red skin he saw up by ther Rabbit Islands. Wal, I bin thar and heard all from ther great Chief—"

"Na-wa-je-wum?"

"Yes, the 'Strong Stream'—from him down ter ther leetle boys, all say there haint

bin no sich reptyle thar, and *I don't believe thar has.*"

"Then the Beaver thinks that the tongue of Shoon-ka-ska is blistered with lies?"

"Yes. Thar's no use in mincin' matters between us. I think he has lied, and more'n that I am e'enermost sartin that he whar the very one that tried ter kill Pitt."

"The pale face could never have done him any wrong."

"It war er mystery ter me at fust, but now it's jist as plain as er Buffalo trail ter er salt lick. You have er darter, yer know and—"

"Shoon-ka-ska loves her, and is jealous of the pale face!"

"You never made a better shot at er mark in all yer life, chief. Yes, he loves ther Swallow, and would git Pitt out er ther way, so as to have plain sailin. Yer found out mighty cute that ther bullet that bit yer, fitted ther leetle rifle, and perhaps yer kin do the same erbout whar ther pisenen arrer come from."

"Moons ago it was in the wigwam of the great Medicine," was the quiet response.

"Are you sartin of that?"

"Is the Beaver certain that the stars shine?"

"Of course I am. I don't doubt yer word, but how did he git it from thar? Did he steal it?"

"No."

"Then how did it come in his possession?"

"The Medicine was showing it one day to old Sa-sa-nah."

"What, ther one that passes for er witch?"

"From that hour he has never been able to find it."

"So she stole it, and gave it ter the White Dog. Could thar have bin ernuther one like it in ther encampment?"

"There was but one."

"The positive assertion admitted of no argument. So confident was the chief, that the trapper was convinced he had some private mark upon it. In this he was right.

"Does my Brother see this?" continued the Indian, drawing the arrow safely enveloped in bark, from his pouch, and pointing to a minute cross upon it.

"Sartinly. I haint quite blind yet."

"When there was war between the Ojibwas and the Cut Throats, (he never called the Sioux by any other name but that of contempt,) this was shot at the heart of Ah-ne-mee-kee. It did not reach it. He brought it home, marked it and gave it to the care of the Medicine."

"That's all right, and thar haint er shader of er doubt that it whar ther White Dog that fired it."

"Sa-sa-nah must tell that."

"Then the fust thing ter be done is ter find her, and I reckon it won't be er easy thing. Do you know whar she am used ter hidin', chief? Ef I remember rightly she used ter be er ramblin round kivered with er sort of er cloak of wolf skin."

"The Beaver shot at one in the grave yard when we were coming home from the island."

"So I did! So I did! May ther Lord fergive me ef I have committed er murder. Come, chief, let's go and see."

The words of the Indian had merely been surmised. He knew that the old squaw was accustomed to visit the spot—was often seen among graves—was frequently imitating a wolf, and nothing had been seen or heard of her since that time, much as he had enquired. To relieve his own mind, therefore, he needed no urging to induce him to go and search. If the squaw had in reality been killed, there was an end at once to her witchcraft and his hopes of proving the guilt of Shoon-ka-ska. Without her testimony he could bring nothing against the denial of the Indian.

The bright light of the moon, showed them distinctly as soon as they reached the shore of the little island, that something resembling a wolf was lying still beneath one of the upraised graves, and with feelings of horror they drew near.

"If it am ther poor woman, God forgive me," whispered the trapper.

"The hands of my brother are unstained with blood," was the comforting assurance of his companion.

"I don't know—I can't say that. Howsomever, I wouldn't have shot at her any more'n I would at er harmless chippin' bird, ef I had er known it."

The eyes of the Great Spirit are shut to such things."

"Wal, I'm glad on it, but we haint right sartin that it haint er beast arter all."

Picking up a branch, he pushed the skin aside, and was satisfied! There lay a human skeleton—skeleton, for the birds and beasts had torn off so much of the covering of flesh that neither form or feature remained.

"It am ther poor woman!" exclaimed the horror-stricken old man, and falling upon his knees he poured out (for the first time in his life, perhaps) a prayer that God would not lay the crime of murder to his charge.

The chief, however, was more skeptical. He had seen too much of the mummeries of the old Medicine not to be so, and his examination was long and careful. Repulsive as was the task, he turned over the wretched *debris* of a human frame until the trapper became completely disgusted.

"Wal?" he asked under his breath, as the Indian turned away.

"It is the body of Sa-sa-nah! The bullet of the Beaver sent her to the Spirit land," and he led the way again to the canoe, as anxious now as his companion, to get away from such terrible surroundings.

With the power of making the old squaw confess taken away from them, new plans had to be formed. Very deep ones, too, they must be, if successful to trap one like Shoon-ka-ska, and pondering upon what was to be done, they returned in silence to the main land. To ascertain if it was true, as the trapper had surmised, that he was in love with his daughter, was the first link in the chain that suggested itself to the chief, and leaving his companion to provide for himself at some other wigwam, he sought his own, and found, fortunately for his purpose, that his wife had gone with others of her sex to gather rushes for the manufacture of mats—an important article in their rude housekeeping.

"My child," he said, introducing the subject at once, for fear of being disturbed, "has Shoon-ka-ska ever asked you to be his wife?"

"Father!"

She thought instantly of the other one who had done so, and to whom she had plighted her troth, blushed and faltered in her speech.

"Why do you not answer?"

"He has never asked me to be his wife."

"Has he whispered sweet words in your ear?"

"No."

"Has nothing been said to you upon the subject?"

"Mother has told me that I must be the wife of Shoon-ka-ska—often told me so. I have heard them talking together about it."

"Did she speak of the pale Medicine?"

"Never, except to abuse him."

"Did the White Dog say he would never return?"

"Never return? Father, father!" and she threw herself in his arms, and confessed the great love of her heart.

"Is it so indeed, my child!" he replied.

"Then may the great and good Spirit help you; but let your lips be closed to all other ears—even those of your mother."

"And the white Medicine, father? If he should not return, the Swallow would die."

This conversation, brief as it was, let much light in upon the mind of the Chief. His wife had been constantly talking to him since their return home of the goodness of the White Dog—of its being time that their daughter was married, and various other topics all pointing to one end. His own desire to have matters thus arranged, had departed, but staring him broadly in the face were his words to the Beaver, that he would kill her with his own hand before she should be the wife of a pale face. Either he must forget his years of sorrow and his almost oath, or—he saw it plainly now—break his daughter's heart. Which should it be?

Long and earnestly he and the old trapper talked about the matter, but without settling it. Of one thing, however, they were both of one mind, and that was that Moncrief must be saved, and to that end they prepared to follow the trail leading to the Copper Rock.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE CAVE.

For a long time after the extinguishment of his torch, Pitt Moncrief realized but little the horrors of his situation. He fancied that he might be lost for a brief period, and that the Indian, finding that he did not return, would come in search of him and lead him out again. Winding about as he had done, he could not tell how far he had travelled or which was the way he had come. Like a blind man he groped around in the darkness for a time, his hands touching and shrinking from the slimy walls. Then he called aloud until he was hoarse. The echoes and the whirring of the bats, and hooting of the disturbed owls was his only answer. He rested, recruited his strength, and tried again and again with a like result.

Still he could not believe that he was intentionally deserted. It could not be that he was heard. His voice must be lost in the cavern, and not penetrate to the outside, or he would be answered. It might be that the Indian had gone to the copper rock, expecting him to follow. If he could catch but one ray of light he would know which way to go, and soon be in safety. The little tunnel by which he had entered must still remain open, and search would find it.

Then for a single instant he thought of treachery—thought that he might be shut up in a mountain cavern, far away from all of human help, and that he would perish by the lingering death of starvation, and he prayed to God for any other fate than that. But no, no! it could not be. He would soon find his way out again and smile at all his ungrounded fears.

To guard as much as possible against the danger of physical injury, he stooped down and crawled along, cutting his tender hands upon the sharp rocks. This he kept up for hours—how long he could not tell—then he sank down in hopeless despair. Suddenly he thought of his watch. That would tell him how long he had been underground. He held it to his ear, and found that it had stopped! He knew that he had wound it the evening before—recollected

that distinctly, so it must be night again, and for fully twelve hours, he had been crawling amid unseen horrors. Of this both thirst and hunger convinced him. He was faint with exertion—bruised and bleeding in many places, and he stretched himself at full length to husband his strength if possible. But for what? He had come thither in search of a Manitou, and found the dark one of Death!

Then as if his eyes had suddenly been cleared from all earthly film, he saw in vivid colors all that had been. The face of Shoon-ka-ska had seemed familiar to him from the very first—familiar, and yet repulsive. Now he knew that it was he who had fired the poisoned arrow! In the loss of the compass and the taking away of the glass, he saw premeditation; in sending him alone into the cavern he felt that it was to block up the entrance and confine him there,—and that it was accomplished! But why should he thus long for revenge? The Swallow? Yes, it must be that he was jealous of her, and with the thought came the recollection of the bark he had found in the moccasins. He felt for it and found it safe—drew it forth and attempted to look at the picture writing. The darkest midnight he had ever known was not as black as that around him.

But thought begets thought, and for the first time since his entombment he remembered a little box of matches that he always carried with him. He struck one, a feeble flame followed, but enough for his purpose. He saw that upon the fingers of one of the rude drawing was a ring, knew that it was intended for her he loved, knew that it was a warning, and that the serpent striking at the about to be clasped hands was the treacherous Indian, Shoon-ka-ska. Ah! why had he been so blind as not to notice it before,—notice it when it was in his power to save himself. Now all was lost, lost!

The whirling wings, often brushing him in the face, and the shrill cries and hooting of the birds that love the darkness, agreed with his conjectures, that it was night. He struck another match and found that his watch had stopped with the hands pointing nearly at eleven,—now it must be fully an hour later. It was a morbid gratification to know how

long he had been there, but was purchased at a terrible price. The strange light attracted the birds. They hovered around him as thickly as bees around honey comb. One, more venturesome than the rest darted at the little blaze, struck it with its powerful wings, and at the same time swept the box from his hands. He heard the clink of the metal as it struck upon the rocks at some distance, but to find it was impossible. Now he must meet whatever came, without even the poor satisfaction of a light.

An hour of intense mental anguish followed. Then, powerless to help himself, and numbed with cold, he fell asleep and dreamed such dreams of warmth and plenty as ever come to the brain amid such surroundings. The shipwrecked sailor, floating on a little raft dreams of rills of cool, fresh water; the one amid the eternal snows and ice of the Arctic of warm, sunny dells and bright flowers; the prisoner of freedom, and the sick one of robust health. How true it is that

"Dreams in their development have breath,
And tears and torture, and the touch of joy,
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking toils;
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity."

But slumber brought little of rest to Pitt Moncrief. He woke to find his sleeping thoughts but hollow mockeries, and realize more fully than ever he had done before that he was a prisoner, far away from friends, from God's blessed sunshine, far away from hope. His limbs became still more numbed, his hunger and thirst more imperative in their demands. The calmness of despair settled upon his heart. It was better to die suddenly than to linger thus in torture, and meet the grim skeleton at last. He could not rest as he was, and for the hundredth time continued his explorations, feeling his way and creeping along inch by inch. Suddenly his fingers rested upon something round. A moment of manipulation, and he flung it aside in horror. It was a human skull! They were scattered, mixed with other bones, all around him, and he knew that he had been sleeping in a charnel house!

For hours he again wandered about, hoping against hope that he would find some

clue to enable him to regain his liberty. But all was in vain, and when the bats and owls were once more upon the wing he fell from exertion, numbness, and the want of food and drink, almost hoping that he would never wake again. But death comes not to those who pray for it. It has its own time. Once more he awoke, and fainter and weaker, resumed his useless search. He knew that relief must come and that speedily, or it would be too late, for not long can either mind or body survive such a terrible strain. Reason will totter from its throne, as the physical strength gives way, and imbecility or madness follow.

With the calmness of despair he at length ceased his crawling about in the pitchy blackness—over the rugged pathway where every inch was gained only by severe labor and torn flesh, and began to calculate the chances of escape. And desperate indeed they were. Look at them in any light he would, he could see no possible hope of rescue. Not a single human being could have the slightest knowledge of his situation except him who had cunningly baited the trap and sprung it, and his lips would remain sealed.

That the opening by which he had entered was walled up and covered over so as not to be distinguishable from the rest of the surface, there could not be the slightest doubt. The trapper was upon a false trail and might be weeks absent. The Swallow was powerless to help him and the chief could not be expected to take part against one of his own tribe (and that one a lover of his daughter) even supposing that he was aware of what had befallen him. But could he not help himself? Would it be a useless task to attempt to dig out? There must be places where the covering was thin compared to others, and if he could only find such a spot might he not yet save his life, and disappoint the vengeance of the Indian? At least it was worth the effort, and far better than thoughtful idleness.

But how was he to find the point at which his labor would be the lightest? Everything he had ever read or heard of people being lost in caves flashed with lightning-like rapidity through his brain. There must be out-

side sounds he at length concluded, and if the shell that hid him from the gladsome sunshine and the sweet music of birds and perfume of flowers was but thin enough, he could hear by attentive listening. In this he was correct, and he was fast learning wisdom in the severe school of experience, but fate was yet against him. He could hear nothing save the same muffled sounds that had filled his ears since the first moment of his confinement. Again he was deprived of even the comfort of action, and to dig in a wrong direction would be merely excavating his own grave!

Suddenly, however, he fancied that he could distinguish a noise as of a beast scratching. Was that horror to be added to those that already encompassed him? Was he, after all he had suffered, to become the prey of some ravenous bear or wolf or panther? Was his flesh to be torn piecemeal, his blood to stain the floor, and his bones to be scattered about that cavern? Should mother or sister or loved ones never know of his fate? Ah! it is very hard to think of death, when the joys of life are at their flood, but such a fate is more than terrible.

But might not the very beast he so much dreaded be the means of saving his life? It might pass him in the intense darkness—its lair might be in an opposite direction from where he was lying—in the struggle he might conquer. What if his hand had become weak, his knife was sharp, and forgetful of all other things he waited and listened until he became satisfied that fancy had cheated him—that the sound he thought he had heard was but the coinage of his own brain. Then he flung himself madly upon the rocky floor, and almost raved for death to put an end to his sufferings.

But the knife—the long, sharp pointed, keen edged steel! It was still firmly clutched in his hand, and one blow would free him from all he dreaded—one little, rapid motion of the arm, and farewell alike hope and misery, love and hate, trial and earth. The temptation was severe—very difficult to be resisted, and he tore the covering from his breast and bared his heart for the blow.

Well enough it is for us in the full possession of all our faculties, breathing the free

air, enjoying light and warmth and reveling in God's bounties, to talk sneeringly (to say nothing of the wickedness) of the cowardice of such an act. Well enough to shudder at and pity the guilty wretch who would take the heaven-given life into his own hands, and send his soul, stained with his own blood, to judgment. But who, surrounded by darkness, worn out, hopeless, dying by inches, would think calmly of that "something after death" except that it was a "consummation most devoutly to be wished!"

Satisfied that nothing interfered to null the effects of the blow, the poor prisoner drew back his arm to throw into it all his remaining strength. Then even, as every muscle was strained to the utmost a sudden faintness fastened upon his heart, and his hand fell powerless for harm. The thought of his mother—his sister—of a father called home to God, with a crown of glory upon his silver hair, and more, perhaps, than all, of the beautiful and loving Indian girl, robbed him of the power to commit self-murder.

"Great heavens!" he murmured, shuddering at the feeble sound of his own voice, "Great heaven! What would I do. I may—will die, but it shall not be by any act of my own," and his thoughts rapidly formed themselves into such a prayer as never before had been born in his heart. A prayer that if it was God's will that he should die then and there, that all his sins might be forgiven, and his soul find free passage through the golden gates.

Tranquilized by the outpouring of his feelings, Moncrief lay for a long time motionless. He knew by the signs that had before warned him that night had come again. But would he see the dawning of another morning save one eternal? Very little chance was there of such a thing. The clock of life was beating more slowly at every pulsation of the heart—the hands had crept around the dial almost to "twelve." Soon the last hour would come.

Again he thought he heard an unwonted sound. He raised his head from the hard, cold stone pillow, and listened. All was still. His senses almost purified from earth, might have heard the beating of the surf on the thither shore of time—the rushing of angel

wings—the songs of the New Jerusalem, but nothing caused by mortals. Once more his head sank—once more the often raised and disappointed hope died out within him.

"May God have mercy upon me," was breathed from his parched lips. "Mother, sister. Swallow, dear Swallow, I am dying—dy—"

The black bats screamed, and the great eyed owls hooted above him, but his leaden ears heard nothing of their harsh utterances. The chilling condensations dripped from the rocky roof like rain upon his unprotected limbs, but he knew it not. The skulls and bones of those who had gone before, were scattered around him—he was resting upon them but he heeded it not. The rosy sun was gilding the clouds of grey, and telling that another day of glorious beauty and promise was dawning upon a sleeping world, but his eyes were closed. Loved ones were whispering his name, but he could not answer.

The blood had faded from cheek and brow—the limbs were becoming rigid as iron—the soft hair was stiffening with the heavy damps of dissolution. The icy fingers of death had fastened upon his heart strings.

Weep mother, weep sister, weep Indian lover for him whose image ye may have in your hearts; but who shall take his place by your side—whose warm kisses shall thrill your lips—whose breast shall pillow your heads, and whose smile shall be to you as sunshine—nevermore!

CHAPTER XIV.

COUNTER PLOTS.

AT the very moment of the disappearance of the white man within the cave, the Indian, Shoon-ka-ska, crawled near to it and listened. As long as he could hear the sound of his footsteps he remained motionless, but as soon as they were lost to his ears he placed in front of the opening a flat stone that he had carried thither with much labor during his morning visit, and began to cover it with

earth and leaves, effectually shutting out all of light. The rude portion of the work accomplished, he smoothed it over with skillful hands, so that nothing but the closest scrutiny could discover that it had ever been disturbed. Not satisfied, however with this, he crept up the steep bank and rattled the earth and stones from above, until for yards there was the appearance of a recent land slide.

Never was there more care taken or more cunning displayed in the covering up of the tracks of crime. A white man would not have endured the fatigue, even if he had thought of the plan, but to the red one it was almost a labor of love. Next to vengeance the hiding of the trail was a work of peculiar pleasure, and when all was finished to his mind, he sat down and contemplated it, as a skillful engineer might have done some bravely fought battle with, and victory over nature. The one who had stood between him and his revenge, was out of the way, and there was no one to tell the tale. And more than that, he had made himself rich by the securing of a weapon that he had coveted from the outset, and the powerful glass—a thing he looked upon as one of the pale man's Manitous—by which he could see for a great distance.

Like one, consequently, who had done a noble deed, he sat down and glorified over the sufferings that would come to Moncrief. Well he knew the secrets of the prison house, and that nothing short of Divine assistance would ever free a prisoner confined therein. While treading its darksome way, even for the little distance that he had, his heart had trembled, and how much more so must it be with one frail of frame as the white man, who knew that there was no escape? He knew that it was strewn with the bones of dead men, that foul birds made it their abiding place, and more than once, during hunting expeditions, he had heard it ring with the roars of savage beasts. Might not some now be rearing their young amid its secret hollows, and if so, what would be the fate of him who blindly rushed upon them? Think of it in whatever light he might, the end would be the same—death to the pale face, and not a taint of blood upon

even the hem of his garments to tell that he knew aught of the matter.

Thus far not a single ripple had broken the smooth current of his dream, but now other thoughts forced themselves upon his attention. How should he account for the non-appearance of the white man when he returned to the encampment of the tribe, for return he must to win the Swallow as a bride, otherwise all his labor and steeping his hands in blood, would be lost. Both the old trapper and the chief were not easily to be blinded, and it would require something more than an ordinary story to satisfy them. Both, too, had reason to love Moncrief. One was a firm friend—loved him as a son, and he had saved the life of the other. Nothing short of actual proof, therefore, would content them. Any idle tale they would see through in a moment—any trail to which they could find a starting point, follow like sleuth hounds to the end.

How, then, was he to set their minds at rest? keep them his friends, and so secure their assistance in wooing and winning the Swallow? Her being betrothed to the one that he had murdered, he took no account of. The mother was on his side, and unless there was something to turn the father against him, he had no fear for the result. But that was merely a secondary consideration. Moncrief, even though out of the way, was far more of a stumbling block than when free.

Many almost as the leaves of the tree under which he sat, were the lies that came ready formed to his tongue, but all were rejected. To return and say that the white man had wandered from him and become lost, would not for a moment be credited, for any child could find such a trail as he would leave. To say that he had been accidentally killed, would be putting upon himself the task of leading others to the grave. To tell that they had quarrelled and separated, would bear falsehood upon the face of it; for the pale man would not be rash enough (no matter what the provocation) to do such a thing, when the chances were a thousand to one against his ever finding his way back to his friends. To assert that he had met some party of his own color upon

the lake and joined them, would lead to a severe questioning of all the particulars—of their number, and which way they were bound.

Between so many contradictory stories he knew not how to decide. There was but one way for him to cut the Gordian knot that suggested itself to his mind, and that was by leaving himself for a length of time. Yet while the matter was being forgotten, might not some one else step in and carry away the prize? Go, therefore he could not, and so must add another murder to his list of crimes. The old trapper had before aroused him to anger—that was not yet revenged, and now his presence rose like a mountain before him. Yes, he must die! That point settled, the other appeared less difficult to be met and overcome.

Still there were rocks ahead—still lions in his path. The trapper was not of the same metal as his friend. He was accustomed to be on the watch for danger—to expect constantly to meet it, and be prepared when it came. To think of enticing him into a cave would be useless—to assault him openly dangerous. To ambush and kill him when unsuspecting, was the only chance. But here again, as in all his other plans, difficulties arose. The trapper was absent, following, as the Indians well knew, a foolish trail, and he might not return for a long time.

—"Might not return for a long time." If so he would have an opportunity to visit the encampment, learn all that had transpired during his absence, and arrange his plans for the future without fear of molestation. After a long deliberation he settled upon this, and with his mind relieved, cooked the first meal since early in the morning, and sat down and eat it as coolly and with as much relish as if the one that had trusted him with his life was not starving within a few feet of where he sat! And there, too, he slept, for the entire day had been spent in thought and watching that his victim did not escape; for, fiend that he was, he had distinctly heard the calls for assistance, and smilingly noticed the fact that they constantly grew more feeble.

And yet another day he lingered. Some strange fascination chained him there. Once or twice he determined upon opening

the mouth of the cave, that it had cost him so much labor to close and conceal, and satisfy himself that the white man had not escaped by some unknown outlet, now that his cries had long been stilled. But he dared not do so. Living, he would not have feared him; but that he could live so long underground, shut out from light and pure air, and surrounded by the rattling bones of the departed never entered into his calculations. Dead he must be, and it was the fear of meeting his ghost that alone deterred him.

Any civilized mind would fancy that he must have had a skeleton for companion as he stuffed himself at his lonely meals; and a skeleton for his bed fellow as he lay wrapped during the dark hours in the blanket of him he had entombed,—that hideous forms must have come trooping around him in his dreams; that he would have awakened from them, nor dared

"Again to close
His eyelids in such dire repose,"

but it was not so. Never did innocence sleep more soundly—never did quick-footed dreams dance to a more joyous measure through the brain of any man. He saw himself crowned as the great chief of the nation and the hand that placed the badge of power upon his head, accompanied by horrid words, was the Swallow!

No marvel then was it, that the dawn found him refreshed, and ready for the homeward trail. A trail much nearer than that by which he had journeyed thither, for he had purposely taken a long and blind one to baffle Monerief, in case that any accident should render his plans of vengeance abortive.

Hiding the glass and rifle in a secure place until the time came when he could use them without fear of questioning, he gave one more glance at the spot where the opening to the cavern had been—listened once more to satisfy himself that all was silence, and started. To return to where he had left his canoe would occupy too much time, and so he struck a direct course for the mouth of the river where his people lived, condensing the journey to within the space of two days.

As he came within sight of the fires as

they flashed ruddily out amid the darkness of early evening, he paused and considered. If he could, himself unseen, but learn all that he wanted to know, it would be well, for then he could retreat or go boldly forward as policy dictated. Or if he could find some friend within the wigwams who would unknowingly play the spy and come and inform him, it would be better still. If the old witch woman was only alive, he would have such an one, but the fatal shot of the trapper had robbed him of her assistance, and though he gloried in it at the time, it was a matter of bitter regret now. There was but one other one that he dared trust, and that was the mother of the Swallow. To gain her ear, however, without detection, was anything but an easy task. Still it was the only resource left him, and so he waited until the fires were extinguished, and all silence in the encampment. Then he crept cautiously forward, soothing as best he might the outcries of the ever restless and noisy dogs.

An hour occupied in snail-like crawling, brought him to the wigwam of the chief. There was no sound issuing from within except the regular breathing of some one—one and not more. His quick ears did not deceive him as to that. Could it be possible that he had found the one he sought alone? If so fortune was indeed on his side. Gently he raised the bark covering, and peered within, but all was darkness, and he could discover nothing.

"Are you alone?" he asked, calling the mother of the Swallow by name.

There was no answer for a time. He could hear a slight rustling within, as if some one was rising, and repeated his question.

"Yes," was answered, but in so low a tone as scarcely to reach his ears.

"May I come in?"

"No."

"Where is the chief and the Swallow?"

"Gone!"

"Will they soon come back?"

"Yes."

"Then put your ear close to the side of the wigwam. I want to talk to you."

There was another movement within. The bark he had raised was put down, and the same cautious voice told him to "go on."

"Where is the trapper?"

"Gone."

"Up the lake?"

"Yes."

"Has he not got back?"

"No."

It appeared evident that the squaw was determined to answer only in monosyllables, and though it somewhat nettled him, yet he attributed it to her extreme caution, and continued:—

"Has the chief heard from him?"

"No."

"Has any one been asking for the pale face that went away with me?"

"No. Where is he?"

"Safe enough. He is not coming back again."

The form of the speaker within the wigwam trembled violently, and it was sometime before she could sufficiently command herself to ask:—

"Where has he gone?"

"Away with some of his people."

The very lie he had thought of and rejected, had been forced from his lips. Accident had decided for him what thought had failed in doing.

"Did he send any word to—to my daughter?"

"No."

"He loved her?"

"Yes, and had he not gone, would have made her his wife. Now she shall be mine; you know you promised me."

"Ye—yes."

"What does her father say?"

"Nothing."

"Do you think she will forget the pale face, and love me?"

"No!"

The answer was given with so much more energy than any had before, that it started the Indian.

"What makes you speak so strongly?" he asked.

"Because I hate you."

"What do I care? She shall be my wife."

"Which way did the pale face go?"

"Towards the Sault."

"Didn't you go to the copper rock?"

"No."

"But you started for it?"

"Yes, but he altered his mind. Are you certain the trapper has not got back?"

"Look and see."

"Have you spoken to the Swallow about my love?"

"Yes."

"And she will—you will make her become my wife?"

"When she forgets the pale face?"

"I'll soon make her do that."

"Will you?"

Again the form of the squaw trembled violently, and her hands rested upon the knife within her belt. It was a somewhat strange action for a friend, but she might have been thinking of the wrong done to her other daughter by one of white skin, and it was but a savage way of showing her hatred of all the race.

"You will tell her that her pale lover has gone never to return."

"Ye—yes."

Every time that subject was mentioned, her replies appeared to choke her. So difficult became her utterance, that the Indian could not but notice it.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked.

"Noth—Nothing. I was thinking of the pale face."

"He will never trouble you more."

"You—have—have murdered him!"

"No. I left him—that's all."

"Hist!"

The signal of warning recalled the Indian to the recollection of the danger of his situation, and with a request that she would meet him outside of the encampment in the morning, he stole away and again hid himself in the forest.

But if he had remained—if he could have looked within the wigwam, he would not have rested as calmly as he did. No sooner was he gone than her he had taken for the old squaw threw aside her wrappings, and the Swallow was revealed! She had known the voice of Shoon-ka-ska the moment he had spoken, and suspecting treachery, had cunningly forbidden him to enter the wigwam, and counterfeited her mother's voice. Very difficult was it, however, for her to com-

mand herself when he had spoken of Moncrief and of her being his wife. His wife! Dark as was the road of death, she determined to follow it rather than that the arms of the White Dog should ever press her to his heart or her lips be blasphemed by his kisses.

But what of the pale face who had won her love? She did not believe a single word of the story she had heard—but she did believe Moncrief had been basely murdered. In an instant all the cunning of her race awoke within her, and she resolved to be revenged, even if her own little hand was forced to do the bloody work. Ah! if she could only see either the trapper or her father then! But both were absent. She knew that they had started upon the trail, but had little idea which way they had gone. Her mother she could not trust—for mother though she was, had proved herself an enemy in her love matters. Hard as it was she could see nothing to do but to wait and watch the treacherous Indian, and he was to be her husband.

Very quickly these thoughts had flashed through her brain, and she had resolved upon her course. Then she lay down again, and when her mother returned from a night visit to a sick neighbor, she was apparently sleeping soundly. On her entering she arose, thought that it would be necessary for her to keep the visit of the Shoon-ka-ska a secret, and so determined to meet him herself, disguise her feelings, and learn if she could, more concerning the fate of him who was to her more than life. She was fast realizing what it was to become strong by suffering—learning what love would do and dare.

"Has your father returned?" questioned her mother, as she saw her making preparations to leave.

"No. I have not seen him."

"Where are you going?"

"Down to the lake to see if his canoe is coming."

"To look for your pale-faced lover," was the sneering reply.

"I have none. He has gone away."

"And you are watching for him to come back?"

"He will never come back!"

The sound of her own words, although they were used to deceive her mother, struck

a chill to her own heart. What if they should prove to be true? Then may the Good Spirit help her, for as she had once said, she would surely die.

Woman-like, she dressed herself in all of her savage finery—all but one thing. The ring Moncrief had forced upon her acceptance was safely hidden from sight—suspended from around her neck by a string of wampum, and resting above her heart. But all her other adornments were displayed to the best advantage, and satisfied that she could fully captivate the savage heart of Shoon-ka-ska, she went forth to meet him.

CHAPTER XV

SEARCHING IN VAIN.

THE long deliberation of the trapper and the chief was anything but satisfactory save in one respect, and that was the very one that was the most fatal to their hopes—the murder of Moncrief. Still the old man clung to the belief that if they hastened on they would be in time to save him, but the Indian shook his head sadly—he had every reason to believe that they would be too late.

"Whar shall we go, chief, fer er startin pint?" asked the Beaver, when they had finally settled upon following the trail.

"Shoon-ka-ska would not follow a straight one if he intended it should end in death," was the answer.

"He went down the lake, didn't he, this varmint?"

"Yes, but there are an hundred places where he could land, and no eye be the wiser."

"That's all true ernuff, but he must leave the canoe somewhar. We kin find that."

"Can my brother see in the water like the pike?"

"Of course I can't, and I don't know as I want ter nuther."

"Is he growing so old that he has forgotten his cunning?"

"O!" replied the Beaver with a low laugh,

"I see what yer er driving at now. Yer haint fergot ther time when I whar chased by the Sacs and filled my canoe with stones and sunk it and made them believe that I had gone down erlong with it. It war't er bad caper, and yer think that ther White Dog might do some sich thing?"

"He will hide his trail."

"More'n likely, but ef I don't find it I haint half as smart as ther anermile arter which I am named. We will go down ther lake anyhow, and see what we kin find."

Slowly they paddled along the shore and examined it inch by inch, and great was the joy of the old man when they came at length to the spot where they had landed for the last time, and the White Dog hidden his frail boat. Both the sand and the green mould showed where it had been taken from the water, and not long were they in finding where it had been secreted.

"Ther reptyle wasn't half so smart as we gin him credit fer," exclaimed the overjoyed old man; overjoyed, for he could not believe that any one who premeditated a foul crime would leave so open a trail. "It haint on-possible," he continued, "that we mought be mistaken arter all. Ther White Dog haint sich er fool as ter leave er trail as plain as er runnin' Carerboo, ef he had any raskality in his mind."

The Indian made no reply. His mind was still far from being at ease, and he knew that such a plan had frequently been resorted to in order to double upon the trail, and blind the eyes of all searchers. Until he had followed it unto the end, no opinion would pass his lips. He was very certain, however, that the joy of his companion was premature, and that before their search was ended it would turn into sorrow. Yet he willingly consented to press forward, and showed his rare wood training whenever any difficulty occurred, leading the way where an unskilled eye could have found nothing for a guide, without the slightest hesitation. The most minute disturbance of the moss upon the rocks, the recently broken branch, the turning of a stone was sufficient for him.

But at one point they rested longer and examined more closely than they had previously done. It was where Shoon-ka-ska

and Moncrief had camped together for the last time. The charred embers of the fire yet remained as they had been left; for, builded Indian fashion (that is with the sticks laid like the spokes of a wheel and the fire kindled where the hub would be, it soon expires unless some hand keeps moving them towards a common centre) it had died out for want of tending. Various other signs, also, revealed the not yet trodden out love of luxury of the white man, and the old trapper smilingly pointed to them and remarked:—

"That thar boy had orter have bin er woman! Yet he is jest as brave as kin be, and when he sits his foot down ter er thing, thar haint no more use of trvin' ter stir it than thar is of er mounting."

"The foot of the young Medicine has ventured too near the brink or—"

"That red devil of er White Dog has pushed him over!" exclaimed the trapper, noticing for the first time the spot where the Indian had hurled down the loosened stone, pretending to fall and dropped the compass. "Thar can't be er doubt on it, chief. Here's ther indentical spot whar he shoved him over and murdered him. May ther Lord forgive him, but I never will, ef he has killed ther boy," and unused as his eyes were to tears, they were now flooded.

"The pale face may have escaped," replied the Indian, anxious to comfort his companion, although he did not believe his own words.

"Escaped! He's crushed inter er thousand atoms! Thar haint no kind er manner of doubt of that. O! my poor boy! My poor boy."

"The tears of my brother may have blinded his eyes. Let us go below and look."

"And find his body all crushed and mangled and eaten by wolves, and picked by birds! Thunder! this am ther most sorrowful minnit of my life, and may I be forgiven for letting him come erlone. I had orter known better. And he has an old mother at home, and—"

"The Swallow had promised to be his wife."

"Wal, I thought as much, and now she'll have ter mourn for him all the rest of her days. It am sad fer her too, poor child."

Perhaps the chief felt as deeply as he did, the loss of Moncrief, but his heart gave no expression in words. It was his nature to keep violent emotions under control, and besides, the thought of vengeance was combatting with those of grief for mastery.

"Thar am ther print of his little feet," continued the Beaver. "They haint much longer than er child's. I kin see it all jest as plain as if I had bin here. He's bin er standing right on ther brink of ther precepice, and ther White Dog has shoved him off and ther rocks rolled arter him. He whar too cowardly ter tackle him when he would have had er chance fer his life."

Even while they were talking, the long howl of a wolf arose from the valley beneath. Their eyes met and they read each other's thoughts. They had frightened the beast away from its loathsome meal, and each seizing a stone, hurled it into the abyss to accelerate its movements, and save for burial the torn remnants of him they had once loved.

"Quick, chief," shouted the Beaver. "Quick! Let us git down jest as soon as we kin. Ther thought of what thar beast mought have bin er doin, has sent er cold chill creeping over me like ther ager."

Very far, however, was it from being a speedy task to arrive at the bottom of the deep and ragged ravine. By slow and winding and dangerous paths only, could they reach it without going back to a far greater distance than their patience would endure. Quick eyes, daring hearts and strong arms and limbs, at length accomplished the task, and panting with exertion they paused to regain their breath, before beginning their search—a search for that they did not wish to find! And find the corpse of Moncrief they did not. Look as carefully as they would, there was no trace of it.

"Ther wolves kin not have devoured bones and all," said the trapper mournfully. "Thar must be somethin' left. I've seen sich things before, but I ollers could find er scrap of clothin' ef nothin' more."

There was but one solution of the mystery to the mind of the chief, and he turned his eyes upwards. One falling from above might have lodged in a tree or caught upon

a far jutting point of rock. Whether this was the case or not, it required much time and severe labor to decide. But they were equal to the task, and after crawling half way up they found—not the body of Moncrief, but his little compass hanging uninjured upon a bush.

"It's all plain now," shouted the Beaver, as exultingly as he had before been sorrowful. "This ar thing am ther only one that has fallen arter all. We've bin big fools, chief, I'll bet my life ergain er bullet mould, that ef we'd er looked at ther onward trail, we'd have found ther prints of his moccasins."

And so it proved. The trail from the fire was as plain as any they had followed. The feet of both the white man and the Indian could be plainly distinguished, but as darkness had settled around they were forced to desist from their search, and re-arranging the dry sticks they camped upon the very spot where him they sought had spent his last night above the ground. Spent it with the white man mourning in more than his usual words at discomfiture, and the red man more than usually taciturn. To have gone on such a hard and foolish errand was a shame to the very name of hunters. A hearty supper and a long smoke, the knowledge that no one else was aware of their *faux pas*, somewhat comforted them, and again they could talk calmly of the object of their journey.

"How far am ther big rock of copper from here?" asked the Beaver, as he stretched himself at full length with his feet to the glowing coals.

"Two leagues," was the curt answer.

"And we had ter be er fooling erway our time and nearly killin' ourselves when we could jest as well have bin thar as not. Howsomever, it won't be many hours till ther morning. What kind of er trail am it, chief?"

"A child could find it."

"So much ther better. Then we won't be very long er gittin ther."

"The foot that is anxious travels fast."

"Yes, thar's truth in that ar. But didn't yer say yer darter and Pitt had er-greed ter git married."

"Yes," and the Indian briefly related all that the Swallow had told him.

"Wal, I thought as how it would be ther case, and—" He was going on to tell what a handsome couple they would make, and how glad he was of the engagement, when he suddenly recollected that the Indian had almost sworn to kill his child before she should become the wife of any pale face.

"What is the matter with my brother?" asked the chief, looking up in astonishment at the sudden cutting short of the sentence and the confused face of his companion.

"Nothin', nothin', I stopped ter think, that's all."

"What was he thinking of?"

"It war'nt of much account no way, and besides I'm gittin' too sleepy ter talk any more. I don't know when I've bin so tired. How do yer feel?"

"Well."

"So am I in body, but my mind is kinder restless-like when I think of what ther morrer may bring."

"Would my brother sleep dry?" suddenly asked the Indian.

"It haint of much ercount no way, but its er good rule ter take keer of yerself when yer kin. What makes yer ax sich er question?"

"Look," and his finger pointed to the sky.

"Blacker than er mink, haint it? Nary er glimpse of er moon or star ter be seen. Yer right. We're goingter have er regular old-fashioned deluge, and we mought jist as well be er takin keer of ourselves."

The large drops pattering upon the leaves quickened their movements, and a shelving rock, a few pieces of bark, and their blankets, were soon made to afford perfect protection. For hours the tempest raged furiously. The rain fell in torrents, the inky sky was fitfully illuminated by the lightning; the thunder fairly bellowed amid the mountain tops; great trees were twisted off as if they had been but slender reeds, and if ever the demons of storm were out upon a holiday it was on that night.

Morning followed, more beautiful for the freshening of nature, violent though it had been. The evergreens shook off their spicy

odors at every breath of the wind; the foliage was dripping and sparkling like emeralds; the little blossoms of that far northern Flora held a pearl-like drop in each petite cup, and the brooklets sang sweet songs as they ran gurgling down the mountain side.

What if a few trees had fallen splintered—the monarchs of an hundred years been laid prostrate? From amid the countless thousands they would no more be missed than a grain of sand from the seashore. Their ruin was but a wise provision of Him who rides amid the thunder and directs the lightning for his nomad children. The track of the whirlwind and the red bolts was their wood-yard. The elements had torn apart and broke into fragments the giant trunks that they had not the tools to cope with. The sun and the wind would dry, and their hands would gather them as they had need for their little fires. Then kind mother Nature that abhors barrenness as much as she does a vacuum, would cause the green mould to gather, the little blue-eyed violets to bloom, the trailing vines to creep over the ruins, and the sprouting second growth to cover with beauty the work of her hour of wrath. But a few years and other trees would appear where the dust of the old had fed the earth. Little birds sing and busy squirrels gather their winter stores from amid the branches, and no living eye be able to trace the wreck there had been before.

Up with the earliest bird, the trapper and the Indian could hardly control their impatience long enough to partake of the morning meal. But years of experience had taught them the lesson that it was best to eat while they had the means and opportunity. Such a conjunction of circumstances might not occur for hours—even days. A thousand things in such roving lives as they led, and especially when engaged as they now were, might prevent the satisfying of hunger. Best, therefore, was it for them to keep up their strength, and though they lingered not over their meal, yet there was no undue haste. That finished, they literally girded up their loins (for the sashes around them were tightly drawn, and would be more so from time to time if they were forced to fast) and took the forward trail.

Everywhere around them were plainly to be seen the marks of the storm, and as the old trapper stepped upon an open spot—the bald top of the hill, he paused and leaned upon his long rifle thoughtfully. A moment after he gave vent to the reverential emotions that underlaid his character and in a great measure controlled his actions, except when intense excitement made him forgetful for a time.

"Ther Good Lord," he said, "has bin erbroad in his wrath. Look, chief," and he pointed to rived and twisted trunks, the huge rocks torn from their resting places and hurled into the valleys, and the furrows ploughed by the water down the faces of the hills. "Yes, ther Good Lord has bin erbroad in His wrath and ther forests and ther hills have bowed unto Him. Ah! how very leetle is man when ther tempest is erwake. How feeble am his arm and how cowardly am his heart. He twists ther great trees inter wisps like straws, and crushes the hard rocks into powder. He leaveth his track upon ther land, and ther waves of ther lake bile inter foam berneath ther wind from his wings as he passes erlong."

Not either polite or correct his words, but they were the outpourings of a true heart, and never more fervent ones were ever uttered by the most eloquent lips beneath the groined and fretted roof of the money build-ed sanctuary. But he was not alone in his feelings of reverence and awe. The "Poor Indian," also, "saw God in clouds and heard Him in the wind," long before the pale faced and blue eyed Saxon came from trans-Atlantic climes. Yes, in fanciful imagery they talked of such things, for

"Poesy, agrestic maiden,
Wild-eyed, black haired, haunted here,
Singing of the Indian Arden,
Southwest of this mortal sphere;
Singing of the good Great Spirit,
Who is in and over all;
Singing sweetly every river,
Mountain, wood and waterfall."

"The Manitou was angry with his children," replied the chief, as his eye ran rapidly over the footprints of the storm. "Now he smiles again, and the black shadow has passed from his face."

"And why would'nt he be angry when His arth was stained with human blood, and

black wolves whar er roamin round devourin' innocent lambs? I hearn ther misernaries tell berfore now at ther Soo erbout ther world havin bin covered with water, and I only wonder ther flood don't come ergin and sweep all ther people erway, they er gettin so bad."

Whatever the opinion of the Indian might have been upon the subject—probably he had no very clear one—he failed to express it. He waited patiently until the fire in the eyes of the old trapper had somewhat faded, and then gently reminded him of the necessity of speed when upon a following trail.

"Yer right, Thunder, right," was the reply as he threw his rifle upon his shoulder after having first carefully examined it to see that it had not suffered from dampness. "We haint got no time ter loose, but I allers feel kinder sad-like when I see ther old trees fall. It reminds me that some day I must go like them."

To one educated in the woods the reflection was very natural. All of his comparisons were drawn from the scenes around him. It is the open volume of the living God that his eye ever rests upon. The tree is a symbol of what an atom he is, and he cannot but mournfully compare his end to its fall. Its crash is the iron knell that enters his soul. Like it, with its great arms crushed under it, he soon shall lie a lifeless corpse upon the ground. Ah! there is something sublimely beautiful in such thoughts, that we who pass our lives in cities know nothing of.

After the few moments thus given to looking up through Nature into Nature's God, they pressed forward at a rapid pace. The long lopes that red man and trapper used alike, soon made the two leagues dwindle into nothing.

"Am that ther big copper rock?" asked the Beaver, as they came within sight of it.

"It was placed there by the Great Spirit."

A careful examination satisfied them that the white man, Moncrief, had not been there, and they returned to the spot where the White Dog had camped for two nights after he had immured his victim. From signs that no other but trained eyes could have discovered, they decided that but one had rested there, and that was an Indian. But equally certain were they that his companion had

come as far as that point. What then could have become of him. Both eyes looked anxiously around for some rude grave, and both at the same moment saw the opening to the cavern. The heavy rain had washed away all the covering of dirt and apparently removed the stones. At all events there was nothing to conceal the entrance.

"Thar!" almost whispered the trapper, "thar is some kind of er devil's den whar er murderer could hide away more'n er hundred, I reckon."

"My brother is right."

"You know the cave well, then?"

"I have been in often."

"What kind of a place mought it be?"

"It is covered with the bones of warriors."

"Ugh! Suppose he should have put Pitt in thar and erlive! Come, let's go and see."

"Is the Beaver a bat?"

The trapper understood the hint, and assisted the chief to prepare torches. Then they entered and fully explored it. They found the little match box that had belonged to the missing man—his cap, and a portion of his dress, but that was all. That he had been there was certain. Had the wolves fattened upon him? There was a deep, well-like opening, that they had no means of fathoming. If his body was there it must rest until both the land and the sea should give up its dead.

Not a word was spoken by either tongue until they were again in the open air. The horrors of the cavern had fallen upon them too heavily for speech.

"Whar shall we go now, chief?" asked the trapper, when once more they stood in the sunlight.

"Home."

"What for?"

"Vengeance!" was the stern reply.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARISING FROM THE DEAD.

THE chief, Ah-ne-mee-kee, and the Indian Shoon-ka-ska were right, when they sup-

posed that the wolf-like form the old trapper had fired at upon the little island, was the witch woman, Sa-sa-nah. Right, also, were they all, in the opinion that the shot had hit the mark, for the bullet pierced the shoulder of the old woman, knocked her over, and for a time rendered her helpless. Had the trapper followed his impulse of going after the skin, all would have been discovered, but as he changed his mind it gave her time to recover from the shock, gather the proper remedies, and soon cure the evil to a great degree.

That accomplished, her crafty mind saw that she could increase the dread of her, and materially augment her power by being reported dead for a time, and then suddenly reappearing. So she removed a corpse from its birch coffin, put on it the copper ornaments she had been accustomed to wear, wrapped it in her wolf skin robes, and stole away like a shadow.

Chance had thrown her in the way of Moncrief, when a band of mischievous boys were hooting at her and driving her before them with sticks and stones. He had taken her part—rebuked them, and saved her not only from insult but injury, and made her, from that moment, a fast friend. There was another thing, also, that contributed to this end. Shoon-ka-ska had seen her fired at, fall, and had not come to her assistance, leaving her to die alone. That rankled in her breast, for she knew she had laid herself open to severe punishment for stealing the poisoned arrow from the lodge of the Medicine man, and for him to thus to desert her in the hour of need was more than she would tamely submit to. Out of her desire for revenge upon him, grew the love of the pale faced stranger, and she instantly resolved to be to him as a guardian angel, knowing that the Indian would never rest until he had accomplished his murder.

By means of eaves dropping and gossiping with those who were boon companions, and but little, if any, better than herself, she learned that the pale face would attempt to visit the copper rock, accompanied only by the Indian Shoon-ka-ska. Shrewdly guessing, from what had passed upon the island that the Swallow was betrothed to Moncrief,

she saw the additional motive there would be for putting him out of the way. To have warned either the trapper or the chief would have been to annul all the power she intended to acquire by means of her reported death, and so having bound the few that knew of her escape from the bullet of the trapper to secrecy, she turned her back upon the encampment, plunged into the woods and started for a point she thought they would be certain to pass.

And long and faithfully she watched, only to be disappointed at last. By accident, far more than intention, the White Dog had guided his companion around the opposite side of the hill from where she lay concealed. Convinced that such must be the case, Sasannah crept thither, and her very eyes flashed fire as she saw the trail and knew by the marks that they were hours ahead, and that their swift feet would travel at least with four-fold the rapidity her feeble ones could possibly do. For a moment only, she thought of turning back. What was the pale face to her? Did he not belong to the race that had ever been enemies of her own? Was he not going to try and secure and take away that which had ever been sacred by all the tribe? No, she would leave him to his fate. Then the recollection of his kindness to her, an unknown old woman, softened her heart, and she followed on with all possible dispatch.

Had they stopped to hunt along the way as was frequently done, the fable of the hare and the tortoise might have been reenacted. But it was not so. The Indian had his reasons for being in haste, and Moncrief was anxious to claim the rock by virtue of being the first white discoverer. So, had the trail been a circular one, they would have overtaken the old woman in the place of her overtaking them. With tortoise-like perseverance she crawled along, keeping up her strength by stimulating draughts, prepared from roots and herbs, until she reached the same spot that had been so carefully examined by the trapper and the chief. Here, too, she

* "This, Fathers, is the property of no one man. It belongs alike to all of us. It was put there by the Great Spirit and it is ours."—[Extract from speech of an Ontonagon chief to Gov. Cass and Col. T. L. McKenney, Commissioners, etc. A. D. 1826.]

paused and pondered, but either more cunning or more thoughtful than they, she did not idle her time and waste her strength by an investigation of the valley. On the contrary, she looked at once at the trail, and though forced to rest, was up and away long before the rising of the sun.

Knowing the locality fully as well as Shoonka-ska, her movements became very slow and careful as she reached the vicinity of the copper rock. It was the very morning that he was preparing for departure. By the fast coming light she could see him as he partook of his last meal, and so strong was vengeance in her heart, that she would have shot him dead if she had only been possessed of the necessary weapons. What had become of the pale face was a mystery. That he had come thus far there was not a shadow of a doubt, and if murdered, it must have been very near that spot. Yet, although consumed with impatience she could do nothing until the departure of the Indian, and begrudging him every mouthful that he swallowed, in fact, hoping that they would choke him, she kept her eyes fixed upon his every movement. Well she knew that

"Time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

At length he hid the weapon and glass he had obtained from Moncrief, and took the homeward trail. Still she stirred not for a long time. He might be watching as well as she, and her fate would be sealed if she was found upon his trail. Noon had come before she dared to stir. Then she ventured cautiously out, and all the experience of years of trickery was brought to bear upon ascertaining what had become of the pale face. She had tracked him without difficulty thus far, but here was a sudden ending of the trail. She examined every possible spot for concealment without avail, and though aware that there was a cave somewhere in that vicinity could find no clue to it, and as fully deceived as she had ever deceived others, she sat down to rest as the evening came on. Came on with the terrible storm of which the trapper had so feelingly spoken.

That storm was the accidental means of finding what she sought. The heavy rain gathered on the top of the hill, rolled down in torrents and swept away all the work of Shoonka-ska. It loosened the dirt around the heavy stones he had placed as a door, and they fell below. The fitful flashes lighted up the cavern within for a considerable distance, and to protect herself the drenched and chilly woman crawled thither. That accomplished a fire was the next thing in her thoughts. Flint and steel and punk she always carried with her, and it was brief work for one accustomed to such tasks, to gather dead branches and resinous barks. True, she had to go out again into the driving storm, but that was a matter of little moment. She could not be more wet than she was already.

The fuel prepared, it was soon kindled, and the red flames danced cheerily amid the blackness, sending volumes of smoke aloft, driving the birds with ill-omened screams from their nests. With a smile of comfort upon her face, seamed and crossed with countless wrinkles, the old woman sat down, kept piling on the wood, and rubbed her fingers in the blaze. Then she spread out her blanket to dry, and prepared herself for slumber. Around her were scattered the bones of the dead, but they had no terrors for her—they had been her companions for years. Two or three that interfered with her resting easily, she flung carelessly aside. Had it been otherwise, she would not have given herself that trouble. Familiarity with such things had robbed them of all their terrors, and without the least scruple she would have piled them upon the flames had it been in the slightest degree requisite for her comfort.

The heat aroused something besides the birds. There was one there nearly past the boundaries of life—one numbed with cold, starving and helpless—one who had breathed his latest prayer and to whom the angels were calling. An hour more, if indeed he could have lived so long, and the lips of Pitt Moncrief would have failed to utter the groan that now issued from them as the light and warmth penetrated to the spot where he was lying.

The woman heard it, started up and listen-

ed; but it was not repeated for a time and she communed with herself:—

"No bird makes a noise like that. It was not the cry of a beast except one in its last agonies. The dry bones cannot talk! May the Manitou save me, it must be —"

Another groan. She seized a blazing brand from the fire and rushed wildly about until she almost stumbled over the body of Moncrief, stretched upon the hard, damp stones. With the exertion of far more strength than one could have thought possible, she dragged him to the side of the fire, rubbed his hands and feet, and forcing open the set jaws, poured into them a little of the stimulating drink that had so sustained her. Food, too, she knew he must have, but how to procure any that would be suitable to his condition, would have been a puzzle to almost any one, especially when the storm was raging so violently without. The young of bats and owls might have been had in plenty. The simple reaching out of the hand, or at most the throwing of a stick or stone at the nests above would have secured them. In a state of hunger she would not have hesitated to have eaten them, but she knew that the stomach of the pale face would revolt against them if well, and must be far more delicate now. Another and yet another draught of her favorite beverage given, and she drew ready-made snares from her pouch, and defying wind and rain, went forth to set them. The same kind Providence that had thus far watched over the poor sufferer, soon guided a young rabbit into one of them, and before its little heart had done palpitating from fright, she had seized it, carried it in triumph to the cave, dressed it, and was squeezing the warm blood from the half cooked flesh into the now more easily opened mouth.

But nature never suddenly reacts after so long prostration. Strength can only be gained by time and careful nursing, and it was near midnight before the pale face could be said to be fairly out of the hands of death. Slowly, very slowly she had fed him. Slowly, but constantly, keeping up the friction of the extremities without intermission. Then as the stars began to wink dreamingly, and the dawn was stepping forth grey hooded from

the clouds she saw that he was able to sit up and even whisper lowly.

"Don't talk, my son," she said kindly, "wait until you get stronger. Do you think you will soon be able to walk a little way at a time? No, you are not strong enough."

"What for?" he asked faintly.

"Have you forgotten Shoon-ka-ska?"

"No. Where is he?"

"Gone, but he might return at any moment."

"Is that the reason why you want me to go?"

"Yes. If he should come back he would kill us both."

"Let me try."

She assisted him to rise and stand upon his feet. They felt like mountains, the blood had remained so long stagnant. Like a little child learning to walk he tottered and would have fallen, had she not caught him and gently eased him to the floor again.

"No, I cannot walk. At least not yet. Sit down and tell me how you found me. It seems an age since I first was left alone in the darkness. O! it was horrible!"

"Not now. Some other time. We must leave the cave and hide away somewhere until you get your strength. Then will I tell you all. But if the White Dog should return, then—"

"Give me my rifle and I'll—O! I remember now, although my brain is yet whirling. Indeed I have been very near to death."

"The white winged Manitou of life and the black one of the grave, fought long and hard for the soul of the pale face. Had not the Good Spirit guided the moccasins of Sa-sa-nah hither, the battle would soon have been ended. He sent the floods to open the door and the bright lightning to show her the way."

"Then I was walled in?"

"As cunningly and as strongly as the hand of man could do it;" and she explained briefly how the waters had washed away the earth and torn the stones from their resting places.

"It is as I thought. Tell me of the trapper. Where is he?"

"Gone up the lake."

"And the chief?"

"At home waiting for the return of the Beaver."

"And the Swallow."

First though she was in his thoughts and heart, yet she had been the last questioned of. His love and modesty kept him from uttering her name before a stranger until forced to do so.

"Mourning for the pale face. If he should not return soon her mother will force her to wed Shoon-ka-ska."

"Great heaven! She dare not."

"As sure as the sun rises she will."

"Give me another drink."

The simple thought of the Swallow—the one he loved and who loved him so well, being torn from him and compelled to be the wife of him who had trapped him to death, forced the hot blood to run through his veins with a swifter current than anything else could have done. It was the triumph of mind over matter. Although the new born energy might be short lived, yet it assisted materially in carrying out the plans of the old squaw, and almost without her help he dragged himself to the mouth of his prison house and looked once more at the glorious light of the sun and breathed the sweet, pure air.

"This way, my son."

Compelling him to lean upon her shoulder and furnishing him with a stout staff, she piloted the way around the foot of the hill, until they were completely out of sight of any one on the other side. Then she bade him sit down and rest him in a clump of bushes and returned and covered up, or otherwise completely obliterated, their footprints.

There was but little use in giving the advice she had, for if his life had been the stake, his limbs would have carried him no farther. Yet short as was the distance, it would have been far better if they had failed of support before, for scarcely had they disappeared before the old trapper and the chief were coming down the hill in plain view of the opening to the cave. One little twentieth of an hour only separated him from those who would have given their heart's blood to have saved him from any farther suffering, and had

travelled fast and far to prevent, if possible, any danger coming to him. In this as in the great majority of the affairs of life how fully is proved the value of minutes.

Yet he was with one who would take care of him as far as her limited means would permit. She might not be able to save him by rifle or knife, but the cunning of the fox is often of more avail than the courage of the lion, and perchance he would be the safest in her hands until his strength had returned, and his mind resumed its normal condition.

Anxious to be as far as possible away from the scene of his late suffering, and at the same time lessen the distance between him and the object of his affections, Moncrief struggled on during the day as far as was possible, or rather as far as the Indian woman would permit him to go. The miles they accomplished were very few, but had his foot-steps kept pace with his desire, the wigwams of the Ojibwas would have found him in their midst long before the going down of the sun. As it was they rested on the bank of a little tributary of a river that debouched its waters into the lake, not many miles to the southward of the Michipicoten. Ordinarily, except during the spring and fall freshets, one might have crossed it dry shod. Now it was swollen so that a deeply laden canoe would easily have floated.

On its bank and protected from sight, the old squaw erected a little shelter and floored it with green branches and soft grass, so as to make it comfortable. Willingly, for the labor of the day had been intense to him, Moncrief threw himself down, and even while his guide and nurse was preparing supper, and steeping some febrifugal plants he fell asleep. But it was far from being a healthy slumber, and on waking, his first thought was of the little case of medicine he was accustomed to carry with him, and great was his sorrow when he found that it was gone. To the skill of the squaw, therefore, he must trust entirely. Well, however, he knew that his journeying was done for a time. He had gone far beyond his strength, and nature was revenging herself for being abused.

"I can go no farther," he said sadly, as Sa-sa-nah brought him the herb tea, and

compelled him to swallow it, hot and bitter as it was.

"You will be better to-morrow," she replied consolingly.

"Very doubtful."

"The Great Spirit has not brought you thus far to allow you to die in the woods."

"But I cannot walk. O! if we had a canoe."

There was something like a smile for a single instant upon the face of his attendant, and a quick lighting up of the eye, but she made no reply. Very soon she brought him more tea, and a very minute quantity of some (to him) strange kind of soup, and after he had eaten and drank, she covered him up and closely tucked him in her blanket, builded a fire so that it would reflect upon him and left him, to pass through the great cure-all of the red man—sweating. Understanding her object and that the latest draughts he had swallowed were a decoction of the plant usually known as "boneset or thoroughwort" (*Empatorium*) he remained as passive as possible, sleeping at intervals, and rising refreshed and greatly relieved from pain.

As for the squaw, she slept not. During every moment of the night, she was busy constructing a raft, and as soon as he was ready in the morning, she assisted him on board, screened him with thick branches, and taking her place at the stern, guided the little structure, with the swift current for a propelling power. The second morning (for they had travelled as well during the dark as the light hours) brought them in view of the lake. Here she gained the shore, cut the bark lashing of her rude vessel, and allowed the logs to drift out.

"Where are we going now?" asked Moncrief, astonished at the wonderful sagacity that made her destroy the means of their sailing so far, for fear some eye would rest upon it and be curious to learn for what purpose it had been constructed.

"Where no one would ever think of seeking for you, even if they knew you were alive. Follow me."

By signs only known to herself, she guided him into the middle of a gigantic wood-fall, until she came (after creeping for many

yards) to where a half a dozen huge trees had lodged in falling. These had remained living, (for the roots were only partially torn up) and were covered not only with their own verdure but parasite vines, forming underneath a wigwam sufficiently large to have sheltered half of the branch of the tribe to which she belonged. It was evident that it was not her first visit there, for everything to make one comfortable was at hand. In fact it was very near the cave to which she had taken the White Dog.

"In the name of goodness," asked Moncrief, throwing himself upon a pile of skins to which she pointed, "how did you find this place. A man might live here years without being discovered."

Pleased by his opinion, she showed him where a little, cool spring trickled along underground, concealed only by a stone, and a *cache*, where a store of provisions was hid.

"It is a charming place for a summer resort," he continued, "if only thatched, so that the rain would not come in."

"It is," was the curt answer.

"But in the winter time you would freeze without fire."

Again her explanation was by actions. She walked to the largest of the trees that framed the enclosure, and carefully removing the bark from the inner side, showed him that it was hollow, and had before been used as a chimney.

"I understand. It is hollow to the top. But the smoke? Would that not be seen?"

"Dry wood makes a thin smoke. It is soon lost in the air. The eye cannot discover it. The red man is too cunning to use any other. But rest now. As soon as I have prepared food and drink, I must take the trail again."

"And I?"

"Must remain until I come back."

"When will that be?"

"Two suns."

"Two days! Where are you going?"

"You will learn when I come back."

"And I must not venture from here?"

"Are you afraid to stay?"

"No."

"The beasts may howl around in the night time, but none can get within, after

the door is closed," and she again showed him how Indian cunning had aided nature in making the place safe.

"I care nothing about them. I have never been afraid yet of anything in the woods, except serpents."

She looked at him a moment, as if astonished that a man should be afraid of the things she toyed with, and then replied:—

"They will keep farther away from here than they would from a circle of fire."

"I do not understand why."

"Do you not see that I have planted ash saplings thickly around?"

"Well?"

"No snake was ever yet seen where one grew."

The trapper, indeed any backwoodsman, could have explained to him that her words were true. Could have told him that they had often enclosed a serpent in the leaves of the ash, leaving but one outlet, where they builded a fire, and that it had crawled through the flames! The fact is too well known to admit of argument, and hunters stuff their moccasins full of the leaves when in a dangerous locality—even more, they carry those of a peculiar species with them, to cure the bite. But while the white man doubted it, he had no inclination to say ought against it. His mind was filled with matters of far more importance.

"I am to remain here until you come back?" he asked again.

"Yes. Rest, sleep and drink of this tea. It will drive away fever and take all the pains from your bones."

"I will not forget. Are you going where my friends are?"

"I am going where the Great Spirit leads," was the anything but explanatory answer, and after a few more instructions she crept outside and disappeared.

Very long seemed the hours to Moncrief, although he knew that he was doing the best possible thing for his recovery. But he attended to her advice and strove to kill time by fanciful dreamings of how happy he would yet be with the Indian girl.

And thus the two days dragged themselves along, and the third morning came when he was aroused from his slumbers by some one

knocking at the door of his wild wood home, and a voice calling his name. He was very glad to have even the companionship of the old squaw, and hastened to admit her.

"I am glad you have come. I was very lonely," he began, but looking more closely he exclaimed, "Thank heaven," and folded the intruder to his heart, covering her lips with kisses.

It was not the old squaw, but the Swallow!

CHAPTER XVII.

COUNTERFEIT LOVE.

ALTHOUGH the Swallow had appointed no particular place to meet Shoon-ka-ska, she had no fears but that he would be upon the watch, and so as soon as she had got out of sight of the encampment, turned at once into the bushes and began singing one of the familiar love songs of the nation. Reaching a point not too far distant from the wigwam to be heard in case he attempted any violence, she sat down and waited his coming, but with her heart filled with anything but affection for him. In truth her mind was preoccupied with thoughts of the pale face. Intent upon that, she failed to notice a pair of fiery eyes that were watching her from the underbrush. All the rest of the form was hidden. The White Dog fancied and rightly that this would be the spot her mother would choose for a meeting, and hours before had prepared himself to watch her, hoping to learn something that might be of use to him.

In that he was mistaken. Save the love song she had trilled while on her way thither, no word passed her lips; and though her fingers toyed with the ring that was hidden beneath her dress, it was never drawn forth to the light and pressed to her lips, as it had been hundreds of times when alone or when the darkness rendered it safe for her to do so. That had been her object when her fingers first sought its warm resting place, and she had almost withdrawn it when she recollected

that she might not be without a watcher, and she contented herself with pressing it more closely to her heart, slipping her finger within the golden circle and breathing a prayer for him who had placed it there.

Tired of playing the spy without any hope of profit, the Indian at length threw aside his coverings and sprang up directly in front of the girl.

"The Swallow did not expect to see me here," he said. "She was not thinking of me."

"Of course I was not," she replied. "How should I? I thought you was far away with the pale face."

"I have just returned."

"Where is he?"

"Gone."

To use a familiar expression, she was determined to "throw dust in his eyes," and so choked down her feelings and replied:—

"It is well."

"Then you are glad that he has gone? I thought you loved him, and had promised to be his wife?"

"So I fooled you as well as him!"

"You have not me. I heard and saw all that passed upon the island the evening I came to tell you of your mother's being there."

"You thought I did not know it! Do you think that I am blind?"

The Indian was puzzled by the coolness of the answer, and still more by the way she flashed her eyes upon him. The difficulties and dangers he had braved to possess her, had rendered her far more dear than he had ever conceived she could be, and the love-light that shone upon her face had a strange power over him.

"Then you do not love the pale face?" he asked.

"How can you ask such a question?"

"But you promised to be his wife?"

"I could not get away else. You saw that I often tried to do so."

"Yes—but—"

"You had forgotten what reasons my father, mother and I have, for hating all his race."

"Your sister loved one, and why might not you?"

"Because she did so love and was betrayed, is the reason why I hate them!"

"Is your tongue travelling the trail of truth?" he asked, fixing his eyes upon her face as if he would follow the subtle workings of the brain.

"As the crow flies," she answered, meeting his gaze with the most wonderful fortitude.

"Why then did you let him take you in his arms and kiss you?"

"Why does the warrior walk backwards when he is upon a dangerous trail?"

"To deceive the enemy."

"And may not a woman play as cunningly? If she would leave a blind trail may she not double upon it like a hare? Shoon-ka-ska has not studied her heart. His ways have been those of the eagle, and not of the dove."

"To whose wigwam will the moccasins of Shaw-Shaw be turned?"

"She has none but that of her father."

"And if he should be called to the spirit land?"

"She will have to live alone like old Sa-sa-nah."

"Sa-sa-nah! What do you know of her?" he asked in alarm, fearful that he had been mistaken in supposing her dead, and that she had revealed their secrets.

"My father and—" She had nearly betrayed herself by adding "the trapper" whom she had said (when playing the part of her mother) had not returned from up the lake. "My father saw her lying dead among the dead upon the island."

It was his turn to appear ignorant, for how was he to know that she had been shot.

"Yes. Do you not remember that the Beaver fired at a wolf there?"

"Was that Sa-sa-nah? O! I remember that I have seen her going around dressed in skins."

"It was her. She had been dead for days."

The girl believed that she was telling the truth and so did the Indian. Neither had any knowledge of her having escaped. Both the chief and the old trapper had been deceived in the matter, and all the proof in the world other than that of their own eye sight

would not have convinced them to the contrary. But the Swallow had little feeling upon the subject. It was an old woman gone—that was all. With her companion it was a source of exceeding joy. Such testimony effectually quieted the doubts that had sometimes floated through his mind. He was safe now, and all that was connected with the poisoned arrow buried with her. The dead whispered no secrets.

"Are there not wigwams open for the Swallow," he asked, continuing the conversation from the point where it had been broken off.

"She has not looked."

"Is there no heart empty among the braves of the Ojibwas?"

"How should she know?"

"Has she thought of no one?"

"No. Whose?"

Had she been a trained coquette she could not have used her eyes with more effect. Their soft light appeared intensified—to possess a magnetic power. They drew him to a seat by her side and chained him there. They fettered the tongue that had never faltered before—they made tremulous the nerves that had been like iron. Strange how a simple girl can make a strong man grow weak. A few weeks previous she would have been unable to have coped with him, but now she loved and was a woman!

"Shaw-Shaw knows," he said falteringly, "that she is the most beautiful of all in the tribe."

"So the pale face told me," she answered with a puzzling smile.

"Then for once his tongue was not forked. All the others are sun-burned compared to her. They are like black clouds—she the one that the moon is shining through."

"The pale face said that there were many among the girls of his people that were not as fair. Then his tongue did sometimes travel a trail that was not crooked?"

"It was to tempt the Swallow to her ruin. It was her that had forgotten the fate of her sister."

Alas! she had far too much reason to remember it, for it was ever rising between her and the one she loved. It was the cause of her father's opposition—warning and

almost curse; it was the black thunder-freighted sky that might at any moment vomit forth destroying lightnings. The rapt devotion of her heart could blind her for a time, but there were moments of reflection when unbidden and unwelcome tears would start as memory conjured up a spectral face—the face of a dead sister—dead in all her youthful hope and beauty, by the treachery of a white man.

"She never forgets the one that has gone," she replied, bowing her head until the black hair hung like emblematic willows over the tomb of departed hopes.

"Then she will not believe the words of the pale face."

"Has she said that she did? Shoon-ka-ska told her that his tongue was not crooked. Has he looked at his heart?"

"It is blacker than the starless sky. But we will not talk of him. Has no brave laid gifts at the door of the wigwam of the Swallow?"

"None."

"Would she take them in if he did?"

"How can she tell?"

"Have the eyes of no one told her that she was dearer to him than even beaver skins or scalps? and he endeavored to throw into his own the feeling he described."

"No one brave of the tribe," and she looked up at him as innocently as if she had never known what love was. She told but the truth. No one of her nation had thus talked to her, but she said nothing of one of another skin and bright eyes and curling hair.

"Then let the ear of the Swallow be open."

"They are not closed. She can hear the sweet singing of the little birds and the far away music of the waters."

"Shoon-ka-ska loves her."

"Loves me!"

She knew that it was coming, and yet with all her preparation could not keep from starting. It brought very vividly back to her mind the time when another had whispered the same sweet words—and where was he now? For an instant she was overcome by her conflicting feelings, but she felt the importance of retaining her self-command—

the necessity of learning if possible what had become of Moncrief; and sweeping her long hair as if by accident over her eyes, so as to free them of tears, continued:—

"Shoon-ka-ska is making light of the heart of the Swallow."

"No. The very day she went away with her father he was going to ask her to come to his wigwam and be his wife."

"She is very young."

"Her mother has given her to him."

"But she has never thought of him except as—a friend."

It was very hard for her to use the word when she meant "enemy."

"He will be very kind and good to her."

"She will think of him."

"And will be his wife."

"Let him fill his wigwam with furs and meat, and when the leaves fall come and ask her again."

Vainly he endeavored to obtain some more definite answer, though he had not expected to receive one even so promising. He put his arms around her and attempted to draw her closer to him, even to kiss her, but she started proudly away.

"My lips are for my husband," she said.

"And you gave them freely to the pale face!"

"To blind his eyes. Where has he gone?"

"How should I know?"

"You *do* know. Shoon-ka-ska would win the Swallow and yet would have secrets from her. It is thus he would treat his wife?"

"No, but—"

"If she cannot trust him now when could she?"

"She said she did not care for the pale face?"

"But she is a woman and likes to know what has become of one who pretended to love her."

"He will tell her when she is his wife."

She changed her tactics in a moment. She threw one arm around his brawny neck, rested her head upon his shoulder, and looked up so lovingly in his eyes that he found it difficult to resist her entreaties.

"Come," she whispered, "show the Swallow."

low the scalp of the pale face. Let her have the soft hair to fringe in his leggins. The daughter of a chief of the Ojibwas loves one whose tomahawk is red with the blood of the pale face."

"Shoon-ka-ska has no scalp."

"Then he was a coward!" and she tore herself away from him and her black eyes flashed with apparent scorn. "A coward!"

"He is brave as any one in the tribe."

"It is false. He pretends to love the Swallow, and yet let a pale face who had insulted her—had come between them, escape without revenge. Hereafter he will not be called Shoon-ka-ska but Shangodà-ya—coward!"

"He has not escaped," answered the Indian, moodily.

"Then where is he? Tell me that her he loves may be proud of him."

"He is—dead!"

"Dead!"

With the greatest difficulty she repressed a cry of sorrow. Dead? The word blotted out every star from her sky in an instant.

"Dead—and—and you killed him?"

"I did—Hist!"

The cracking of the dry brush under the heavy step of a man, startled both in an instant.

"I will see the Swallow to-night," whispered the Indian, and darted into the bushes. The girl, however, remained. She had nothing to fear. In an instant after the old trapper was by her side.

"So I have found yer at last," he said. "I have bin er looking arter yer fer er long time fer I have got something ter tell yer."

"Of the pale face?" she asked excitedly.

"Yes, and I don't know how ter tell it nuther. But here haint ther place. Jest come erlong with me."

Leading the way they journeyed through the forest. The old man was satisfied that she would follow him. The mention of Moncrief would be a charm sufficient for that. Very much, consequently, was he surprised when he turned around and saw that he was alone. Where and when she had disappeared he could not determine, and grumbling aloud he returned to the wigwam of the chief.

"Thar's no more dependence to be placed

on one of these ar gals," he said, "than thar is on er weasel. They jest slip through yer fingers and yer can't tell whar they ar gone ter. Wal, I 'spose she'll turn up ergin all right."

Had he but known that she had been suddenly arrested by the old witch woman, who stepped from behind a tree, and that after a few whispered words she had fled with her, he would have been still more puzzled. But so it was, and a few hours after they were knocking at the door of the gigantic wigwam where Moncrief was concealed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONSPIRACY.

FOR some reason, the old Medicine man of the tribe had taken a great dislike to the trapper. His open expressions of disbelief of what he asserted to be the revelations of the spirits, and his scoffing at what he fain would have had him believed to be miraculous, had tended much to that end. Perhaps he was jealous of his power, for the advice of the Beaver had many times been followed, although directly opposite to his own. Of late this feeling had increased. The moment he saw him in the capacity of a guide to the pale face—saw him going with them, and showing the spots where copper was to be found, he became an inveterate enemy, and was waiting impatiently for some means to work his ruin.

This came far sooner than he expected. When the White Dog had stolen away into the bushes, he saw the trapper arrive and the Swallow go with him. Farther than that, he knew nothing. He had failed to follow to the point where the old squaw lured her away. Satisfied that she would return with the evening, he waited. Waited and watched until he at length fell asleep, to be awakened by some one stumbling over him, and starting to his feet he found himself face to face with the Medicine. From him he learned that the Swallow had been missing since

morning, and the entire encampment was in a state of alarm on account thereof.

"What does the Beaver say?" asked the White Dog, prompted by the same black devil that heretofore swayed his actions.

"He does not know where she has gone."

"Pretends he don't."

"Pretends? What does my son mean?"

"That he does know. He has carried her off to join her pale faced lover."

"How do you know?"

"I saw them together in the forest this morning."

"And she has not been seen since? It looks very dark."

"The Beaver has even laughed at the Medicine."

"And the young pale face pretended to be one."

Here was ample data from which to work, and the White Dog was not very slow in convincing his companion that the old trapper was guilty of abduction. That point settled, they talked long and earnestly, and the result was that they returned together to the wigwams. But the White Dog would never have dared to do so had he not learned that the chief was again very ill. The rapid march, the exposure and fatigue he had endured while searching for Moncrief, had caused a return of the illness of the island, and from which he had never fully recovered. As the Medicine man stated, he was beyond the power of exercising any authority—in fact helpless, and they could work without any fear of him.

Boldly, therefore, Shoon-ka-ska walked to where the other chiefs and warriors were assembled, took his place in the circle, smoked the proffered pipe and waited to be questioned of his absence.

"Where has our brother been?" was asked, after the usual silence, by the acting head of the nation.

"To pilot the pale face."

"Did he show him the copper rock?"

"Is Shoon-ka-ska a fool?"

"Where did he go?"

"He wandered along the lake until a party of the pale faces came along. Then the one he was with went with them."

"It is well. Has he seen anything of the Swallow?"

"He has."

"Does he know where she is?"

"He does."

"The ears of his brother, are unlocked. Let him tell them."

"The Beaver has stolen her."

There was a visible emotion among the group at the answer, for the great majority respected and looked up to the old man. The Indian pretended not to notice it, and related briefly the meeting of the trapper and the girl, and hinted that she had not been seen since, and consequently that he had carried her away.

"What could he want of her?" was asked.

"To take her to the pale Medicine?"

"Could he not come after himself?"

"Are my brothers blind as the bat? He pretended to go away and paid the Beaver to bring her to him. Is it not as plain as the sun at noonday?"

To them it did appear so. One pale face would of course assist another. Though the trapper had been reared among them, had he not severed the tie and gone to live with those of a white skin? What but treachery could they expect of a pale face? Yes, it must be so, and willingly they assented to the proposal of the White Dog, (seconded by the Medicine) to send for the Beaver and put him to the proof.

The old man was seated by the side of the sick chief, and vainly trying to soothe him, for his mind was wandering to the early days when he was accustomed to follow the bloody trail of war. Fully occupied in this, he was startled when a messenger came and demanded his instant presence at the council fire.

"I can't go," was the bluff answer. "Don't yer see that I am tendin' on the chief?"

"The Beaver must go."

"I tell you that I shan't do no sich er thing. Do you think that I am er heathen and goin to let ther Thunder die?"

This reluctance was remembered and used against him afterwards as a certain sign of guilt.

"Then the warriors will come after him."

"What kin they want of me?"

"He has ears and will hear."

"Wal," he turned and addressed the wife of Ah-ne-mee-kee, "Wal, yer'll have ter take keer of yer husband ther best yer kin ontill I come back ergin. I don't see what ther fools kin be arter wantin'."

A true daughter of Eve was the mother of the Swallow, and as curious as the trapper to learn what the unexpected summons could mean. The moment he and the messenger was out of sight she called in a neighbor, and crept noiselessly to the vicinity of the council of warriors. Shoon-ka-ska saw her, and not wishing to meet the keen eye of the trapper until it was necessary to do so, stole to her side and they conversed in guarded whispers. In her he knew he had a firm friend, and it gave new courage to his heart to play the treacherous part he had undertaken.

"What do you want of me?" asked the trapper, as he stalked without ceremony into the midst of the circle, and looked savagely around. "It must be somethin' most mighty important when yer take me erway from the side of the chief, and he jest as sick as kin be."

"Where is the Swallow?" was asked in reply.

"Ther Swallow? How should I know? You had better ax her mother, or somebody that's got something ter do with her."

"The snows of many winters have lodged in the hair of the Beaver. His tongue should have learned to travel as straight as the honey laden bee."

"And so it does. I haint never om given ter tellin' lies, and I haint er goin ter begin now. Ef yer want ter find out anything that I know, jest speak out plump and plain. I never like ter have anybody er beating er round ther bush with me."

"Where has the Beaver taken the daughter of Ah-ne-mee-kee?"

"Taken her? Wal, that am er pooty question ter be axin. Taken ther Swaller? I haint taken her no whar's."

"Where is the pale Medercine?"

"That's jest what I'd like ter know."

"Did ther Beaver not take the Swallow to join him?"

"I haint seed her or him neither."

"Was he not in the company of the girl this morning?"

"Wal, come ter think of it I war, and now I remember too that I have heard that she hadn't bin home all day. Yes, it am er fact that I saw her this very mornin'."

"Where did you take her to?"

"No whar. She took herself away from me in ther most mysterious manner," and he proceeded to relate *seriatim* all the incidents of their meeting and parting. But he saw that he was not believed and added, "ef any body has got er different story ter tell, he had better speak out, that's all I've got ter say."

"Both the Great Medercine and I saw them together and heard him coaxing her to go away with him," said the White Dog, stepping boldly in front of the old man.

"Liar!" and he raised his arm as if he would fell him to the ground. He saw, however, the folly of such an outburst of temper, and calming himself, continued:—"Here is one that kin tell all erbout ther pale Medercine, as ybu call him. Jest ask him."

"He is no more to us than the wind that blows through the tree tops. But if the Beaver would know, he has gone away with his people."

"I don't beleave er single word of it. My mind am this, and I haint erfeared ter speak it out nuther. The White Dog has murdered him."

"It matters not. He was an enemy of the Ojibwas. If he has gone to the spirit land it is well. What has Shoon-ka-ska to say of the Beaver and the daughter of Ah-ne-mee-kee?"

"The years of the Great Medercine are many and he is wise. Shoon-ka-ska is young," and he withdrew with apparent modesty for the old trickster to speak.

The joint production of the Medicine and the White Dog was a clever story, and nothing was lost in the telling of it. By that account both had seen the trapper and the girl together in the forest, had seen him take her in a canoe and paddle rapidly and cautiously away, and that he had returned alone late in the afternoon.

"Wal, I whar out on ther lake this arter-

noon and didn't git back ontill nigh erbout sundown, but I whar all erlone," said the trapper, as if talking to himself.

That was an admission little expected, and the Medicine somewhat enlarged upon his theme. The telling was perfectly straight forward. There was not the slightest hesitancy. Its effect to was increased by the mother of the missing girl. At a sign from the White Dog she rushed forward and loudly demanded her child.

"Ah-ne-mee-kee is dying," she screamed rather than uttered.

"The pale face stole away one child. Now he has taken another. Give me, oh! give me back my daughter," and she threw herself at the feet of the Beaver, and raised her hands imploringly.

"Silence!" was thundered from every tongue.

To have a woman thus dare to obtrude upon the council was a thing almost unheard of, and she was put out without an opportunity to utter another word. Both she and the Indian who had arranged the episode, well knew that this would be the case, but they knew, also, that her presence could not be without effect and having gained their point were content to offer no resistance. Still the White Dog riveted the feeling by adding in a sorrowful voice:—

"The heart of the mother mourns for her lost child. She asks for justice. Her husband is traveling the dark road that leads to the grave. She has no one to speak for her now. Shall she ask in vain of her brothers for her daughter?"

"Justice?" blurted out the trapper, unable longer to restrain his tongue. "Justice? ef you had it you'd be er swingin' ter ther highest tree."

"Does the Beaver deny still that he has stolen away the child of the red man?" was asked.

"Ter be sure I do. Every word that yer've heard has bin lies, except what I told yer erbout seein' her in the timber, and erbout my bein' out in ther canoe. But I whar erlone. remember."

"If he speaks the truth he would have come willingly when he was sent for. Only the guilty have to be forced."

"So I would, ef it hadn't er bin fer their chief's bein' sick. That's what kept me and nothin' else. Jest wait ontill ther chief gets better and see what he'll say."

"And give the young Medicine time to carry away the girl beyond the reach of the tribe," craftily suggested Shoon-ka-ska.

"My brother speaks well," replied the leading spirit of the council. "If the Beaver would save his life he must bring back the Swallow."

"So it's my life yer arter, am it?" answered the trapper, beginning to somewhat understand the matter, and seeing that it was a conspiracy to get him out of the way while Ah-ne-mee-kee was unable to assist him. "So yer want my blood? Wal, the tree am old, and it don't matter very much when it falls, but look out it don't crush some on yer when it does go down."

It was no braggart boast, and they knew it. Although he was only armed with his knife, yet one blow from his powerful arm would be certain death. This the White Dog realized, and knowing that he would be the first victim to the righteous vengeance of the trapper as well as to appear disinterested answered:—

"The warriors of the Ojibwas thirst not for the blood of the Beaver. He has been one of them. They love him. If he has forgotten that love in a stronger one for the pale face, let him but bring back the Swallow and all will be forgotten and forgiven."

"I don't want ter talk ter any sich reptyles as ye are. You want ter git me out on ther way, no matter how yer cover up yer tracks and I know it. I wont fergit ther blind trail yer sent me on in er hurry."

"The Beaver is angry," continued the crafty Indian, addressing those of his own race. "When he is cool he will not talk thus."

"I haint ergoin ter talk onymore onyhow. I've told yer all I know, and am ergoin ter go back and take keer of ther chief, that's jest what I am. He's er white-hearted Injun, and that's more than I kin say of most of yer."

"The Beaver must stay," said the leader in words of authority.

"Must!" replied the old man with a

scornful laugh. "Must?" Wal, I rayther like that, must? I jest like ter see anyone that will ertempt ter stop my goin'."

A dozen of the bravest arose and stepped in front of him, but without even drawing his knife he dashed them aside, and marched straight to the side of the sick man. But like cowardly wolves they gathered noiselessly around the wigwam (opened for air) and like the same cowardly beasts springing upon a wounded buffalo, they threw themselves upon him, and by sheer weight bore him backwards, held him down and pinioned him beyond the possibility of escape.

"Who laughs now?" hissed the White Dog in his ears.

"Go erway sarpent!" replied the old man, "you think you've got me tight now, but my turn will come some day."

"Let us take him away, brothers, he will disturb the chief."

The suggestion was adopted and the prisoner lifted up and carried to the prison wigwam, there to remain until his fate was determined upon. What that would be it needed no prophet to foretell with such enemies around him as Shoon-ka-ska, the Medicine and the mother of the Swallow, who in reality believed that he had stolen her child, and taken her away to join her white lover.

"Wal," communed the trapper with himself as soon as he had been thrown upon the floor of the wigwam, the curtains been tightly drawn, and he left alone, "Wal, I can't rightly see but one way that this ar thing ar ergoin' ter end and that will be by killin' me. It haint dyin' that I am erfeared on, for I've bin face ter face with it often and never so much as flinched, but what galls me is ter die for sich er black-hearted rascal as that ar White Dog. Howsomever, ef I only knowed that Pitt whar safely out'er his clutches, I'd be content. But I mustn't think erbout dyin' jest yet. I must find out erbout ther boy, and ef he has bin murdered, as I fear, I reckon I shall have er little job of revenge on my own hands. No, no, I've bin in many er tight place before, and I haint ergoin' ter gin up now, ontill I am obliged ter," and he settled into serious thought of some means of freedom.

This was easy enough to dream of, but very hard to be accomplished. He was bound hand and foot, with all the cunning and strength of those long accustomed to such business. The deer skin thongs would cut into the flesh if he exerted himself to part them, but the iron fetters of the white man would not hold him more securely. Even if it should be possible for him to gain the use of his limbs, of what would it avail him? The lodge in which he was confined was in the centre of all the others, and it was a full half mile to the nearest timber or water. There were guards chosen for the express purpose of listening to his every movement without, and the thousand and one eyes of the entire tribe would be upon the watch that he did not escape. Turn which way he would, he could not see a single ray of hope, and yet he never thought of giving way to despair.

Denied a light, and without even the dim glimmer of moon or star piercing the heavy skin and mat covering, he could not see if there was anything that would aid him. It was an idle fancy that he might find a knife, hatchet or sharp edged stone, he could turn to account. Idle, because he had no means of using them. Still he stretched himself at full length upon the ground, and groped blindly around with his fettered hands, almost holding his breath and listening between every movement. But his search was in vain. A full hour was occupied in this anything but a pleasant task, and then he sank down with a heavy sigh and resolved to save his strength until morning.

"Ef ther good Lord wills that I am ter die," he murmured, "I only hope that he will fergive all my sins and take keer of Pitt. He's too young and to good ter die." Then his thoughts changed and he continued:—"I do wonder what kin have become of ther Swallow. I almost reckon that she's got some kind of er trail and gone ter him. But ef that's ther case he must be erlive. I wish I whar sartin of it. Ef she whar only here and ther chief well, he'd soon find out ther truth. But I'm erfeared he's e'enermost got ter ther end of ther life trail, and who knows but we may travel ther dark road

tergether? Wal, I haint got no wife or child ter mourn for me when I am gone and—Who are you?"

The sudden flashing in of a fire light showed that the curtains had been opened, and some one had entered.

"A friend to the Beaver," was answered in a low and disguised voice.

"What do yer want?"

"Would the pale face save his life?"

"Ter be sure I would. Any fool would do that. What do yer want ter know fer?"

"Then tell me where the Swallow is, and I will untie you and guide you to a place of safety."

"Ef I were sartin of that I might—Whar ar all ther guards?"

"I have bribed them to leave."

"No body watching?"

"Not a single eye. Tell me what I want to know, and you shall be free."

"Come nearer. We mought erwaken some one ef we talked so loud. I want ter whisper in yer ears."

"What do you want to tell me?"

"You seem like er kind-hearted sort of er man, and I want ter tell yer—"

"Erbout the Swallow?"

"Yes, erbout her and whar yer kin find er good lot of furs and traps and some money, in case I should be killed. They'll be of no use ter me, and you mought as well have them as any one. You know that I haint trapped so many years for nothin', and that I haint had no one ter give em to except now and then er poor old squaw."

It was a tempting bait—he intended it should be—and he had the reputation of being "well to do," for he had never squandered the money he had received for his industry in either "fire water," or riotous living, as was the custom with the great majority of those who followed his calling.

The Indian caught at it greedily, and drawing near knelt down and prepared to listen.

"Come a little nearer," urged the old man.

"I can hear."

"You act jest as if yer whar erfeared, and me laying here tied hand and foot. Wal, I kin holler it out so that ther hull tribe kin

hear, and dervide ther spiles with yer, ef that's what yer want."

That it was not what he wanted was evident, for the visitor immediately crept nearer and bent down so that his face almost touched that of the trapper. Whatever had been his motive in coming, it was certain that avarice was then the passion that had strongest sway over his heart.

"Let the pale face speak, and softly as the wind that blows from the south in the summer time," he whispered, forgetting for the moment to disguise his voice as he had hitherto done.

That was enough for the prisoner. He was convinced of the truth he had hitherto but suspected, and reaching up he grasped the throat of the Indian and drew him down to him. Though his wrists were tied, yet his hands were at liberty, and retained their immense muscular power.

"I know you, traitor! Thar haint no White Dog livin' that kin play that possum, game with an old trapper more'n once, and now yer've got yer neck in er trap, all yer've got ter der, is jest ter die as quietly as yer kin, and so—"

The struggles of Shoon-ka-ska as he strove to tear himself away from the vice-like grasp cut the speech of the old man short. Had he been free, the end of the Indian would have been swift and sudden. As it was, the contest was unequal, and in a moment he was flung back and the White Dog was kneeling upon his breast with his knife raised in one hand, while the fingers of the other were tearing the short hunting shirt from above his heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRANGE REVELATIONS.

No one but lovers who had dreamed each other dead, and were thus suddenly brought together, can realize the raptures of the Swallow and Pitt Moncrief on again clasping each other to their heart, and feeling their lips burning with kisses. It was a mo-

ment that amply repaid them for all they had suffered—one that is more like our dreams of heaven than anything else in the world.

Beckoned to follow the old woman, even while she was journeying with the trapper, (who was now suffering imprisonment, and with a death of torture in prospect) she had wonderingly turned aside. Wonderingly and with an exclamation of horror upon her lips, that was only checked by the whisper of the old squaw.

"Sa-sa-nah no ghost. The fire weapon of the Beaver did not kill."

"But he—my father, both saw you lying dead."

"They thought they did. Come," and she rapidly drew her within the cover of the bushes, and explained the reason of her coming.

On their forced journey the Swallow had learned much of what her white lover had suffered—much, and yet under the circumstances how little that appeared.

Drawing her to a seat, Moncrief sought to calm her agitation, for she clung to him, sobbing and looking anxiously around, as if even then they would be separated.

"You are safe here," he whispered, lavishing his kisses upon her upturned lips. "Safe, my dear Swallow, and what makes you tremble so?"

"I was thinking of Shoon-ka-ska," she replied with trembling accents.

"Where is he?"

"I don't know. Prowling about the camp like a wolf."

"Two can play at that game," growled the old woman, who was busy preparing some food.

Her words were either unheard or unnoticed, for Moncrief continued:—

"It is a terrible account he will have to settle with me when we meet again."

"Don't go near him! Oh! don't go near him. He will kill you—kill you!"

"Little fear of that, now I know him. Besides, the trapper will be upon the watch."

"And so must I," again growled the old squaw, who was evidently *de trop*, as all third parties are with lovers.

"But you do not know—know what a

bad, black heart he has," still urged the girl, her fears for Moncrief being the one absorbing passion of her heart.

"I know enough, and shall go boldly into the encampment and charge him with his treachery before all the tribe."

"It will do no good. You are a pale face."

"But your father will not dare to deny me justice?"

"My father—"

The ever fatal advice and warning he had at the outset given her, and his exclamation when she had confessed her love, arose before her like a mountain.

"Why do you stop?"

"My father—"

"Must and shall consent to our marriage and so protect us: To do that he must punish him who would have torn us apart, and—"

"Murdered you!"

It was useless for him to attempt to convince her of the safety of the plan he proposed to follow. She had but the one argument of woman—love, and that cared little for reason. The old witch woman, however, settled the matter.

"The pale face must not go," she said, "Sa-sa-nah must. He must stay until she comes back. Then she can show him and the Swallow the trail of safety. Now both would follow a trail as blind as that of the mole."

"And you will go and return to us?" he asked, not sorry to be unmolested for a time in his wooing.

"I will go. Eat."

She placed food before them, took her seat near, and satisfied herself as fully and as quietly as if there were neither lovers or murderers in the world. That done, and without answering a single question as to what her purpose was, she stole softly away, leaving them to their enjoyment. With a frame that appeared to be composed of steel springs and whalebone rather than of the elements of humanity, she dashed along until she neared the encampment of the tribe. Then she drew from a secret hiding place a disguise such as she had been accustomed to wear, and robing herself in it, crept noiselessly forward.

The natural avarice of her nature led her first to inspect the wigwam of Shoon-ka-ska. To reach it she was passing very near to the one in which the old trapper was confined, when hearing a strange noise she stopped and listened. Well was it for the prisoner that she did so. In another moment the knife of the red assassin would have been buried in his heart. She heard the voice of but one, and yet instantly comprehending that something wrong was going on, seized a stone and hurled it through the covering.

Quick as thought all was silent as the grave, and a dark form crept swiftly away, passing so near to the disguised and couchant woman, that she could have touched him. She knew that he saw her as plainly as she did him, but she also knew that he took her for the beast she had counterfeited, and had no time just then to bestow even a passing kick upon a dog. And so she followed him at a safe distance, and saw him enter the very wigwam she had at first designed searching.

"Shoon-ka-ska would murder the Beaver," she muttered between her clenched teeth and tightly compressed lips, "but what could he have done that he should be confined in the prison wigwam?"

This was a point that puzzled her far more than the fact that he had come so near his death by the hands of the Indian. For the latter she could see reason enough, but the former was something far beyond her powers of understanding. It was a labyrinth to which she had not the slightest clue. From infancy he had been protected by the entire tribe—in fact, had been as one of them. Why then should they, at this late day, turn against him? Honest as the sun she knew him to be, and where was the chief, Ah-nemee-kee, with whom he had ever been hand and glove, that he did not protect him? Thus one question rose upon another, difficult of solution, and whatever she would learn must be done quickly.

First she turned her attention to the prisoner.

Creeping back to the wigwam where he was confined, she assumed the gait of and snuffed around like a dog, even thrusting aside the covering and looking within. With her eyes

accustomed to the darkness she was soon able to determine that he was securely bound. In this her ears as well as her eyes assisted her, for he was talking to himself after his usual custom, when at all excited.

"Ther good Lord be thanked for savin' my life from that bloody-hearted Injun, but I can't see how it whar done. Somethin' came er crashin' through ther side of ther wigwam jest as I whar er sayin' my last prayer. I wonder what it could have bin? Thar whar no one keepin' guard without, that's fer sartin, er he wouldn't have dared ter try and murder me. It's most mighty curious too that I should be here for carryin off the Swallow, when I haint no more knowledge of her than er child unborn. And ther chief, too, must be took sick jest when I wanted his help more'n I ever did that of er mortal man. Hello! Wha's that ar er snuffin round? Er dorg, as I live. Wal I never heard of any of them tryin ter eat up er live human, but thar's no tellin' what they mought do, fer they ar more'n half starved all ther blessed time. Er fool fer luck, er poor man fer children, and er Injun fer dorgs, is er mighty true sayin', so fer as ther Injun am concerned anyhow."

The old man paused, whistled and called without effect. The animal was deaf to all persuasion.

"I never saw er dorg before that I couldn't call jest when I had er mind ter. Git out!" and he resumed his soliloquy.

"I 'spect I shall have ter die onyhow, but it won't be ther fust innercent man that has bin killed. Wal, ef I only knowed whar Pitt was, I'd be far more contented than I am. Thar's that brute ergin! I hearn Pitt tellin' one night erbout somebody, 'Sop I think he called him, who told a story, though that wharn't ther name he gin it, erbout er little mouse that bit off ther meshes of er net so er great big lion crawled out and run away. I wish this ar dorg would do the same by me; but no, no, luck's ergin me this time, and die I must, but it shall be like er brave man and not er very bad one nuther;" and with this resolution and little morsels of self praise, he relapsed again into a silence that was soon followed by heavy slumber.

From him Sa-sa-nah had learned all that she wished to know, excepting something more

deffinate about the illness of Ah-ne-mee-kee. To attempt anything farther might betray her before she was ready to have it known that she was still an inhabitant of earth, and not of the land of spirits. It was perfectly in her power to have freed the trapper, and had it not been for the chance shot at her while creeping among the graves, would have done so. That rankled far more in her heart than the bullet had done in her flesh. A very little thing had made her the friend of Pitt Moncrief, and one almost as small had made her the enemy of the trapper. Her mind was of too narrow a compass to contain two generous emotions at the same time, although it would a dozen of revenge.

So the old man was left to his fate. She had and would save the young pale faced Medicine, but the old catcher of beaver might suffer from torture, from knife, hatchet and fire, and she would not raise even a finger to ease his sufferings. Settling these things to her satisfaction, she hastened back again to the wigwam in the track of the whirlwind, and surprised the lovers by her sudden entrance.

"O! Sa-sa-nah!" exclaimed the Swallow, springing from the arms of her lover, and blushing far deeper than ever did the heart of a forest rose.

"The Swallow has not missed her of the white locks," was the reply of the old woman, with a sly laugh. "She has had no time to think of the one who saved the life of the young Medicine."

"Indeed, my good friend, we have talked much about you," said Moncrief, coming to the rescue of the girl. "Come, sit down, rest and eat. Then you can tell us all that we wish to know."

The varied requests complied with, and what was of more pleasure than all the rest, the offer of a well filled pipe, the squaw muffled herself in her blanket, and awaited their questioning.

"Did you see anything of the trapper?" asked Moncrief, taking the initiatory.

"I didn't look for him," was the evasive answer.

"Nor hear anything?"

"I was among the wigwams at night. All were sleeping."

"And the White Dog?"

"Was in his wigwam."

"Then he is back again?"

"Did not the Swallow tell you?"

"That he was near but not in their midst."

"He is there now."

"What is he doing?"

"He was sleeping."

"And the chief—the father of my darling?"

"The sum of his life is very fast going down behind the western hills."

"My father! Oh! may the Manitou save him. My father dying!" exclaimed the girl with clasped hands and tearful eyes.

"The fever fiends that were driven away by the young Medicine, have returned again, and are clutching his heart with their icy fingers."

"I feared that it would be so," answered Moncrief sadly, "and wish I could be with him again. It might not yet be too late."

"Let us go. O! let us go," answered the Swallow, forgetting in her earliest love the later one that had blossomed, and was bearing ripe fruit in her heart.

"Yes, let us go and at once," and the white man began to make preparations for departure.

"You could not save him. He is either in the spirit land or his moccasins are upon the backward trail," replied the old squaw.

"But we cannot remain here when he is ill."

"Then you go alone. Listen to me. Pale face, for your kindness I have done that which gold would not have tempted me to do. I have forgiven the injuries of your race, and even brought you one of my own to gladden your heart when I should have cursed you."

"I never injured you."

"Others—one at least of as white a skin, as soft curls and as bright eyes, did. It is long, very long ago and,—but let me not think of it. It would turn the brain that is far from being steady now. When I remember how he was my young love—how he ran away and left me—how I followed him—how my child died—how—"

"May the great Spirit have mercy! You

are not, cannot be—" exclaimed the Swallow.

"I am your own—only sister!" and she clasped her hands over her ears, as if to shut out all other sounds, and ran wildly out into the forest.

Like two who had suddenly been struck dumb, the lovers sat and gazed after her for a time. Then Moncrief took the icy hands of the Swallow within his own and whispered:—

"Darling, this must not part us."

"My sister!" was the only whispered response.

"And she has given you to me. It appears as if she was an instrument in the hand of heaven to cement our love."

"I know not. I cannot think."

"And I must think for you," answered a deep voice, and turning their heads, they saw standing before them, a woman who was a stranger.

"Who are you, and what is your purpose?" demanded Pitt Moncrief fiercely, as he threw a protecting arm around the Swallow.

"The one who has saved your life, and will still continue to do so."

"Sa-sa-nah?" asked both in a breath.

"Yes, her, and yet not her. I have deceived you, as I have done my own father and mother, the chiefs, and the tribe, for years. Sit down and listen."

Her face had been washed from paint—her hair still glorious in its length, had been released from beneath the cap of wolf skin—her form was unbowed, and her eyes flashed with all the fire of a full score of years previously. All of disguise was wanting.

"When I left home," she continued, as soon as their exclamations of surprise had ceased, "When I left home to follow my husband, for he was so in the eyes of the Good Spirit, and found him not, I sat down within a great city with my dead baby in my arms, and prayed that I, too, might go to the happy hunting grounds. But I could not—did not die. What I suffered—what I did—how long I stayed, it matters not. My heart longed for the green forest and the bright lake, and one night I came within

sight of the wigwams of my father. I dared not go farther. Old Sa-sa-nah had been very kind to me, and I sought and found her. She was dying—did die, but lived long enough to teach me many things. I closed her eyes and buried her—painted myself to look like her—took her dress, and have lived her life."

"Why did you not come back to father and me?" asked the Swallow, who had crept up to her side and was gently pressing her hand.

"It was my purpose to do so. In my disguise I stole to his wigwam and heard him curse me—then I shut both loves out of my heart forever."

"Still you have been very kind to me," said Pitt.

"Have I?" was answered with a forced laugh—the habitual one of the witch woman.

"Certainly."

"But I did not mean to be, I gave the poisoned arrow to Shoon-ka-ska, and told him where he could find you. I used your love for the—for my sister, to make him angry and jealous."

"You?"

"Yes, I; and yet I travelled miles upon miles afterwards, to save you."

"You did? Explain."

"I learned that you was a Medicine. I looked at you when you did me a kindness—I heard your name—I knew that your father was also a Medicine—"

"He was, and was—"

"Very kind to me, and—and—my poor little baby," and she darted from the wigwam as before.

"May the Great Manitou be thanked," said the Swallow in an impressive whisper. "Your father was kind to the—to my sister, and she has saved your life."

"Yes," replied Moncrief, reverently, "yes, the hand of God was in it."

"And in every thing!" responded his benefactor, entering at the moment again fully disguised, and with her customary wild manner and assumed voice.

Vain, however, were all their efforts to get her to renew the conversation or to go home with them.

"It is time to sleep," was her only answer, and wrapping herself fully in her blanket, she turned her moccasins to the fire.

"She has more than earned the right to rest," said Monerief in a low voice.

For a time they conversed, as who would not, upon the strange page in their history that had been opened to them, and then the birds, had they looked from their nests above, would have seen then, also, dreaming golden dreams, the arm of the pale face around the Indian girl, and his breast her pillow.

CHAPTER XX.

LIFE AND DEATH.

WITH the rising of the sun, the council fires of the Ojibwas was lighted again, a strong post strongly driven into the vacant space in front of the prison wigwam, and the old trapper aroused from his slumber, placed against it and firmly bound. Then and there his doom was to be decided, and executed. Of what it would be, the preparations told, without the mock ceremonies of pipe smoking, cabalistic mummeries of the Medicine Man, inflammatory speeches of the White Dog, or wailing of the false-hearted mother of the Swallow. One who was a stranger to the customs of the Indians might have still falsely dreamed of hope. But the trapper knew better, for though he had never taken a part in any such diabolical outrages upon the name of justice, yet he had often been forced to be a witness of them in his younger days. Yet even if he had dared to think that his long association with them—his being a child of their adoption would procure him mercy, the blackened faces would have instantly convinced him that such a thing was not to be.

"Yer haint even goin' ter give me er chance fer life?" he exclaimed, after he had fully nerved himself to bear whatever might come, and yet determined not to throw away a single chance for life.

"Let the Beaver tell where he has hidden

the Swallow, and his red brothers will listen to his words. Until then they can see him no more than they can the wind that whispers in their ears," replied the Medicine.

"I can't tell what I don't know."

"The pale faces have ever wronged the daughters of the red man."

"Ef yer mean that fer me, it's false."

"So sings the cuckoo when it throws the little birds from the nest, and they starve upon the ground."

"Thar's no denyin' that I know what yer mean by that, fer I should lie ef I did. Why don't yer speak up like men and say that I have not only wronged but murdered her arterwards. That's what yer tryin' to insinuate onyhow."

"The Beaver was alone with her in the forest, and—"

"So I'd jest like ter be with you, and have my hands free fer erbout five minutes."

"That they will never be again. They are stained with the blood of a daughter of the chief."

To be thus openly charged not only with having committed a great wrong but to have attempted to conceal it by murder, and that of one he loved so well as the Swallow, struck far more deeply to the soul of the trapper than all the terrors of death had done. It was not the punishment but the shame he feared, and for a moment it crushed him beyond the power of speech. This was looked upon as a sign of guilt, and the Medicine continued tauntingly:—

"The Beaver has forgotten his cunning. His trail is as open and broad as that of a pale man's fire canoe. The little boy hunters can find the way to where he has builded his dam. Why does he not answer?"

"Ahem!"

"The red man loved him well, and now he has repaid them with wrong and bloodshed."

"You say so, but that don't make it."

"And you have not denied it."

"I did in the very beginnin' of ther matter, and have all erlong. But it haint no manner of use, for ther long and short of it am, that yer detarmined ter kill me, and all I kin say wont alter ther matter one grain."

There was so much of truth in the charge, that for a moment they were as completely



silenced as he had been. But might with them was right. They were thirsting for blood, and the devilish spirit of the White Dog was urging them on, and the (supposed to be) childless mother ringing her cries in their ears. The Medicine soon aroused himself and continued:—

"It is ever thus that the pale faces whine like sick papooses when they see death even afar off. No one but cowards talk thus."

"Coward!" thundered the old man, straining at his bonds until the blood circled in dark rings beneath them.

"His red brothers had thought him brave. He is not. He is a squaw, and afraid to die."

"Me erfeared ter die? Me erfeared ter die! Thar isn't er livin soul ermong yer but what knows ther words ar er lie. I thought when yer charged me with murder that yer couldn't say anything worse, but this am ten times as bad. Er coward and erfeared ter die!" and his iron frame trembled with the terrible anger that boiled up from his heart, his hands were clenched and his eyes filled with tears.

Call such a man anything but that name and you may be forgiven—that never. It is to him more than even honor among business men—it is his entire stock in trade. Every hour of his life is a continued disregard of danger. He wins his name for bravery by hand to hand encounters with the wild beasts of the forest, prairie and mountain, and the scarcely less savage Indian. He dares all things *alone*. Very seldom has he any companion, and then only one. He is brave to recklessness, and next to the deer and the buffalo, leaves behind him the trail that civilization will follow, carve out new states, make the wilderness like the rose, teach the mountain cones of Oregon to echo with the music of the church going bell, and "Sacramento's golden gate to swing open to the song," of thanksgiving and of prayer. What! call such men cowards? Why,

"They knew no dread of danger,
When rose the Indian's yell;
Right gallantly they struggled,
Right gallantly they fell;
From Alleghany's summit,
To the farthest western shore,
These brave men's bones are lying
Where they perished in their gore.
Their bones were left to whiten
The spot where they were slain,
And were ye now to seek them,
They would be sought in vain.

Their very names are dying,
Unconsecrate by fame,
In oblivion they slumber,
Our glory and our shame!"

Little, however, did the breast of the red man know of such feelings. To him the white one was *and ever will be*, despite all treaties and annual payments—simply enemies. With one accord they took up the cry of the Medicine, and croaked like so many ravens:—

"Coward! *Shangoda-ya!* Coward!"

"Howl on yer bloody wolves!" answered the old trapper, "If yer think yer kin scare me with yer screechin, just keep at it until yer tired, that's all."

"The pale face is singing his death song."

"Wal, it shant be er croakin one anyhow."

The farce of a trial had been carried far enough to please even those who pretended to shield themselves behind the scales of justice, and the cry for blood was struggling upon their lips for utterance.

"Once more," demanded the Medicine, as he filled the great calumet of the tribe with tobacco and Ken-ne-ken-ick, preparatory to the last smoke before the doom was spoken, "once more, will the Beaver tell us what he has done with the Swallow?"

"Nothing! So help me heaven, nothing," and his eyes were raised on high to that heaven, from which help alone could come. In view of that other and better world upon whose confines his feet were trembling, his anger dwindled into nothingness, and natural awe and reverence took its place.

This answer was deemed final. In solemn and ominous silence the chiefs seated themselves in a circle around the fire, the huge pipe was passed from hand to hand, clouds of smoke were blown from each pair of nostrils into the air, and then the predetermined sentence was given:—

"Death by the knife, the arrow, the tomahawk and the fire."

Such a compilation of torture was enough to shake even the stoutest heart, and for a moment that of the trapper trembled and grew faint. Well he knew what the words imported, simple as they were. He had seen them tested before, and knew how little it was in human nature to bear up even if one could have exclaimed with gallant Sir Walter

Raleigh, "this is a sharp medicine, but a sure remedy for all evils."

First the youths of the tribe would amuse themselves shooting with blunt headed arrows and dull knives, so that no injury could be inflicted by their inexperience. The object was not to hit, but to see how near they could come without doing so, and with the very refinement of savage torture, all parts of the victim were bound beyond the possibility of moving, except the head. That was left free so as to tell whether he flinched or not, as the weapons were shot or hurled in close proximity. Boasted civilization has never yet invented a more complete test of courage than this. To keep the head from the slightest quivering when an ill directed arrow or knife would pierce the eye, requires nerves of iron and a heart of adamant. There is nothing amid the clashing of steel, the rattling of musketry and the thunder of cannon that can compare with it.

Towering above all stood the trapper, with his broad shoulders thrown backwards, and his deep chest forward like a bulwark. His long, muscular arms, were pinioned to his sides. His head was uncovered, and the hair of "silvered sable," blown back save a few locks that hung down and mingled with his beard. His lips were slightly compressed; his eyes more sparkling and black than usual even under the most intense excitement, and his entire appearance like one who might be slaughtered like an ox in the shambles, but without a single groan escaping from his lips.

True, both heart and pulse beat more rapidly than they had ever done before. He would not have been human had it been otherwise—a statue and not a man. True it was, also, that his ear was strangely alive to every sound, and his eye strained to the utmost watching for relief that he could have no hope of, save from heaven.

A touch of scorn now and then curled his lips as some shot flew very wide of the mark, and an exclamation of disgust escaped him.

"Why don't yer set yer old and blind squaws ter throwin' things? Er bat could see sich er big mark as I am in ther brightest sunshine thar ever was. Better let me run ther

gauntlet, and have ther little papooses slap at me with their little hands!"

There could be no more bitter taunt to an Indian than this, and they felt it to the very core. A dozen hands grasped knife and tomahawk, and it required all the efforts of the Medicine man to still the tumult and save his life from instant vengeance. But there was another outcry that was not so easily quieted. An hundred voices clamored for the ordeal of the gauntlet. This was particularly the case with the young men, boys and old women, who were excluded from taking part in the other tortures. There each would have an opportunity to wound him in some manner, as he ran through the double line.

The old trapper knew that he would arouse such a feeling when he cunningly threw out the suggestion. He knew, also, that once free, his immense strength would enable him to burst through as easily as the moose tosses the wolf from his way, with his mighty horns, when they would bar his passage, drive him over a precipice and feed, free from danger, on his mangled remains.

But others were aware of the same thing, though the lesser lights had not experience or craft enough to look so far forward, yet the elders and the Medicine man had, and they forced silence. The "ignoble rabble" driven back grumbling and discontented, the order for the warriors to take the place of the youngsters was given, and the actual torture began.

Knives and hatchets were showered thick as hail around, many cutting the firm flesh and leaving terrible wounds. Not deep enough to bring death, save by the constant leakage of blood, but yet rapidly wasting alike to the strength and courage.

"Fire away!" shouted the old man, falling into the custom of his tormentors, when placed in such a situation and talking braggingly, although the strain upon his nerves was terrible, and the effort to keep his head from involuntary motion was swelling his neck cords almost beyond the power of endurance. "Fire away! Ef I couldn't shoot straiter than that when I whar ten years old, I'd have sold myself for a coon skin, taken in the summer time. Fire away, and then

go and tell yer squaws thar's er man stood before yer bigger nor er ox, and yer couldn't help hittin' him. Better let ther boys take yer place ergin. They kin shoot straighter nor any of yer!"

The taunting speech was near his death knell. Outraged beyond measure, and still fearful that something might occur to set him free, Shoon-ka-ska snatched a heavy tomahawk from his belt, measured the distance carefully, and hurled it with all his strength. The aim was true, and the blow terrible. The head of the heavy weapon struck full in the broad forehead—had it been the edge, it would have cut through the skull like paper—and the trapper quivered for a moment, his head dropped like lead upon his breast, and had it not been for his bonds he would have fallen to the ground.

A cry of baffled vengeance rang through the entire encampment. They thought themselves robbed of the brutal exhibition of farther torture, and were not satisfied that one jot or tittle should be omitted. Had it been so there would have been another victim required to satisfy their fiendish passions, and that would have been Shoon-ka-ska. But the wild burst of savage fury operated upon the old trapper like cool water to one fainting. It caused his strong nature to almost instantly relax. His knees became firm again under him—his breast heaved with a mighty emotion, his head was raised firmly upon the stalwart neck, and he was all the strong, determined, defiant man again. A red, purpling spot alone told of the blow. His face had lost something of its usual flush, but his unshorn lips were bitter in their scorn, and his tongue worse than the waters of the Dead Sea.

"There's er specermin of er warrior fer yer! Look at the White Dog! See what yer think of him. Him er brave! A dog ter ther very heart's core! Er sick squaw would make him run. He's ther man that gits behind bushes and shoots at men with er pisened—"

"Silence!" thundered Shoon-ka-ska, fearing that another word would be his ruin.

"Thank heaven, yer haven't got my tongue tied up ef yer have my hands and

feet. I say that he shot ther young pale faced Medicine with—"

"Set the torture of fire—"

"Er pisened arrer, and—"

"Tear his tongue from his mouth."

"I speak ther truth. Ther Swaller and ther chief know—"

His voice was completely lost in the babel of confusion that followed. All were shouting for faggots, and bark, and fire, and scores of willing hands gathered and piled them around him breast-high. He saw that he was wasting his strength uselessly—saw the White Dog dancing in triumph at a little distance—saw him as he rushed forward torch in hand, and then turned his thoughts beyond the dark river.

"May the good Lord forgive them," he murmured to himself. "They are acting ercording to thar best lights, and ef I had allers lived ermong them, I shouldn't have been any better."

"Who triumphs now?" was hissed in his ears.

"You, White Dog. I'm going ter ther happy land of ther Great Spirit, I hope, but you—"

"Where is the Swallow?"

"Ask yer own black heart, sarpint."

"She lives, and she will be my wife."

"Liar!"

"The white Medicine, I killed—starved him to death in a cave, and—"

"God fergive yer. Go erway—go erway. Yer make me think black thoughts."

"You shall burn by inches," and he commanded those around to remove the faggots, and re-arrange them so that they would simply roast, not consume him.

"Thar whar er little prayer that I've hearn ther good missionaris say down at ther Sault, that I wish I could think of now," communed the trapper with himself. "It bergins somethin' erbout 'Our Father,' and thar's somethin' erbout 'heaven,' and 'fergivin' our sins,' and—but I disremember all ther rest. Perhaps ther Good Lord knows what I mean, and will fergive me, tu."

"FIRE!"

The terrible word burst upon his ears, even while, good old man that he was, try-

ing in his rude, unlettered way to lay his sins at the foot of the cross, and beg of the bright-winged angels to swing open wide the golden gates for his soul to enter.

"FIRE!"

Like demons at the bidding of their master, the Indians rushed forward to light the funereal pyre. The smoke curled up in little wreaths at first—then the flames shot forth spiteful tongues of lurid glare—then the smoke grew stronger, more dense, and rolled in inky clouds aloft, staining the golden lightness of the sun—then there was a swirling, crackling, rushing sound, and the trapper was enveloped in one sheet of living flame!

But death could not come to him suddenly. The skill with which the resinous bark and wood had been piled, prevented that. It would be a death of lingering torture.

"May the great and good Lord forgive them—me—and, and—" was heard even above the roar of the flames, and the giant form of Ahmeek, the Beaver, was seen to totter like the oak of many centuries' growth, when the axe of the woodsman has reached its heart, reel and then fall backwards. Backwards into the sea of flame and forest of living coals?

Not so! a dozen strong hands had torn away the faggots from behind him, and on the opposite side from where the White Dog was standing, cut the bonds and carried the old man to safety. This, the wall of smoke and fire concealed, and even while Shoon-ka-ska was straining his lungs with the cry of victory, he saw the almost ghost of the chief, Ah-ne-mee-kee, start as if from the ground before him!

"Traitor! Murderer! Seize him!" was all he heard, before he was powerless in the grasp of many warriors.

But other shades arose as if from the grave, to confront and appal him. There in a triangle stood:—

PITT MONCRIEF!

THE WITCH WOMAN! THE SWALLOW!

He saw all at a glance—knew that he was betrayed, and with a howl of despair, and a mighty effort of strength burst from those who held him, snatched a knife from his belt, and rushed upon Moncrief.

The Swallow saw it, and threw herself before her lover. So, also, did the witch woman, and both would have fallen had not a man who appeared wrapped in a cloud of smoke and glittering sparks, leaped wildly into the circle, swung a heavy rifle above his head and bringing it down, crushed the skull of Shoon-ka-ska as if it had been an egg shell!

"May ther good Lord fergive me ef this am murder. I couldn't help it! I couldn't help it!" and he fell fainting into the open arms of Pitt Moncrief.

* * * * *

A few weeks after, a gay flotilla of canoes left the banks of the Michipicoten and wended their way to the settlement at the *Sault*. There Pitt Moncrief and the Swallow were married according to the rites of the Christian church and the cabalistic ceremonies of the red man. Through much sorrow, they had reached exceeding joy. But the happiness of the group was the old trapper. Something had convinced him that it was not best for man to live alone, and when he again returned to his loved cabin, he was accompanied by the counterfeit Witch Woman, Wit-chi-ta, as wife.

THE END.

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