The Young Fur Traders
Vol.I

By
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The Young Fur Traders

CHAPTER I

Plunges the reader into the middle of an Arctic winter; conveys him into the heart of the wildernesses of North America; and introduces him to some of the principal personages of our tale.

Snowflakes and sunbeams, heat and cold, winter and summer, alternated with their wonted regularity for fifteen years in the wild regions of the Far North. During this space of time the hero of our tale sprouted from babyhood to boyhood, passed through the usual amount of accidents, ailments, and vicissitudes incidental to those periods of life, and finally entered upon that ambiguous condition that precedes early manhood.

It was a clear, cold winter's day. The sunbeams of summer were long past, and snowflakes had fallen thickly on the banks of Red River. Charley sat on a lump of blue ice, his head drooping and his eyes bent on the snow at his feet with an expression of deep disconsolation.

Kate reclined at Charley's side, looking wistfully up in his expressive face, as if to read the thoughts that were chasing each other through his mind, like the ever-varying clouds that floated in the winter sky above. It was quite evident to the most careless observer that, whatever might be the usual temperaments of the boy and girl, their present state of mind was not joyous, but on the contrary, very sad.

"It won't do, sister Kate," said Charley. "I've tried him over and over againI've implored, begged, and entreated him to let me go; but he won't, and I'm determined to run away, so there's an end of it!"

As Charley gave utterance to this unalterable resolution, he rose from the bit of blue ice, and taking Kate by the hand, led her over the frozen river, climbed up the bank on the opposite sidean operation of some difficulty, owing to the snow, which had been drifted so deeply during a late storm that the usual track was almost obliteratedand turning into a path that lost itself among the willows, they speedily disappeared.

As it is possible our reader may desire to know who Charley and Kate are, and the part of the world in which they dwell, we will interrupt the thread of our narrative to explain.

In the very centre of the great continent of North America, far removed from the abodes of civilised men, and about twenty miles to the south of Lake Winnipeg, exists a colony composed of Indians, Scotsmen, and French-Canadians, which is known by the name of Red River Settlement. Red River differs from most colonies in more respects than onethe chief differences being, that whereas other colonies cluster on the sea-coast, this one lies many hundreds of miles in the interior of the country, and is surrounded by a wilderness; and while other colonies, acting on the Golden Rule, export their produce in return for goods imported, this of Red River imports a large quantity, and exports nothing, or next to nothing. Not but that it might export, if it only had an outlet or a market; but being eight hundred miles removed from the sea, and five hundred miles from the nearest market, with a series of rivers, lakes, rapids, and cataracts separating from the one, and a wide sweep of treeless prairie dividing from the other, the settlers have long since come to the conclusion that they were born to consume their own produce, and so regulate the extent of their farming operations by the strength of their appetites. Of course, there are many of the necessaries, or at least the luxuries, of life which the colonists cannot growsuch as tea, coffee, sugar, coats, trousers, and shirtsand which, consequently, they procure from England, by means of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company's ships, which sail once a year from Gravesend, laden with supplies for the trade carried on with the Indians. And the bales containing these articles are conveyed in boats up the rivers, carried past the waterfalls and rapids overland on the shoulders of stalwart voyageurs, and finally landed at Red River, after a rough trip of many weeks' duration. The colony was founded in 1811, by the Earl of Selkirk, previously to which it had been a trading-post of the Fur Company. At the time of which we write, it contained about five thousand souls, and extended upwards of fifty miles along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, which streams supplied the settlers with

a variety of excellent fish. The banks were clothed with fine trees; and immediately behind the settlement lay the great prairies, which extended in undulating wavesalmost entirely devoid of shrub or treeto the base of the Rocky Mountains.

Although far removed from the civilised world, and containing within its precincts much that is savage and very little that is refined, Red River is quite a populous paradise, as compared with the desolate, solitary establishments of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company. These lonely dwellings of the trader are scattered far and wide over the whole continentnorth, south, east, and west. Their population generally amounts to eight or ten menseldom to thirty. They are planted in the thick of an uninhabited deserttheir next neighbours being from two to five hundred miles offtheir occasional visitors, bands of wandering Indiansand the sole object of their existence being to trade the furry hides of foxes, martens, beavers, badgers, bears, buffaloes, and wolves. It will not, then, be deemed a matter of wonder that the gentlemen who have charge of these establishments, and who, perchance, may have spent ten or twenty years in them, should look upon the colony of Red River as a species of Elysium, a sort of haven of rest, in which they may lay their weary heads, and spend the remainder of their days in peaceful felicity, free from the cares of a residence among wild beasts and wild men. Many of the retiring traders prefer casting their lot in Canada; but not a few of them smoke out the remainder of their existence in this colonyespecially those who, having left home as boys fifty or sixty years before, cannot reasonably expect to find the friends of their childhood where they left them, and cannot hope to remodel tastes and habits long nurtured in the backwoods so as to relish the manners and customs of civilised society.

Such an one was old Frank Kennedy, who, sixty years before the date of our story, ran away from school in Scotland; got a severe thrashing from his father for so doing; and having no mother in whose sympathising bosom he could weep out his sorrow, ran away from home, went to sea, ran away from his ship while she lay at anchor in the harbour of New York, and after leading a wandering, unsettled life for several years, during which he had been alternately a clerk, a day-labourer, a store-keeper and a village schoolmaster, he wound up by entering the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, in which he obtained an insight into savage life, a comfortable fortune, besides a half-breed wife and a large family.

Being a man of great energy and courage, and moreover possessed of a large, powerful frame, he was sent to one of the most distant posts on the Mackenzie River, as being admirably suited for the display of his powers both mental and physical. Here the small-pox broke out among the natives, and besides

carrying off hundreds of these poor creatures, robbed Mr. Kennedy of all his children save two, Charles and Kate, whom we have already introduced to the reader.

About the same time the council which is annually held at Red River in spring for the purpose of arranging the affairs of the country for the ensuing year thought proper to appoint Mr. Kennedy to a still more outlandish part of the countryas near, in fact, to the North Pole as it was possible for mortal man to liveand sent him an order to proceed to his destination without loss of time. On receiving this communication, Mr. Kennedy upset his chair, stamped his foot, ground his teeth, and vowed, in the hearing of his wife and children, that sooner than obey the mandate he would see the governors and council of Rupert's Land hanged, quartered, and boiled down into tallow! Ebullitions of this kind were peculiar to Frank Kennedy, and meant nothing. They were simply the safety-valves to his superabundant ire, and, like safety-valves in general, made much noise but did no damage. It was well, however, on such occasions to keep out of the old fur-trader's way; for he had an irresistible propensity to hit out at whatever stood before him, especially if the object stood on a level with his own eyes and wore whiskers. On second thoughts, however, he sat down before his writing-table, took a sheet of blue ruled foolscap paper, seized a quill which he had mended six months previously, at a time when he happened to be in high good-humour, and wrote as follows:

Letter

To the Governor and Council of Rupert's Land, Fort Paskisegun
Red River Settlement. June 15, 18.
Gentlemen,I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your favour of 26th April last, appointing me to the charge of Peel's River, and directing me to strike out new channels of trade in that quarter. In reply, I have to state that I shall have the honour to fulfil your instructions by taking my departure in a light canoe as soon as possible. At the same time I beg humbly to submit that the state of my health is such as to render it expedient for me to retire from the service, and I herewith beg to hand in my resignation. I shall hope to be relieved early next spring.I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your most obedient, humble servant,

F. Kennedy.

"There!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in a tone that would lead one to suppose he had signed the death-warrant, and so had irrevocably fixed the certain destruction, of the entire council"there!" said he, rising from his chair, and sticking the quill into the ink-bottle with a dab that split it up to the feather, and so rendered it hors de combat for all time coming.

To this letter the council gave a short reply, accepting his resignation, and appointing a successor. On the following spring old Mr. Kennedy embarked his wife and children in a bark canoe, and in process of time landed them safely in Red River Settlement. Here he purchased a house with six acres of land, in which he planted a variety of useful vegetables, and built a summer-house after the fashion of a conservatory, where he was wont to solace himself for hours together with a pipe, or rather with dozens of pipes, of Canadian twist tobacco.

After this he put his two children to school. The settlement was at this time fortunate in having a most excellent academy, which was conducted by a very estimable man. Charles and Kate Kennedy, being obedient and clever, made rapid progress under his judicious management, and the only fault that he had to find with the young people was, that Kate was a little too quiet and fond of books, while Charley was a little too riotous and fond of fun.

When Charles arrived at the age of fifteen and Kate attained to fourteen years, old Mr. Kennedy went into his conservatory, locked the door, sat down on an easy chair, filled a long clay pipe with his beloved tobacco, smoked vigorously for ten minutes, and fell fast asleep. In this condition he remained until the pipe fell from his lips and broke in fragments on the floor. He then rose, filled another pipe, and sat down to meditate on the subject that had brought him to his smoking apartment. "There's my wife," said he, looking at the bowl of his pipe, as if he were addressing himself to it, "she's getting too old to be looking after everything herself (puff), and Kate's getting too old to be humbugging any longer with books: besides, she ought to be at home learning to keep house, and help her mother, and cut the baccy (puff), and that young scamp Charley should be entering the service (puff). He's clever enough now to trade beaver and bears from the red-skins; besides, he's (puff) a young rascal, and I'll be bound does nothing but lead the other boys into (puff) mischief, although, to be sure, the master does say he's the cleverest fellow in the school; but he must be reined up a bit now. I'll clap on a double curb and martingale. I'll get him a situation in the counting-room at the fort (puff), where he'll have his nose held tight to the grindstone. Yes, I'll fix both their flints to-morrow;" and old Mr. Kennedy gave vent to another puff so thick and long that it seemed as if all the previous puffs had concealed themselves up to this moment within his capacious chest, and rushed out at last in one thick and long-continued stream.

By "fixing their flints" Mr. Kennedy meant to express the fact that he intended to place his children in an entirely new sphere of action, and with a view to this he ordered out his horse and cariole [Footnote: A sort of sleigh.] on the following morning, went up to the school, which was about ten miles distant

from his abode, and brought his children home with him the same evening. Kate was now formally installed as housekeeper and tobacco-cutter; while Charley was told that his future destiny was to wield the quill in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and that he might take a week to think over it. Quiet, warm-hearted, affectionate Kate was overjoyed at the thought of being a help and comfort to her old father and mother; but reckless, joyous, good-humoured, hare-brained Charley was cast into the depths of despair at the idea of spending the livelong day, and day after day, for years it might be, on the top of a long-legged stool. In fact, poor Charley said that he "would rather become a buffalo than do it." Now this was very wrong of Charley, for, of course, he didn't mean it. Indeed, it is too much a habit among little boys, ay, and among grown-up people, too, to say what they don't mean, as no doubt you are aware, dear reader, if you possess half the self-knowledge we give you credit for; and we cannot too strongly remonstrate with ourself and others against the practiceleading, as it does, to all sorts of absurd exaggerations, such as gravely asserting that we are "broiling hot" when we are simply "rather warm," or more than "half dead" with fatigue when we are merely "very tired." However, Charley said that he would rather be "a buffalo than do it," and so we feel bound in honour to record the fact.

Charley and Kate were warmly attached to each other. Moreover, they had been, ever since they could walk, in the habit of mingling their little joys and sorrows in each other's bosoms; and although, as years flew past, they gradually ceased to sob in each other's arms at every little mishap, they did not cease to interchange their inmost thoughts, and to mingle their tears when occasion called them forth. They knew the power, the inexpressible sweetness, of sympathy. They understood experimentally the comfort and joy that flow from obedience to that blessed commandment to "rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." It was natural, therefore, that on Mr. Kennedy announcing his decrees, Charley and Kate should hasten to some retired spot where they could commune in solitude; the effect of which communing was to reduce them to a somewhat calmer and rather happy state of mind. Charley's sorrow was blunted by sympathy with Kate's joy, and Kate's joy was subdued by sympathy with Charley's sorrow; so that, after the first effervescing burst, they settled down into a calm and comfortable state of flatness, with very red eyes and exceedingly pensive minds. We must, however, do Charley the justice to say that the red eyes applied only to Kate; for although a tear or two could without much coaxing be induced to hop over his sun-burned cheek, he had got beyond that period of life when boys are addicted to (we must give the word, though not pretty, because it is eminently expressive) blubbering.

A week later found Charley and his sister seated on the lump of blue ice where

they were first introduced to the reader, and where Charley announced his unalterable resolve to run away, following it up with the statement that that was "the end of it." He was quite mistaken, however, for that was by no means the end of it. In fact it was only the beginning of it, as we shall see hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

The old fur-trader endeavours to "fix" his son's "flint," and finds the thing more difficult to do than he expected.

Near the centre of the colony of Red River, the stream from which the settlement derives its name is joined by another, called the Assiniboine. About five or six hundred yards from the point where this union takes place, and on the banks of the latter stream, stands the Hudson's Bay Company's trading-post, Fort Garry. It is a massive square building of stone. Four high and thick walls enclose a space of ground on which are built six or eight wooden houses, some of which are used as dwellings for the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, and others as stores, wherein are contained the furs, the provisions which are sent annually to various parts of the country, and the goods (such as cloth, guns, powder and shot, blankets, twine, axes, knives, etc., etc.) with which the fur-trade is carried on. Although Red River is a peaceful colony, and not at all likely to be assaulted by the poor Indians, it was, nevertheless, deemed prudent by the traders to make some show of power; and so at the corners of the fort four round bastions of a very imposing appearance were built, from the embrasures of which several large black-muzzled guns protruded. No one ever conceived the idea of firing these engines of war; and, indeed, it is highly probable that such an attempt would have been attended with consequences much more dreadful to those behind than to those who might chance to be in front of the guns. Nevertheless they were imposing, and harmonised well with the flag-staff, which was the only other military symptom about the place. This latter was used on particular occasions, such as the arrival or departure of a brigade of boats, for the purpose of displaying the folds of a red flag on which were the letters H. B. C.

The fort stood, as we have said, on the banks of the Assiniboine River, on the opposite side of which the land was somewhat wooded, though not heavily, with oak, maple, poplar, aspens, and willows; while at the back of the fort the great prairie rolled out like a green sea to the horizon, and far beyond that again to the base of the Rocky mountains. The plains at this time, however, were a sheet of unbroken snow, and the river a mass of solid ice.

It was noon on the day following that on which our friend Charley had threatened rebellion, when a tall elderly man might have been seen standing at

the back gate of Fort Garry, gazing wistfully out into the prairie in the direction of the lower part of the settlement. He was watching a small speck which moved rapidly over the snow in the direction of the fort.

"It's very like our friend Frank Kennedy," said he to himself (at least we presume so, for there was no one else within earshot to whom he could have said it, except the door-post, which every one knows is proverbially a deaf subject). "No man in the settlement drives so furiously. I shouldn't wonder if he ran against the corner of the new fence now. Ha! just sothere he goes!"

And truly the reckless driver did "go" just at that moment. He came up to the corner of the new fence, where the road took a rather abrupt turn, in a style that insured a capsize. In another second the spirited horse turned sharp round, the sleigh turned sharp over, and the occupant was pitched out at full length, while a black object, that might have been mistaken for his hat, rose from his side like a rocket, and, flying over him, landed on the snow several yards beyond. A faint shout was heard to float on the breeze as this catastrophe occurred, and the driver was seen to jump up and readjust himself in the cariole; while the other black object proved itself not to be a hat, by getting hastily up on a pair of legs, and scrambling back to the seat from which it had been so unceremoniously ejected.

In a few minutes more the cheerful tinkling of the merry sleigh-bells was heard, and Frank Kennedy, accompanied by his hopeful son Charles, dashed up to the gate, and pulled up with a jerk.

"Ha! Grant, my fine fellow, how are you?" exclaimed Mr. Kennedy, senior, as he disengaged himself from the heavy folds of the buffalo robe and shook the snow from his greatcoat. "Why on earth, man, don't you put up a sign-post and a board to warn travellers that you've been running out new fences and changing the road, eh?"

"Why, my good friend," said Mr. Grant, smiling, "the fence and the road are of themselves pretty conclusive proof to most men that the road is changed; and, besides, we don't often have people driving round corners at full gallop; but"

"Hollo! Charley, you rascal," interrupted Mr. Kennedy"here, take the mare to the stable, and don't drive her too fast. Mind, now, no going off upon the wrong road for the sake of a drive, you understand."

"All right, father," exclaimed the boy, while a bright smile lit up his features and displayed two rows of white teeth: "I'll be particularly careful," and he sprang into the light vehicle, seized the reins, and with a sharp crack of the whip dashed down the road at a hard gallop.

"He's a fine fellow that son of yours," said Mr. Grant, "and will make a first-rate fur-trader."

"Pur-trader!" exclaimed Mr. Kennedy. "Just look at him! I'll be shot if he isn't thrashing the mare as if she were made of leather." The old man's ire was rising rapidly as he heard the whip crack every now and then, and saw the mare bound madly over the snow. "And see!" he continued, "I declare he has taken the wrong turn after all."

"True," said Mr. Grant: "he'll never reach the stable by that road; he's much more likely to visit the White-horse Plains. But come, friend, it's of no use fretting, Charley will soon tire of his ride; so come with me to my room and have a pipe before dinner."

Old Mr. Kennedy gave a short groan of despair, shook his fist at the form of his retreating son, and accompanied his friend to the house.

It must not be supposed that Frank Kennedy was very deeply offended with his son, although he did shower on him a considerable amount of abuse. On the contrary, he loved him very much. But it was the old man's nature to give way to little bursts of passion on almost every occasion in which his feelings were at all excited. These bursts, however, were like the little puffs that ripple the surface of the sea on a calm summer's day. They were over in a second, and left his good-humoured, rough, candid countenance in unruffled serenity. Charley knew this well, and loved his father tenderly, so that his conscience frequently smote him for raising his anger so often; and he over and over again promised his sister Kate to do his best to refrain from doing anything that was likely to annoy the old man in future. But, alas! Charley's resolves, like those of many other boys, were soon forgotten, and his father's equanimity was upset generally two or three times a day; but after the gust was over, the fur-trader would kiss his son, call him a "rascal," and send him off to fill and fetch his pipe.

Mr. Grant, who was in charge of Fort Garry, led the way to his smoking apartment, where the two were soon seated in front of a roaring log-fire, emulating each other in the manufacture of smoke.

"Well, Kennedy," said Mr. Grant, throwing himself back in his chair, elevating his chin, and emitting a long thin stream of white vapour from his lips, through which he gazed at his friend complacently"well, Kennedy, to what fortunate chance am I indebted for this visit? It is not often that we have the pleasure of seeing you here."

Mr. Kennedy created two large volumes of smoke, which, by means of a vigorous puff, he sent rolling over towards his friend, and said, "Charley."

"And what of Charley?" said Mr. Grant with a smile, for he was well aware of the boy's propensity to fun, and of the father's desire to curb it.

"The fact is," replied Kennedy, "that Charley must be broke. He's the wildest colt I ever had to tame, but I'll do itI willthat's a fact."

If Charley's subjugation had depended on the rapidity with which the little white clouds proceeded from his sire's mouth, there is no doubt that it would have been a "fact" in a very short time, for they rushed from him with the violence of a high wind. Long habit had made the old trader and his pipe not only inseparable companions, but part and parcel of each otherso intimately connected that a change in the one was sure to produce a sympathetic change in the other. In the present instance, the little clouds rapidly increased in size and number as the old gentleman thought on the obstinacy of his "colt."

"Yes," he continued, after a moment's silence, "I've made up my mind to tame him, and I want you, Mr. Grant, to help me."

Mr. Grant looked as if he would rather not undertake to lend his aid in a work that was evidently difficult; but being a good-natured man, he said, "And how, friend, can I assist in the operation?"

"Well, you see, Charley's a good fellow at bottom, and a clever fellow tooat least so says the schoolmaster; though I must confess, that so far as my experience goes, he's only clever at finding out excuses for not doing what I want him to. But still I'm told he's clever, and can use his pen well; and I know for certain that he can use his tongue well. So I want to get him into the service, and have him placed in a situation where he shall have to stick to his desk all day. In fact, I want to have him broken into work; for you've no notion, sir, how that boy talks about bears and buffaloes and badgers, and life in the woods among the Indians. I do believe," continued the old gentleman, waxing warm, "that he would willingly go into the woods to-morrow, if I would let him, and never show his nose in the settlement again. He's quite incorrigible. But I'll tame him yetI will!"

Mr. Kennedy followed this up with an indignant grunt, and a puff of smoke, so thick, and propelled with such vigour, that it rolled and curled in fantastic evolutions towards the ceiling, as if it were unable to control itself with delight at the absolute certainty of Charley being tamed at last.

Mr. Grant, however, shook his head, and remained for five minutes in profound silence, during which time the two friends puffed in concert, until they began to grow quite indistinct and ghost-like in the thick atmosphere.

At last he broke silence.

"My opinion is that you're wrong, Mr. Kennedy. No doubt you know the disposition of your son better than I do; but even judging of it from what you have said, I'm quite sure that a sedentary life will ruin him."

"Ruin him! Humbug!" said Kennedy, who never failed to express his opinion at the shortest notice and in the plainest languagea fact so well known by his friends that they had got into the habit of taking no notice of it. "Humbug!" he repeated, "perfect humbug! You don't mean to tell me that the way to break him in is to let him run loose and wild whenever and wherever he pleases?"

"By no means. But you may rest assured that tying him down won't do it."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Kennedy testily; "don't tell me. Have I not broken in young colts by the score? and don't I know that the way to fix their flints is to clap on a good strong curb?"

"If you had travelled farther south, friend," replied Mr. Grant, "you would have seen the Spaniards of Mexico break in their wild horses in a very different way; for after catching one with a lasso, a fellow gets on his back, and gives it the rein and the whipay, and the spur too; and before that race is over, there is no need for a curb."

"What!" exclaimed Kennedy, "and do you mean to argue from that, that I should let Charley runand help him too? Send him off to the woods with gun and blanket, canoe and tent, all complete?" The old gentleman puffed a furious puff, and broke into a loud sarcastic laugh.

"No, no," interrupted Mr. Grant; "I don't exactly mean that, but I think that you might give him his way for a year or so. He's a fine, active, generous fellow; and after the novelty wore off, he would be in a much better frame of mind to listen to your proposals. Besides" (and Mr. Grant smiled expressively), "Charley is somewhat like his father. He has got a will of his own; and if you do not give him his way, I very much fear that he'll"

"What?" inquired Mr. Kennedy abruptly.

"Take it," said Mr. Grant.

The puff that burst from Mr. Kennedy's lips on hearing this would have done credit to a thirty-six pounder.

"Take it!" said he; "he'd better not."

The latter part of this speech was not in itself of a nature calculated to convey

much; but the tone of the old trader's voice, the contraction of his eyebrows, and above all the overwhelming flow of cloudlets that followed, imparted to it a significance that induced the belief that Charley's taking his own way would be productive of more terrific consequences than it was in the power of the most highly imaginative man to conceive.

"There's his sister Kate, now," continued the old gentleman; "she's as gentle and biddable as a lamb. I've only to say a word, and she's off like a shot to do my bidding; and she does it with such a sweet smile too." There was a touch of pathos in the old trader's voice as he said this. He was a man of strong feeling, and as impulsive in his tenderness as in his wrath. "But that rascal Charley," he continued, "is quite different. He's obstinate as a mule. To be sure, he has a good temper; and I must say for him he never goes into the sulks, which is a comfort, for of all things in the world sulking is the most childish and contemptible. He generally does what I bid him, too. But he's always getting into scrapes of one kind or other. And during the last week, notwithstanding all I can say to him, he won't admit that the best thing for him is to get a place in your counting-room, with the prospect of rapid promotion in the service. Very odd. I can't understand it at all;" and Mr. Kennedy heaved a deep sigh.

"Did you ever explain to him the prospects that he would have in the situation you propose for him?" inquired Mr. Grant.

"Can't say I ever did."

"Did you ever point out the probable end of a life spent in the woods?"

"No."

"Nor suggest to him that the appointment to the office here would only be temporary, and to see how he got on in it?"

"Certainly not."

"Then, my dear sir, I'm not surprised that Charley rebels. You have left him to suppose that, once placed at the desk here, he is a prisoner for life. But see, there he is," said Mr. Grant, pointing as he spoke towards the subject of their conversation, who was passing the window at the moment; "let me call him, and I feel certain that he will listen to reason in a few minutes."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Kennedy, "you may try."

In another minute Charley had been summoned, and was seated, cap in hand, near the door.

"Charley, my boy," began Mr. Grant, standing with his back to the fire, his feet

pretty wide apart, and his coat-tails under his arms"Charley, my boy, your father has just been speaking of you. He is very anxious that you should enter the service of the Hudson's Bay Company; and as you are a clever boy and a good penman, we think that you would be likely to get on if placed for a year or so in our office here. I need scarcely point out to you, my boy, that in such a position you would be sure to obtain more rapid promotion than if you were placed in one of the distant outposts, where you would have very little to do, and perhaps little to eat, and no one to converse with except one or two men. Of course, we would merely place you here on trial, to see how you suited us; and if you prove steady and diligent, there is no saying how fast you might get on. Why, you might even come to fill my place in course of time. Come now, Charley, what think you of it?"

Charley's eyes had been cast on the ground while Mr. Grant was speaking. He now raised them, looked at his father, then at his interrogator, and said,

"It is very kind of you both to be so anxious about my prospects. I thank you, indeed, very much; but Ia"

"Don't like the desk?" said his father, in an angry tone. "Is that it, eh?"

Charley made no reply, but cast down his eyes again and smiled (Charley had a sweet smile, a peculiarly sweet, candid smile), as if he meant to say that his father had hit the nail quite on the top of the head that time, and no mistake.

"But consider," resumed Mr. Grant, "although you might probably be pleased with an outpost life at first, you would be sure to grow weary of it after the novelty wore off, and then you would wish with all your heart to be back here again. Believe me, child, a trader's life is a very hard and not often a very satisfactory one"

"Ay," broke in the father, desirous, if possible, to help the argument, "and you'll find it a desperately wild, unsettled, roving sort of life, too, let me tell you! full of dangers both from wild beast and wild men"

"Hush!" interrupted Mr. Grant, observing that the boy's eyes kindled when his father spoke of a wild, roving life, and wild beasts."Your father does not mean that life at an outpost is wild and interesting or exciting. He merely means thatait"

Mr. Grant could not very well explain what it was that Mr. Kennedy meant if he did not mean that, so he turned to him for help.

"Exactly so," said that gentleman, taking a strong pull at the pipe for inspiration. "It's no ways interesting or exciting at all. It's slow, dull, and flat; a

miserable sort of Robinson Crusoe life, with red Indians and starvation constantly staring you in the face"

"Besides," said Mr. Grant, again interrupting the somewhat unfortunate efforts of his friend, who seemed to have a happy facility in sending a brilliant dash of romantic allusion across the dark side of his picture"besides, you'll not have opportunity to amuse yourself, or to read, as you'll have no books, and you'll have to work hard with your hands oftentimes, like your men"

"In fact," broke in the impatient father, resolved, apparently, to carry the point with a grand coup"in fact, you'll have to rough it, as I did, when I went up the Mackenzie River district, where I was sent to establish a new post, and had to travel for weeks and weeks through a wild country, where none of us had ever been before; where we shot our own meat, caught our own fish, and built our own houseand were very near being murdered by the Indians; though, to be sure, afterwards they became the most civil fellows in the country, and brought us plenty of skins. Ay, lad, you'll repent of your obstinacy when you come to have to hunt your own dinner, as I've done many a day up the Saskatchewan, where I've had to fight with red-skins and grizzly bears and to chase the buffaloes over miles and miles of prairie on rough-going nags till my bones ached and I scarce knew whether I sat on"

"Oh," exclaimed Charley, starting to his feet, while his eyes flashed and his chest heaved with emotion, "that's the place for me, father!Do, please, Mr. Grant send me there, and I'll work for you with all my might!"

Frank Kennedy was not a man to stand this unexpected miscarriage of his eloquence with equanimity. His first action was to throw his pipe at the head of his enthusiastic boy; without worse effect, however, than smashing it to atoms on the opposite wall. He then started up and rushed towards his son, who, being near the door, retreated precipitately and vanished.

"So," said Mr. Grant, not very sure whether to laugh or be angry at the result of their united efforts, "you've settled the question now, at all events."

Frank Kennedy said nothing, but filled another pipe, sat doggedly down in front of the fire, and speedily enveloped himself, and his friend, and all that the room contained, in thick, impenetrable clouds of smoke.

Meanwhile his worthy son rushed off in a state of great glee. He had often heard the voyageurs of Red River dilate on the delights of roughing it in the woods, and his heart had bounded as they spoke of dangers encountered and overcome among the rapids of the Far North, or with the bears and bison-bulls of the prairie, but never till now had he heard his father corroborate their testimony by a recital of his own actual experience; and although the old

gentleman's intention was undoubtedly to damp the boy's spirit, his eloquence had exactly the opposite effectso that it was with a hop and a shout that he burst into the counting-room, with the occupants of which Charley was a special favourite.

CHAPTER III.
The Counting-room.

Everyone knows the general appearance of a counting-room. There are one or two peculiar features about such apartments that are quite unmistakable and very characteristic; and the counting-room at Fort Garry, although many hundred miles distant from other specimens of its race, and, from the peculiar circumstances of its position, not therefore likely to bear them much resemblance, possessed one or two features of similarity, in the shape of two large desks and several very tall stools, besides sundry ink-bottles, rulers, books, and sheets of blotting-paper. But there were other implements there, savouring strongly of the backwoods and savage life, which merit more particular notice.

The room itself was small, and lighted by two little windows, which opened into the courtyard. The entire apartment was made of wood. The floor was of unpainted fir boards. The walls were of the same material, painted blue from the floor upwards to about three feet, where the blue was unceremoniously stopped short by a stripe of bright red, above which the somewhat fanciful decorator had laid on a coat of pale yellow; and the ceiling, by way of variety, was of a deep ochre. As the occupants of Red River office were, however, addicted to the use of tobacco and tallow candles, the original colour of the ceiling had vanished entirely, and that of the walls had considerably changed.

There were three doors in the room (besides the door of entrance), each opening into another apartment, where the three clerks were wont to court the favour of Morpheus after the labours of the day. No carpets graced the floors of any of these rooms, and with the exception of the paint aforementioned, no ornament whatever broke the pleasing uniformity of the scene. This was compensated, however, to some extent by several scarlet sashes, bright-coloured shot-belts, and gay portions of winter costume peculiar to the country, which depended from sundry nails in the bedroom walls; and as the three doors always stood open, these objects, together with one or two fowling-pieces and canoe-paddles, formed quite a brilliant and highly suggestive background to the otherwise sombre picture. A large open fireplace stood in one corner of the room, devoid of a grate, and so constructed that large logs of wood might be piled up on end to any extent. And really the fires made in this manner, and in this individual fireplace, were exquisite beyond

description. A wood-fire is a particularly cheerful thing. Those who have never seen one can form but a faint idea of its splendour; especially on a sharp winter night in the arctic regions, where the thermometer falls to forty degrees below zero, without inducing the inhabitants to suppose that the world has reached its conclusion. The billets are usually piled up on end, so that the flames rise and twine round them with a fierce intensity that causes them to crack and sputter cheerfully, sending innumerable sparks of fire into the room, and throwing out a rich glow of brilliant light that warms a man even to look at it, and renders candles quite unnecessary.

The clerks who inhabited this counting-room were, like itself, peculiar. There were threecorresponding to the bedrooms. The senior was a tall, broad-shouldered, muscular mana Scotchmanvery good-humoured, yet a man whose under lip met the upper with that peculiar degree of precision that indicated the presence of other qualities besides that of good-humour. He was book-keeper and accountant, and managed the affairs intrusted to his care with the same dogged perseverance with which he would have led an expedition of discovery to the North Pole. He was thirty or thereabouts.

The second was a small manalso a Scotchman. It is curious to note how numerous Scotchmen are in the wilds of North America. This specimen was diminutive and sharp. Moreover, he played the flutean accomplishment of which he was so proud that he ordered out from England a flute of ebony, so elaborately enriched with silver keys that one's fingers ached to behold it. This beautiful instrument, like most other instruments of a delicate nature, found the climate too much for its constitution, and, soon after the winter began, split from top to bottom. Peter Mactavish, however, was a genius by nature, and a mechanical genius by tendency; so that, instead of giving way to despair, he laboriously bound the flute together with waxed thread, which, although it could not restore it to its pristine elegance, enabled him to play with great effect sundry doleful airs, whose influence, when performed at night, usually sent his companions to sleep, or, failing this, drove them to distraction.

The third inhabitant of the office was a ruddy, smooth-chinned youth of about fourteen, who had left home seven months before, in the hope of gratifying a desire to lead a wild life, which he had entertained ever since he read "Jack the Giant Killer," and found himself most unexpectedly fastened, during the greater part of each day, to a stool. His name was Harry Somerville, and a fine, cheerful little fellow he was, full of spirits, and curiously addicted to poking and arranging the fire at least every ten minutesa propensity which tested the forbearance of the senior clerk rather severely, and would have surprised any one not aware of poor Harry's incurable antipathy to the desk, and the yearning desire with which he longed for physical action.

Harry was busily engaged with the refractory fire when Charley, as stated at the conclusion of the last chapter, burst into the room.

"Hollo!" he exclaimed, suspending his operations for a moment, "what's up?"

"Nothing," said Charley, "but father's temper, that's all. He gave me a splendid description of his life in the woods, and then threw his pipe at me because I admired it too much."

"Ho!" exclaimed Harry, making a vigorous thrust at the fire, "then you've no chance now."

"No chance! what do you mean?"

"Only that we are to have a wolf-hunt in the plains to-morrow; and if you've aggravated your father, he'll be taking you home to-night, that's all."

"Oh! no fear of that," said Charley, with a look that seemed to imply that there was very great fear of "that"much more, in fact, than he was willing to admit even to himself. "My dear old father never keeps his anger long. I'm sure that he'll be all right again in half-an-hour."

"Hope so, but doubt it I do," said Harry, making another deadly poke at the fire, and returning, with a deep sigh, to his stool.

"Would you like to go with us, Charley?" said the senior clerk, laying down his pen and turning round on his chair (the senior clerk never sat on a stool) with a benign smile.

"Oh, very, very much indeed," cried Charley; "but even should father agree to stay all night at the fort, I have no horse, and I'm sure he would not let me have the mare after what I did to-day."

"Do you think he's not open to persuasion?" said the senior clerk.

"No, I'm sure he's not."

"Well, well, it don't much signify; perhaps we can mount you."
(Charley's face brightened.) "Go," he continued, addressing Harry Somerville"go, tell Tom Whyte I wish to speak to him."
Harry sprang from his stool with a suddenness and vigour that might have justified the belief that he had been fixed to it by means of a powerful spring, which had been set free with a sharp recoil, and shot him out at the door, for he disappeared in a trice. In a few minutes he returned, followed by the groom Tom Whyte.

"Tom," said the senior clerk, "do you think we could manage to mount Charley to-morrow?"
"Why, sir, I don't think as how we could. There ain't an 'oss in the stable except them wot's required and them wot's badly."

"Couldn't he have the brown pony?" suggested the senior clerk.

Tom Whyte was a cockney and an old soldier, and stood so bolt upright that it seemed quite a marvel how the words ever managed to climb up the steep ascent of his throat, and turn the corner so as to get out at his mouth. Perhaps this was the cause of his speaking on all occasions with great deliberation and slowness.

"Why, you see, sir," he replied, "the brown pony's got cut under the fetlock of the right hind leg; and I 'ad 'im down to L'Esperance the smith's, sir, to look at 'im, sir; and he says to me, says he 'That don't look well, that 'oss don't,'and he's a knowing feller, sir, is L'Esperance though he is an 'alf-breed"

"Never mind what he said, Tom," interrupted the senior clerk; "is the pony fit for use? that's the question."

"No, sir, 'e hain't."

"And the black mare, can he not have that?"

"No, sir; Mr. Grant is to ride 'er to-morrow."

"That's unfortunate," said the senior clerk."I fear, Charley, that you'll need to ride behind Harry on his gray pony. It wouldn't improve his speed, to be sure, having two on his back; but then he's so like a pig in his movements at any rate, I don't think it would spoil his pace much."

"Could he not try the new horse?" he continued, turning to the groom.

"The noo 'oss, sir! he might as well try to ride a mad buffalo bull, sir. He's quite a young colt, sir, only 'alf brokekicks like a windmill, sir, and's got an 'ead like a steam-engine; 'e couldn't 'old 'im in no'ow, sir. I 'ad 'im down to the smith 'tother day, sir, an' says 'e to me, says 'e, 'That's a screamer, that is.' 'Yes,' says I, 'that his a fact.' 'Well,' says 'e"

"Hang the smith!" cried the senior clerk, losing all patience; "can't you answer me without so much talk? Is the horse too wild to ride?"

"Yes, sir, 'e is" said the groom, with a look of slightly offended dignity, and drawing himself upif we may use such an expression to one who was always drawn up to such an extent that he seemed to be just balanced on his heels, and

required only a gentle push to lay him flat on his back.

"Oh, I have it!" cried Peter Mactavish, who had been standing during the conversation with his back to the fire, and a short pipe in his mouth: "John Fowler, the miller, has just purchased a new pony. I'm told it's an old buffalo-runner, and I'm certain he would lend it to Charley at once."

"The very thing," said the senior clerk."Run, Tom; give the miller my compliments, and beg the loan of his horse for Charley Kennedy.I think he knows you, Charley?"

The dinner-bell rang as the groom departed, and the clerks prepared for their mid-day meal.

The Senior clerk's order to "run" was a mere form of speech, intended to indicate that haste was desirable. No man imagined for a moment that Tom Whyte could, by any possibility, run. He hadn't run since he was dismissed from the army, twenty years before, for incurable drunkenness; and most of Tom's friend's entertained the belief that if he ever attempted to run he would crack all over, and go to pieces like a disentombed Egyptian mummy. Tom therefore walked off to the row of buildings inhabited by the men, where he sat down on a bench in front of his bed, and proceeded leisurely to fill his pipe.

The room in which he sat was a fair specimen of the dwellings devoted to the employés of the Hudson's Bay Company throughout the country. It was large, and low in the roof, built entirely of wood, which was unpainted; a matter, however, of no consequence, as, from long exposure to dust and tobacco smoke, the floor, walls, and ceiling had become one deep, uniform brown. The men's beds were constructed after the fashion of berths on board ship, being wooden boxes ranged in tiers round the room. Several tables and benches were strewn miscellaneously about the floor, in the centre of which stood a large double iron stove, with the word "Carron" stamped on it. This served at once for cooking and warming the place. Numerous guns, axes, and canoe-paddles hung round the walls or were piled in corners, and the rafters sustained a miscellaneous mass of materials, the more conspicuous among which were snow-shoes, dog-sledges, axe-handles, and nets.

Having filled and lighted his pipe, Tom Whyte thrust his hands into his deerskin mittens, and sauntered off to perform his errand.

CHAPTER IV.

A wolf-hunt in the prairiesCharley astonishes his father, and breaks in the "noo 'oss" effectually.

During the long winter that reigns in the northern regions of America, the thermometer ranges, for many months together, from zero down to 20, 30, and 40 degrees below it. In different parts of the country the intensity of the frost varies a little, but not sufficiently to make any appreciable change in one's sensation of cold. At York Fort, on the shores of Hudson's Bay, where the winter is eight months long, the spirit-of-wine (mercury being useless in so cold a climate) sometimes falls so low as 50 degrees below zero; and away in the regions of Great Bear Lake it has been known to fall considerably lower than 60 degrees below zero of Fahrenheit. Cold of such intensity, of course, produces many curious and interesting effects, which, although scarcely noticed by the inhabitants, make a strong impression upon the minds of those who visit the country for the first time. A youth goes out to walk on one of the first sharp, frosty mornings. His locks are brown and his face ruddy. In half-an-hour he returns with his face blue, his nose frost-bitten, and his locks whitethe latter effect being produced by his breath congealing on his hair and breast, until both are covered with hoar-frost. Perhaps he is of a sceptical nature, prejudiced it may be, in favour of old habits and customs; so that, although told by those who ought to know that it is absolutely necessary to wear moccasins in winter, he prefers the leather boots to which he has been accustomed at home, and goes out with them accordingly In a few minutes the feet begin to lose sensation. First the toes, as far as feeling goes, vanish; then the heels depart, and he feels the extraordinary and peculiar and altogether disagreeable sensation of one who has had his heels and toes amputated, and is walking about on his insteps. Soon, however, these also fade away, and the unhappy youth rushes frantically home on the stumps of his ankle-bonesat least so it appears to him, and so in reality it would turn out to be if he did not speedily rub the benumbed appendages into vitality again.

The whole country during this season is buried in snow, and the prairies of Red River present the appearance of a sea of the purest white for five or six months of the year. Impelled by hunger, troops of prairie wolves prowl round the settlement, safe from the assault of man in consequence of their light weight permitting them to scamper away on the surface of the snow, into which man or horse, from their greater weight, would sink, so as to render pursuit either fearfully laborious or altogether impossible. In spring, however, when the first thaws begin to take place, and commence that delightful process of disruption which introduces this charming season of the year, the relative position of wolf and man is reversed. The snow becomes suddenly soft, so that the short legs of the wolf, sinking deep into it, fail to reach the solid ground below, and he is obliged to drag heavily along; while the long legs of the horse enable him to plunge through and dash aside the snow at a rate which, although not very fleet, is sufficient nevertheless to overtake the chase and

give his rider a chance of shooting it. The inhabitants of Red River are not much addicted to this sport, but the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Service sometimes practise it; and it was to a hunt of this description that our young friend Charley Kennedy was now so anxious to go.

The morning was propitious. The sun blazed in dazzling splendour in a sky of deep unclouded blue, while the white prairie glittered as if it were a sea of diamonds rolling out in an unbroken sheet from the walls of the fort to the horizon, and on looking at which one experienced all the pleasurable feelings of being out on a calm day on the wide, wide sea, without the disagreeable consequence of being very, very sick.

The thermometer stood at 39° in the shade, and "everythin_k_" as Tom Whyte emphatically expressed it, "looked like a runnin' of right away into slush." That unusual sound, the trickling of water, so inexpressibly grateful to the ears of those who dwell in frosty climes, was heard all around, as the heavy masses of snow on the housetops sent a few adventurous drops gliding down the icicles which depended from the eaves and gables; and there was a balmy softness in the air that told of coming spring. Nature, in fact, seemed to have wakened from her long nap, and was beginning to think of getting up. Like people, however, who venture to delay so long as to think about it, Nature frequently turns round and goes to sleep again in her icy cradle for a few weeks after the first awakening.

The scene in the court-yard of Fort Garry harmonised with the cheerful spirit of the morning. Tom Whyte, with that upright solemnity which constituted one of his characteristic features, was standing in the centre of a group of horses, whose energy he endeavoured to restrain with the help of a small Indian boy, to whom meanwhile he imparted a variety of useful and otherwise unattainable information.

"You see, Joseph," said he to the urchin, who gazed gravely in his face with a pair of very large and dark eyes, "ponies is often skittish. Reason why one should be, an' another not, I can't comprehend. P'r'aps it's nat'ral, p'r'aps not, but howsomediver so 'tis; an' if it's more nor above the likes o' me, Joseph, you needn't be suprised that it's somethink haltogether beyond you."

It will not surprise the reader to be told that Joseph made no reply to this speech, having a very imperfect acquaintance with the English language, especially the peculiar dialect of that tongue in which Tom Whyte was wont to express his ideas, when he had any.

He merely gave a grunt, and continued to gaze at Tom's fishy eyes, which were about as interesting as the face to which they belonged, and that might

have been mistaken for almost anything.

"Yes, Joseph," he continued, "that's a fact. There's the noo brown o'ss now, it's a skittish 'un. And there's Mr. Kennedy's gray mare, wot's a standin' of beside me, she ain't skittish a bit, though she's plenty of spirit, and wouldn't care hanythink for a five-barred gate. Now, wot I want to know is, wot's the reason why?"

We fear that the reason why, however interesting it might prove to naturalists, must remain a profound secret for ever; for just as the groom was about to entertain Joseph with one of his theories on the point, Charley Kennedy and Harry Somerville hastily approached.

"Ho, Tom!" exclaimed the former, "have you got the miller's pony for me?"

"Why, no, sir; 'e 'adn't got his shoes on, sir, last night"

"Oh, bother his shoes!" said Charley, in a voice of great disappointment. "Why didn't you bring him up without shoes, man, eh?"

"Well, sir, the miller said 'e'd get 'em put on early this mornin', an'
I 'xpect 'e'll be 'ere in 'alf-a-hour at farthest, sir."
"Oh, very well," replied Charley, much relieved, but still a little nettled at the bare possibility of being late."Come along, Harry; let's go and meet him. He'll be long enough of coming if we don't go to poke him up a bit."

"You'd better wait," called out the groom, as the boys hastened away. "If you go by the river, he'll p'r'aps come by the plains; and if you go by the plains, he'll p'r'aps come by the river."

Charley and Harry stopped and looked at each other. Then they looked at the groom, and as their eyes surveyed his solemn, cadaverous countenance, which seemed a sort of bad caricature of the long visages of the horses that stood around him, they burst into a simultaneous and prolonged laugh.

"He's a clever old lamp-post," said Harry at last: "we had better remain, Charley."

"You see," continued Tom Whyte, "the pony's 'oofs is in an 'orrible state. Last night w'en I see'd 'im I said to the miller, says I, 'John, I'll take 'im down to the smith d'rectly.' 'Very good,' said John. So I 'ad him down to the smith"

The remainder of Tom's speech was cut short by one of those unforeseen operations of the laws of nature which are peculiar to arctic climates. During the long winter repeated falls of snow cover the housetops with white mantles upwards of a foot thick, which become gradually thicker and more

consolidated as winter advances. In spring the suddenness of the thaw loosens these from the sloping roofs, and precipitates them in masses to the ground. These miniature avalanches are dangerous, people having been seriously injured and sometimes killed by them. Now it happened that a very large mass of snow, which lay on and partly depended from the roof of the house near to which the horses were standing, gave way, and just at that critical point in Tom Whyte's speech when he "'ad 'im down to the smith," fell with a stunning crash on the back of Mr. Kennedy's gray mare. The mare was not "skittish"by no meansaccording to Tom's idea, but it would have been more than an ordinary mare to have stood the sudden descent of half-a-ton of snow without some symptoms of consciousness. No sooner did it feel the blow than it sent both heels with a bang against the wooden store, by way of preliminary movement, and then rearing up with a wild snort, it sprang over Tom Whyte's head, jerked the reins from his hand, and upset him in the snow. Poor Tom never bent to anything. The military despotism under which he had been reared having substituted a touch of the cap for a bow, rendered it unnecessary to bend; prolonged drill, laziness, and rheumatism made it at last impossible. When he stood up, he did so after the manner of a pillar; when he sat down, he broke across at two points, much in the way in which a foot-rule would have done had it felt disposed to sit down; and when he fell, he came down like an overturned lamp-post. On the present occasion Tom became horizontal in a moment, and from his unfortunate propensity to fall straight, his head, reaching much farther than might have been expected, came into violent contact with the small Indian boy, who fell flat likewise, letting go the reins of the horses, which latter no sooner felt themselves free than they fled, curvetting and snorting round the court, with reins and manes flying in rare confusion.

The two boys, who could scarce stand for laughing, ran to the gates of the fort to prevent the chargers getting free, and in a short time they were again secured, although evidently much elated in spirit.

A few minutes after this Mr. Grant issued from the principal house leaning on Mr. Kennedy's arm, and followed by the senior clerk, Peter Mactavish, and one or two friends who had come to take part in the wolf-hunt. They were all armed with double or single barrelled guns or pistols, according to their several fancies. The two elderly gentlemen alone entered upon the scene without any more deadly weapons than their heavy riding-whips. Young Harry Somerville, who had been strongly advised not to take a gun lest he should shoot himself or his horse or his companions, was content to take the field with a small pocket-pistol, which he crammed to the muzzle with a compound of ball and swan-shot.

"It won't do," said Mr. Grant, in an earnest voice, to his friend, as they walked towards the horses"it won't do to check him too abruptly, my dear sir."

It was evident that they were recurring to the subject of conversation of the previous day, and it was also evident that the father's wrath was in that very uncertain state when a word or look can throw it into violent agitation.

"Just permit me," continued Mr. Grant, "to get him sent to the Saskatchewan or Athabasca for a couple of years. By that time he'll have had enough of a rough life, and be only too glad to get a berth at headquarters. If you thwart him now, I feel convinced that he'll break through all restraint."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Kennedy, with a frown"Come here, Charley," he said, as the boy approached with a disappointed look to tell of his failure in getting a horse; "I've been talking with Mr. Grant again about this business, and he says he can easily get you into the counting-room here for a year, so you'll make arrangements"

The old gentleman paused. He was going to have followed his wonted course by commanding instantaneous obedience; but as his eye fell upon the honest, open, though disappointed face of his son, a gush of tenderness filled his heart. Laying his hand upon Charley's head, he said, in a kind but abrupt tone, "There now, Charley, my boy, make up your mind to give in with a good grace. It'll only be hard work for a year or two, and then plain sailing after that, Charley!"

Charley's clear blue eyes filled with tears as the accents of kindness fell upon his ear.

It is strange that men should frequently be so blind to the potent influence of kindness. Independently of the Divine authority, which assures us that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," and that "love is the fulfilling of the law," who has not, in the course of his experience, felt the overwhelming power of a truly affectionate word; not a word which possesses merely an affectionate signification, but a word spoken with a gush of tenderness, where love rolls in the tone, and beams in the eye, and revels in every wrinkle of the face? And how much more powerfully does such a word or look or tone strike home to the heart if uttered by one whose lips are not much accustomed to the formation of honeyed words or sweet sentences! Had Mr. Kennedy, senior, known more of this power, and put it more frequently to the proof, we venture to affirm that Mr. Kennedy, junior, would have allowed his "flint to be fixed" (as his father pithily expressed it) long ago.

Ere Charley could reply to the question, Mr. Grant's voice, pitched in an elevated key, interrupted them.

"Eh! what?" said that gentleman to Tom Whyte. "No horse for Charley! How's that?"
"No, sir," said Tom.

"Where's the brown pony?" said Mr. Grant, abruptly.

"Cut 'is fetlock, sir," said Tom, slowly.

"And the new horse?"

"'Tan't 'alf broke yet, sir."

"Ah! that's bad.It wouldn't do to take an unbroken charger, Charley; for although you are a pretty good rider, you couldn't manage him, I fear. Let me see."

"Please, sir," said the groom, touching his hat, "I've borrowed the miller's pony for 'im, and 'e's sure to be 'ere in 'alf-a-hour at farthest."

"Oh, that'll do," said Mr. Grant; "you can soon overtake us. We shall ride slowly out, straight into the prairie, and Harry will remain behind to keep you company."

So saying, Mr. Grant mounted his horse and rode out at the back gate, followed by the whole cavalcade.

"Now this is too bad!" said Charley, looking with a very perplexed air at his companion. "What's to be done?"

Harry evidently did not know what was to be done, and made no difficulty of saying so in a very sympathising tone. Moreover, he begged Charley very earnestly to take his pony, but this the other would not hear of; so they came to the conclusion that there was nothing for it but to wait as patiently as possible for the arrival of the expected horse. In the meantime Harry proposed a saunter in the field adjoining the fort. Charley assented, and the two friends walked away, leading the gray pony along with them.

To the right of Fort Garry was a small enclosure, at the extreme end of which commences a growth of willows and underwood, which gradually increases in size till it becomes a pretty thick belt of woodland, skirting up the river for many miles. Here stood the stable belonging to the establishment; and as the boys passed it, Charley suddenly conceived a strong desire to see the renowned "noo 'oss," which Tom Whyte had said was only "'alf broke;" so he turned the key, opened the door, and went in.

There was nothing very peculiar about this horse, excepting that his legs seemed rather long for his body, and upon a closer examination, there was a noticeable breadth of nostril and a latent fire in his eye, indicating a good deal of spirit, which, like Charley's own, required taming.

"Oh" said Charley, "what a splendid fellow! I say, Harry, I'll go out with him."

"You'd better not."

"Why not?"

"Why? just because if you do Mr. Grant will be down upon you, and your father won't be very well pleased."

"Nonsense," cried Charley. "Father didn't say I wasn't to take him. I don't think he'd care much. He's not afraid of my breaking my neck. And then, Mr. Grant seemed to be only afraid of my being run off withnot of his horse being hurt. Here goes for it!" In another moment Charley had him saddled and bridled, and led him out into the yard.

"Why, I declare, he's quite quiet; just like a lamb," said Harry, in surprise.

"So he is," replied Charley. "He's a capital charger; and even if he does bolt, he can't run five hundred miles at a stretch. If I turn his head to the prairies, the Rocky Mountains are the first things that will bring him up. So let him run if he likes, I don't care a fig." And springing lightly into the saddle, he cantered out of the yard, followed by his friend.

The young horse was a well-formed, showy animal, with a good deal of boneperhaps too much for elegance. He was of a beautiful dark brown, and carried a high head and tail, with a high-stepping gait, that gave him a noble appearance. As Charley cantered along at a steady pace, he could discover no symptoms of the refractory spirit which had been ascribed to him.

"Let us strike out straight for the horizon now," said Harry, after they had galloped half-a-mile or so along the beaten track. "See, here are the tracks of our friends." Turning sharp round as he spoke, he leaped his pony over the heap that lined the road, and galloped away through the soft snow.

At this point the young horse began to show his evil spirit. Instead of following the other, he suddenly halted and began to back.

"Hollo, Harry!" exclaimed Charley; "hold on a bit. Here's this monster begun his tricks."

"Hit him a crack with the whip," shouted Harry.

Charley acted upon the advice, which had the effect of making the horse shake his head with a sharp snort, and back more vigorously than ever.

"There, my fine fellow, quiet now," said Charley, in a soothing tone, patting the horse's neck. "It's a comfort to know you can't go far in that direction, anyhow!" he added, as he glanced over his shoulder, and saw an immense drift behind.

He was right. In a few minutes the horse backed into the snow-drift. Finding his hind-quarters imprisoned by a power that was too much even for his obstinacy to overcome, he gave another snort and a heavy plunge, which almost unseated his young rider.

"Hold on fast," cried Harry, who had now come up.

"No fear," cried Charley, as he clinched his teeth and gathered the reins more firmly."Now for it, you young villain!" and raising his whip, he brought it down with a heavy slash on the horse's flank.

Had the snow-drift been a cannon, and the horse a bombshell, he could scarcely have sprung from it with greater velocity. One bound landed him on the road; another cleared it; and, in a second more, he stretched out at full speedhis ears flat on his neck, mane and tail flying in the wind, and the bit tight between his teeth.

"Well done," cried Harry, as he passed. "You're off now, old fellow; good-bye."

"Hurrah!" shouted Charley, in reply, leaving his cap in the snow as a parting souvenir; while, seeing that it was useless to endeavour to check his steed, he became quite wild with excitement; gave him the rein; flourished his whip; and flew over the white plains, casting up the snow in clouds behind him like a hurricane.

While this little escapade was being enacted by the boys, the hunters were riding leisurely out upon the snowy sea in search of a wolf.

Words cannot convey to you, dear reader, an adequate conception of the peculiar fascination, the exhilarating splendour of the scene by which our hunters were surrounded. Its beauty lay not in variety of feature in the landscape, for there was none. One vast sheet of white alone met the view, bounded all round by the blue circle of the sky, and broken, in one or two places, by a patch or two of willows, which, rising on the plain, appeared like little islands in a frozen sea. It was the glittering sparkle of the snow in the

bright sunshine; the dreamy haziness of the atmosphere, mingling earth and sky as in a halo of gold; the first taste, the first smell of spring after a long winter, bursting suddenly upon the senses, like the unexpected visit of a long-absent, much-loved, and almost-forgotten friend; the soft, warm feeling of the south wind, bearing on its wings the balmy influences of sunny climes, and recalling vividly the scenes, the pleasures, the bustling occupations of summer. It was this that caused the hunters' hearts to leap within them as they rode alongthat induced old Mr. Kennedy to forget his years, and shout as he had been wont to do in days gone by, when he used to follow the track of the elk or hunt the wild buffalo; and it was this that made the otherwise monotonous prairies, on this particular clay, so charming.

The party had wandered about without discovering anything that bore the smallest resemblance to a wolf, for upwards of an hour; Fort Garry had fallen astern (to use a nautical phrase) until it had become a mere speck on the horizon, and vanished altogether; Peter Mactavish had twice given a false alarm, in the eagerness of his spirit, and had three times plunged his horse up to the girths in a snow-drift; the senior clerk was waxing impatient, and the horses restive, when a sudden "Hollo!" from Mr. Grant brought the whole cavalcade to a stand.

The object which drew his attention, and to which he directed the anxious eyes of his friends was a small speck, rather triangular in form, which overtopped a little willow bush not more than five or six hundred yards distant.

"There he is!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "That's a fact," cried Mr. Kennedy; and both gentlemen, instantaneously giving a shout, bounded towards the object; not, however, before the senior clerk, who was mounted on a fleet and strong horse, had taken the lead by six yards. A moment afterwards the speck rose up and discovered itself to be a veritable wolf. Moreover, he condescended to show his teeth, and then, conceiving it probable that his enemies were too numerous for him, he turned suddenly round and fled away. For ten minutes or so the chase was kept up at full speed, and as the snow happened to be shallow at the starting-point, the wolf kept well ahead of its pursuersindeed, distanced them a little. But soon the snow became deeper, and the wolf plunged heavily, and the horses gained considerably. Although to the eye the prairies seemed to be a uniform level, there were numerous slight undulations, in which drifts of some depth had collected. Into one of these the wolf now plunged and laboured slowly through it. But so deep was the snow that the horses almost stuck fast. A few minutes, however, brought them out, and Mr. Grant and Mr. Kennedy, who had kept close to each other during the run, pulled up for a moment on the summit of a ridge to breathe their panting steeds.

"What can that be?" exclaimed the former, pointing with his whip to a distant

object which was moving rapidly over the plain.

"Eh! whatwhere?" said Mr. Kennedy, shading his eyes with his hand, and peering in the direction indicated. "Why, that's another wolf, isn't it? No; it runs too fast for that."

"Strange," said his friend; "what can it be?"

"If I hadn't seen every beast in the country," remarked Mr. Kennedy, "and didn't know that there are no such animals north of the equator, I should say it was a mad dromedary mounted by a ring-tailed roarer."

"It can't be surelynot possible!" exclaimed Mr. Grant. "It's not
Charley on the new horse!"
Mr. Grant said this with an air of vexation that annoyed his friend a little. He would not have much minded Charley's taking a horse without leave, no matter how wild it might be; but he did not at all relish the idea of making an apology for his son's misconduct, and for the moment did not exactly know what to say. As usual in such a dilemma, the old man took refuge in a towering passion, gave his steed a sharp cut with the whip, and galloped forward to meet the delinquent.

We are not acquainted with the general appearance of a "ring-tailed roarer;" in fact, we have grave doubts as to whether such an animal exists at all; but if it does, and is particularly wild, dishevelled, and fierce in deportment, there is no doubt whatever that when Mr. Kennedy applied the name to his hopeful son, the application was singularly powerful and appropriate.

Charley had had a long run since we last saw him. After describing a wide curve, in which his charger displayed a surprising aptitude for picking out the ground that was least covered with snow, he headed straight for the fort again at the same pace at which he had started. At first Charley tried every possible method to check him, but in vain; so he gave it up, resolving to enjoy the race, since he could not prevent it. The young horse seemed to be made of lightning, with bones and muscles of brass; for he bounded untiringly forward for miles, tossing his head and snorting in his wild career. But Charley was a good horseman, and did not mind that much, being quite satisfied that the horse was a horse and not a spirit, and that therefore he could not run for ever. At last he approached the party, in search of which he had originally set out. His eyes dilated and his colour heightened as he beheld the wolf running directly towards him. Fumbling hastily for the pistol which he had borrowed from his friend Harry, he drew it from his pocket, and prepared to give the animal a shot in passing. Just at that moment the wolf caught sight of this new enemy in advance, and diverged suddenly to the left, plunging into a drift in his

confusion, and so enabling the senior clerk to overtake him, and send an ounce of heavy shot into his side, which turned him over quite dead. The shot, however had a double effect. At that instant Charley swept past; and his mettlesome steed swerved as it heard the loud report of the gun, thereby almost unhorsing his rider, and causing him unintentionally to discharge the conglomerate of bullets and swan-shot into the flank of Peter Mactavish's horsefortunately at a distance which rendered the shot equivalent to a dozen very sharp and particularly stinging blows. On receiving this unexpected salute, the astonished charger reared convulsively, and fell back upon his rider, who was thereby buried deep in the snow, not a vestige of him being left, no more than if he had never existed at all. Indeed, for a moment it seemed to be doubtful whether poor Peter did exist or not, until a sudden upheaving of the snow took place, and his dishevelled head appeared, with the eyes and mouth wide open, bearing on them an expression of mingled horror and amazement. Meanwhile the second shot acted like a spur on the young horse, which flew past Mr. Kennedy like a whirlwind.

"Stop, you young scoundrel!" he shouted, shaking his fist at Charley as he passed.

Charley was past stopping, either by inclination or ability. This sudden and unexpected accumulation of disasters was too much for him. As he passed his sire, with his brown curls streaming straight out behind, and his eyes flashing with excitement, his teeth clinched, and his horse tearing along more like an incarnate fiend than an animal, a spirit of combined recklessness, consternation, indignation, and glee took possession of him. He waved his whip wildly over his head, brought it down with a stinging cut on the horse's neck, and uttered a shout of defiance that threw completely into the shade the loudest war-whoop that was ever uttered by the brazen lungs of the wildest savage between Hudson's Bay and Oregon. Seeing and hearing this, old Mr. Kennedy wheeled about and dashed off in pursuit with much greater energy than he had displayed in chase of the wolf.

The race bid fair to be a long one, for the young horse was strong in wind and limb; and the gray mare, though decidedly not "the better horse," was much fresher than the other.

The hunters, who were now joined by Harry Somerville, did not feel it incumbent on them to follow this new chase; so they contented themselves with watching their flight towards the fort, while they followed at a more leisurely pace.

Meanwhile Charley rapidly neared Fort Garry, and now began to wonder whether the stable door was open, and if so, whether it were better for him to

take his chance of getting his neck broken, or to throw himself into the next snow-drift that presented itself.

He had not to remain long in suspense. The wooden fence that enclosed the stable-yard lay before him. It was between four and five feet high, with a beaten track running along the outside, and a deep snow-drift on the other. Charley felt that the young horse had made up his mind to leap this. As he did not at the moment see that there was anything better to be done, he prepared for it. As the horse bent on his haunches to spring, he gave him a smart cut with the whip, went over like a rocket, and plunged up to the neck in the snow-drift; which brought his career to an abrupt conclusion. The sudden stoppage of the horse was one thing, but the arresting of Master Charley was another and quite a different thing. The instant his charger landed, he left the saddle like a harlequin, described an extensive curve in the air, and fell head foremost into the drift, above which his boots and three inches of his legs alone remained to tell the tale.

On witnessing this climax, Mr. Kennedy, senior, pulled up, dismounted, and ranwith an expression of some anxiety on his countenanceto the help of his son, while Tom Whyte came out of the stable just in time to receive the "noo 'oss" as he floundered out of the snow.

"I believe," said the groom, as he surveyed the trembling charger, "that your son has broke the noo 'oss, sir, better nor I could 'ave done myself."

"I believe that my son has broken his neck," said Mr. Kennedy wrathfully. "Come here and help me to dig him out."

In a few minutes Charley was dug out, in a state of insensibility, and carried up to the fort, where he was laid on a bed, and restoratives actively applied for his recovery.

CHAPTER V.
Peter Mactavish becomes an amateur doctor; Charley promulgates his views of tilings in general to Kate; and Kate waxes sagacious.

Shortly after the catastrophe just related, Charley opened his eyes to consciousness, and aroused himself out of a prolonged fainting fit, under the combined influence of a strong constitution and the medical treatment of his friends.

Medical treatment in the wilds of North America, by the way, is very original in its character, and is founded on principles so vague that no one has ever been found capable of stating them clearly. Owing to the stubborn fact that

there are no doctors in the country, men have been thrown upon their own resources, and as a natural consequence every man is a doctor. True, there are two, it may be three, real doctors in the Hudson's Bay Company's employment; but as one of these is resident on the shores of Hudson's Bay, another in Oregon, and a third in Red River Settlement, they are not considered available for every case of emergency that may chance to occur in the hundreds of little outposts, scattered far and wide over the whole continent of North America, with miles and miles of primeval wilderness between each. We do not think, therefore, that when we say there are no doctors in the country, we use a culpable amount of exaggeration.

If a man gets ill, he goes on till he gets better; and if he doesn't get better, he dies. To avert such an undesirable consummation, desperate and random efforts are made in an amateur way. The old proverb that "extremes meet" is verified. And in a land where no doctors are to be had for love or money, doctors meet you at every turn, ready to practise on everything, with anything, and all for nothing, on the shortest possible notice. As maybe supposed, the practice is novel, and not unfrequently extremely wild. Tooth-drawing is considered child's playmere blacksmith's work; bleeding is a general remedy for everything, when all else fails; castor-oil, Epsom salts, and emetics are the three keynotes, the foundations, and the copestones of the system.

In Red River there is only one genuine doctor; and as the settlement is fully sixty miles long, he has enough to do, and cannot always be found when wanted, so that Charley had to rest content with amateur treatment in the meantime. Peter Mactavish was the first to try his powers. He was aware that laudanum had the effect of producing sleep, and seeing that Charley looked somewhat sleepy after recovering consciousness, he thought it advisable to help out that propensity to slumber, and went to the medicine-chest, whence he extracted a small phial of tincture of rhubarb, the half of which he emptied into a wine-glass, under the impression that it was laudanum, and poured down Charley's throat! The poor boy swallowed a little, and sputtered the remainder over the bedclothes. It may be remarked here that Mactavish was a wild, happy, half-mad sort of fellowwonderfully erudite in regard to some things, and profoundly ignorant in regard to others. Medicine, it need scarcely be added, was not his forte. Having accomplished this feat to his satisfaction, he sat down to watch by the bedside of his friend. Peter had taken this opportunity to indulge in a little private practice just after several of the other gentlemen had left the office, under the impression that Charley had better remain quiet for a short time.

"Well, Peter," whispered Mr. Kennedy, senior, putting his head in at the door (it was Harry's room in which Charley lay), "how is he now?"

"Oh! doing capitally," replied Peter, in a hoarse whisper, at the same time rising and entering the office, while he gently closed the door behind him. "I gave him a small dose of physic, which I think has done mm good. He's sleeping like a top now."

Mr. Kennedy frowned slightly, and made one or two remarks in reference to physic which were not calculated to gratify the ears of a physician.

"What did you give him?" he inquired abruptly.

"Only a little laudanum."

"Only, indeed! it's all trash together, and that's the worst kind of trash you could have given him. Humph!" and the old gentleman jerked his shoulders testily.

"How much did yon give him?" said the senior clerk, who had entered the apartment with Harry a few minutes before.

"Not quite a wineglassful," replied Peter, somewhat subdued.

"A what!" cried the father, starting from his chair as if he had received an electric shock, and rushing into the adjoining room, up and down which he raved in a state of distraction, being utterly ignorant of what should be done under the circumstances.

Poor Harry Somerville fell rather than leaped off his stool, and dashed into the bedroom, where old Mr. Kennedy was occupied in alternately heaping unutterable abuse on the head of Peter Mactavish, and imploring him to advise what was best to be done. But Peter knew not. He could only make one or two insane proposals to roll Charley about the floor, and see if that would do him any good; while Harry suggested in desperation that he should be hung by the heels, and perhaps it would run out!

Meanwhile the senior clerk seized his hat, with the intention of going in search of Tom Whyte, and rushed out at the door; which he had no sooner done than he found himself tightly embraced in the arms of that worthy, who happened to be entering at the moment, and who, in consequence of the sudden onset, was pinned up against the wall of the porch.

"Oh, my buzzum!" exclaimed Tom, laying his hand on his breast; "you've a'most bu'st me, sir. W'at's wrong, sir?"

"Go for the doctor, Tom, quick! run like the wind. Take the freshest horse; fly, Tom, Charley's poisonedlaudanum; quick!"

"'Eavens an' 'arth!" ejaculated the groom, wheeling round, and stalking rapidly off to the stable like a pair of insane compasses, while the senior clerk returned to the bedroom, where he found Mr. Kennedy still raving, Peter Mactavish still aghast and deadly pale, and Harry Somerville staring like a maniac at his young friend, as if he expected every moment to see him explode, although, to all appearance, he was sleeping soundly, and comfortably too, notwithstanding the noise that was going on around him. Suddenly Harry's eye rested on the label of the half-empty phial, and he uttered a loud, prolonged cheer.

"It's only tincture of"

"Wild cats and furies!" cried Mr. Kennedy, turning sharply round and seizing Harry by the collar, "why d'you kick up such a row, eh?"

"It's only tincture of rhubarb," repeated the boy, disengaging himself and holding up the phial triumphantly.

"So it is, I declare," exclaimed Mr. Kennedy, in a tone that indicated intense relief of mind; while Peter Mactavish uttered a sigh so deep that one might suppose a burden of innumerable tons weight had just been removed from his breast.

Charley had been roused from his slumbers by this last ebullition; but on being told what had caused it, he turned languidly round on his pillow and went to sleep again, while his friends departed and left him to repose.

Tom Whyte failed to find the doctor. The servant told him that her master had been suddenly called to set a broken leg that morning for a trapper who lived ten miles down the river, and on his return had found a man waiting with a horse and cariole, who carried him violently away to see his wife, who had been taken suddenly ill at a house twenty miles up the river, and so she didn't expect him back that night.

"An' where has 'e been took to?" inquired Tom.

She couldn't tell; she knew it was somewhere about the White-horse Plains, but she didn't know more than that.
"Did 'e not say w'en 'e'd be home?"

"No, he didn't."

"Oh dear!" said Tom, rubbing his long nose in great perplexity. "It's an 'orrible case o' sudden and onexpected pison."

She was sorry for it, but couldn't help that; and thereupon, bidding him good-morning, shut the door.

Tom's wits had come to that condition which just precedes "giving it up" as hopeless, when it occurred to him that he was not far from old Mr. Kennedy's residence; so he stepped into the cariole again and drove thither. On his arrival he threw poor Mrs. Kennedy and Kate into great consternation by his exceedingly graphic, and more than slightly exaggerated, account of what had brought him in search of the doctor. At first Mrs. Kennedy resolved to go up to Fort Garry immediately, but Kate persuaded her to remain at home, by pointing out that she could herself go, and if anything very serious had occurred (which she didn't believe), Mr. Kennedy could come down for her immediately, while she (Kate) could remain to nurse her brother.

In a few minutes Kate and Tom were seated side by side in the little cariole, driving swiftly up the frozen river; and two hours later the former was seated by her brother's bedside, watching him as he slept with a look of tender affection and solicitude.

Rousing himself from his slumbers, Charley looked vacantly round the room.

"Have you slept well, darling?" inquired Kate, laying her hand lightly on his forehead.

"Slepteh! oh yes. I've slept. I say, Kate, what a precious bump I came down on my head, to be sure!"

"Hush, Charley!" said Kate, perceiving that he was becoming energetic. "Father said you were to keep quietand so do I," she added, with a frown. "Shut your eyes, sir, and go to sleep."

Charley complied by shutting his eyes, and opening his mouth, and uttering a succession of deep snores.

"Now, you bad boy," said Kate, "why won't you try to rest?"

"Because, Kate, dear," said Charley, opening his eyes again"because I feel as if I had slept a week at least; and not being one of the seven sleepers, I don't think it necessary to do more in that way just now. Besides, my sweet but particularly wicked sister, I wish just at this moment to have a talk with you."

"But are you sure it won't do you harm to talk? do you feel quite strong enough?"

"Quite: Sampson was a mere infant compared to me."

"Oh, don't talk nonsense, Charley dear, and keep your hands quiet, and don't

lift the clothes with your knees in that way, else I'll go away and leave you."

"Very well, my pet; if you do, I'll get up and dress and follow you, that's all! But come, Kate, tell me first of all how it was that I got pitched off that long-legged rhinoceros, and who it was that picked me up, and why wasn't I killed, and how did I come here; for my head is sadly confused, and I scarcely recollect anything that has happened; and before commencing your discourse, Kate, please hand me a glass of water, for my mouth is as dry as a whistle."

Kate handed him a glass of water, smoothed his pillow, brushed the curls gently off his forehead, and sat down on the bedside.

"Thank you, Kate; now go on."

"Well, you see," she began

"Pardon me, dearest," interrupted Charley, "if you would please to look at me you would observe that my two eyes are tightly closed, so that I don't see at all."

"Well, then, you must understand"

"Must I? Oh!"

"That after that wicked horse leaped with you over the stable fence, you were thrown high into the air, and turning completely round, fell head foremost into the snow, and your poor head went through the top of an old cask that had been buried there all winter."

"Dear me!" ejaculated Charley; "did anyone see me, Kate?"

"Oh yes."

"Who?" asked Charley, somewhat anxiously; "not Mrs. Grant, I hope? for if she did she'd never let me hear the last of it."

"No; only our father, who was chasing you at the time," replied Kate, with a merry laugh.

"And no one else?"

"Nooh yes, by-the-by, Tom Whyte was there too."

"Oh, he's nobody. Go on."

"But tell me, Charley, why do you care about Mrs. Grant seeing you?"

"Oh! no reason at all, only she's such an abominable quiz."

We must guard the reader here against the supposition that Mrs. Grant was a quiz of the ordinary kind. She was by no means a sprightly, clever woman, rather fond of a joke than otherwise, as the term might lead you to suppose. Her corporeal frame was very large, excessively fat, and remarkably unwieldy; being an appropriate casket in which to enshrine a mind of the heaviest and most sluggish nature. She spoke little, ate largely, and slept muchthe latter recreation being very frequently enjoyed in a large arm-chair of a peculiar kind. It had been a water-butt, which her ingenious husband had cut half-way down the middle, then half-way across, and in the angle thus formed fixed a bottom, which, together with the back, he padded with tow, and covered the whole with a mantle of glaring bed-curtain chintz, whose pattern alternated in stripes of sky-blue and china roses, with broken fragments of the rainbow between. Notwithstanding her excessive slowness, however, Mrs. Grant was fond of taking a firm hold of anything or any circumstance in the character or affairs of her friends, and twitting them thereupon in a grave but persevering manner that was exceedingly irritating. No one could ever ascertain whether Mrs. Grant did this in a sly way or not, as her visage never expressed anything except unalterable good-humour. She was a good wife and an affectionate mother; had a family of ten children, and could boast of never having had more than one quarrel with her husband. This disagreement was occasioned by a rather awkward mischance. One day, not long after her last baby was born, Mrs. Grant waddled towards her tub with the intention of enjoying her accustomed siesta. A few minutes previously, her seventh child, which was just able to walk, had scrambled up into the seat and fallen fast asleep there. As has been already said, Mrs. Grant's intellect was never very bright, and at this particular time she was rather drowsy, so that she did not observe the child, and on reaching her chair, turned round preparatory to letting herself plump into it. She always plumped into her chair. Her muscles were too soft to lower her gently down into it. Invariably on reaching a certain point they ceased to act, and let her down with a crash. She had just reached this point, and her baby's hopes and prospects were on the eve of being cruelly crushed for ever, when Mr. Grant noticed the impending calamity. He had no time to warn her, for she had already passed the point at which her powers of muscular endurance terminated; so grasping the chair, he suddenly withdrew it with such force that the baby rolled off upon the floor like a hedgehog, straightened out flat, and gave vent to an outrageous roar, while its horror-struck mother came to the ground with a sound resembling the fall of an enormous sack of wool. Although the old lady could not see exactly that there was anything very blameworthy in her husband's conduct on this occasion, yet her nerves had received so severe a shock that she refused to be comforted for two entire days.

But to return from this digression. After Charley had two or three times recommended Kate (who was a little inclined to be quizzical) to proceed, she continued,

"Well, then you were carried up here by father and Tom Whyte, and put to bed, and after a good deal of rubbing and rough treatment you were got round. Then Peter Mactavish nearly poisoned you, but fortunately he was such a goose that he did not think of reading the label of the phial, and so gave you a dose of tincture of rhubarb instead of laudanum as he had intended; and then father flew into a passion, and Tom Whyte was sent to fetch the doctor, and couldn't find him; but fortunately he found me, which was much better, I think, and brought me up here. And so here I am, and here I intend to remain."

"And so that's the end of it. Well, Kate, I'm very glad it was no worse."

"And I am very thankful" said Kate, with emphasis on the word, "that it's no worse."

"Oh, well, you know, Kate, I meant that, of course."

"But you did not say it," replied his sister earnestly.

"To be sure not," said Charley gaily; "it would be absurd to be always making solemn speeches, and things of that sort, every time one has a little accident."

"True, Charley; but when one has a very serious accident, and escapes unhurt, don't you think that then it would be"

"Oh yes, to be sure," interrupted Charley, who still strove to turn Kate from her serious frame of mind; "but sister dear, how could I possibly say I was thankful with my head crammed into an old cask and my feet pointing up to the blue sky, eh?"

Kate smiled at this, and laid her hand on his arm, while she bent over the pillow and looked tenderly into his eyes.

"O my darling Charley, you are disposed to jest about it; but I cannot tell you how my heart trembled this morning when I heard from Tom Whyte of what had happened. As we drove up to the fort, I thought how terrible it would have been if you had been killed; and then the happy days we have spent together rushed into my mind, and I thought of the willow creek where we used to fish for gold eyes, and the spot in the woods where we have so often chased the little birds, and the lake in the prairies where we used to go in spring to watch the water-fowl sporting in the sunshine. When I recalled these things, Charley, and thought of you as dead, I felt as if I should die too. And when I came here

and found that my fears were needless, that you were alive and safe, and almost well, I felt thankfulyes, very, very thankfulto God for sparing your life, my dear, dear Charley." And Kate laid her head on his bosom and sobbed, when she thought of what might have been, as if her very heart would break.

Charley's disposition to levity entirely vanished while his sister spoke; and twining his tough little arm round her neck, he pressed her fervently to his heart.

"Bless you, Kate," he said at length. "I am indeed thankful to God, not only for sparing my life, but for giving me such a darling sister to live for. But now, Kate, tell me, what do you think of father's determination to have me placed in the office here?"

"Indeed, I think it's very hard. Oh, I do wish so much that I could do it for you," said Kate with a sigh.

"Do what for me?" asked Charley.

"Why, the office work," said Kate.

"Tuts! fiddlesticks! But isn't it, now, really a very hard case?"

"Indeed it is; but, then, what can you do?"

"Do?" said Charley impatiently; "run away to be sure."

"Oh, don't speak of that!" said Kate anxiously. "You know it will kill our beloved mother; and then it would grieve father very much."

"Well, father don't care much about grieving me, when he hunted me down like a wolf till I nearly broke my neck."

"Now, Charley, you must not speak so. Father loves you tenderly, although he is a little rough at times. If you only heard how kindly he speaks of you to our mother when you are away, you could not think of giving him so much pain. And then the Bible says, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;' and as God speaks in the Bible, surely we should pay attention to it!"

Charley was silent for a few seconds; then heaving a deep sigh, he said,

"Well, I believe you're right, Kate; but then, what am I to do? If I don't run away, I must live, like poor Harry Somerville, on a long-legged stool; and if I do that, I'llI'll"

As Charley spoke, the door opened, and his father entered.

"Well, my boy," said he, seating himself on the bedside and taking his son's hand, "how goes it now? Head getting all right again? I fear that Kate has been talking too much to you.Is it so, you little chatterbox?"

Mr. Kennedy parted Kate's clustering ringlets and kissed her forehead.

Charley assured his father that he was almost well, and much the better of having Kate to tend him. In fact, he felt so much revived that he said he would get up and go out for a walk.

"Had I not better tell Tom Whyte to saddle the young horse for you?" said his father, half ironically. "No, no, boy; lie still where you are to-day, and get up if you feel better to-morrow. In the meantime, I've come to say good-bye, as I intend to go home to relieve your mother's anxiety about you. I'll see you again, probably, the day after to-morrow. Hark you, boy; I've been talking your affairs over again with Mr. Grant, and we've come to the conclusion to give you a run in the woods for a time. You'll have to be ready to start early in spring with the first brigades for the north. So adieu!"

Mr. Kennedy patted him on the head, and hastily left the room.

A burning blush of shame arose on Charley's cheek as he recollected his late remarks about his father; and then, recalling the purport of his last words, he sent forth an exulting shout as he thought of the coming spring.

"Well now, Charley," said Kate, with an arch smile, "let us talk seriously over your arrangements for running away."

Charley replied by seizing the pillow and throwing it at his sister's head; but being accustomed to such eccentricities, she anticipated the movement and evaded the blow.

"Ah, Charley," cried Kate, laughing, "you mustn't let your hand get out of practice! That was a shockingly bad shot for a man thirsting to become a bear and buffalo hunter!"

"I'll make my fortune at once," cried Charley, as Kate replaced the pillow, "build a wooden castle on the shores of Great Bear Lake, take you to keep house for me, and when I'm out hunting you'll fish for whales in the lake; and we'll live there to a good old age; so good-night, Kate dear, and go to bed."

Kate laughed, gave her brother a parting kiss, and left him.

CHAPTER VI.

Spring and the voyageurs.

Winter, with its snow and its ice: winter, with its sharp winds and white drifts; winter, with its various characteristic occupations and employments, is past, and it is spring now.

The sun no longer glitters on fields of white; the woodman's axe is no longer heard hacking the oaken billets, to keep alive the roaring fires. That inexpressibly cheerful sound the merry chime of sleigh-bells, that tells more of winter than all other sounds together, is no longer heard on the bosom of Red River; for the sleighs are thrown aside as useless lumbercarts and gigs have supplanted them. The old Canadian, who used to drive the ox with its water-barrel to the ice-hole for his daily supply, has substituted a small cart with wheels for the old sleigh that used to glide so smoothly over the snow, and grit so sharply on it in the more than usually frosty mornings in the days gone by. The trees have lost their white patches, and the clumps of willows, that used to look like islands in the prairie, have disappeared, as the carpeting that gave them prominence has dissolved. The aspect of everything in the isolated settlement has changed. The winter is gone, and springbright, beautiful, hilarious springhas come again.

By those who have never known an arctic winter, the delights of an arctic spring can never, we fear, be fully appreciated or understood. Contrast is one of its strongest elements; indeed, we might say, the element which gives to all the others peculiar zest. Life in the arctic regions is like one of Turner's pictures, in which the lights are strong, the shadows deep, and the tout ensemble hazy and romantic. So cold and prolonged is the winter, that the first mild breath of spring breaks on the senses like a zephyr from the plains of Paradise. Everything bursts suddenly into vigorous life, after the long, death-like sleep of Nature; as little children burst into the romping gaieties of a new day, after the deep repose of a long and tranquil night. The snow melts, the ice breaks up, and rushes in broken masses, heaving and tossing in the rising floods, that grind and whirl them into the ocean, or into those great fresh-water lakes that vie with ocean itself in magnitude and grandeur. The buds come out and the leaves appear, clothing all nature with a bright refreshing green, which derives additional brilliancy from sundry patches of snow, that fill the deep creeks and hollows everywhere, and form ephemeral fountains whose waters continue to supply a thousand rills for many a long day, until the fierce glare of the summer sun prevails at last and melts them all away.

Red River flows on now to mix its long-pent-up waters with Lake Winnipeg. Boats are seen rowing about upon its waters, as the settlers travel from place to place; and wooden canoes, made of the hollowed-out trunks of large trees, shoot across from shore to shorethese canoes being a substitute for bridges, of

which there are none, although the settlement lies on both sides of the river. Birds have now entered upon the scene, their wild cries and ceaseless flight adding to it a cheerful activity. Ground squirrels pop up out of their holes to bask their round, fat, beautifully-striped little bodies in the sun, or to gaze in admiration at the farmer, as he urges a pair of very slow-going oxen, that drag the plough at a pace which induces one to believe that the wide field may possibly be ploughed up by the end of next year. Frogs whistle in the marshy grounds so loudly that men new to the country believe they are being regaled by the songs of millions of birds. There is no mistake about their whistle. It is not merely like a whistle, but it is a whistle, shrill and continuous; and as the swamps swarm with these creatures, the song never ceases for a moment, although each individual frog creates only one little gush of music, composed of half-a-dozen trills, and then stops a moment for breath before commencing the second bar. Bull-frogs, too, though not so numerous, help to vary the sound by croaking vociferously, as if they understood the value of bass, and were glad of having an opportunity to join in the universal hum of life and joy which rises everywhere, from the river and the swamp, the forest and the prairie, to welcome back the spring.

Such was the state of things in Red River one beautiful morning in April, when a band of voyageurs lounged in scattered groups about the front gate of Fort Garry. They were as fine a set of picturesque, manly fellows as one could desire to see. Their mode of life rendered them healthy, hardy, arid good-humoured, with a strong dash of recklessnessperhaps too much of itin some of the younger men. Being descended, generally, from French-Canadian sires and Indian mothers, they united some of the good and not a few of the bad qualities of both, mentally as well as physicallycombining the light, gay-hearted spirit and full, muscular frame of the Canadian with the fierce passions and active habits of the Indian. And this wildness of disposition was not a little fostered by the nature of their usual occupations. They were employed during a great part of the year in navigating the Hudson's Bay Company's boats, laden with furs and goods, through the labyrinth of rivers and lakes that stud and intersect the whole continent, or they were engaged in pursuit of the bisons, [Footnote: These animals are always called buffaloes by American hunters and fur-traders.] which roam the prairies in vast herds.

They were dressed in the costume of the country: most of them wore light-blue cloth capotes, girded tightly round them', by scarlet or crimson worsted belts. Some of them had blue and others scarlet cloth leggings, ornamented more or less with stained porcupine quills, coloured silk, or variegated beads; while some might be seen clad in the leathern coats of winterdeer-skin dressed like chamois leather, fringed all round with little tails, and ornamented much in the same way as those already described. The heavy winter moccasins and

duffel socks, which gave to their feet the appearance of being afflicted with gout, were now replaced by moccasins of a lighter and more elegant character, having no socks below, and fitting tightly to the feet like gloves. Some wore hats similar to those made of silk or beaver which are worn by ourselves in Britain, but so bedizened with scarlet cock-tail feathers, and silver cords and tassels, as to leave the original form of the head-dress a matter of great uncertainty. These hats, however, are only used on high occasions, and chiefly by the fops. Most of the men wore coarse blue cloth caps with peaks, and not a few discarded head-pieces altogether, under the impression, apparently, that nature had supplied a covering which was in itself sufficient. These costumes varied not only in character but in quality, according to the circumstances of the wearer; some being highly ornamental and mendedevincing the felicity of the owner in the possession of a good wifewhile others were soiled and torn, or but slightly ornamented. The voyageurs were collected, as we have said, in groups. Here stood a dozen of the youngestconsequently the most noisy and showily dressedlaughing loudly, gesticulating violently, and bragging tremendously. Near to them were collected a number of sterner spiritsmen of middle age, with all the energy, and muscle, and bone of youth, but without its swaggering hilarity; men whose powers and nerves had been tried over and over again amid the stirring scenes of a voyageur's life; men whose heads were cool, and eyes sharp, and hands ready and powerful, in the mad whirl of boiling rapids, in the sudden attack of wild beast and hostile man, or in the unexpected approach of any danger; men who, having been well tried, needed not to boast, and who, having carried off triumphantly their respective brides many years ago, needed not to decorate their persons with the absurd finery that characterised their younger brethren. They were comparatively few in number, but they composed a sterling band, of which every man was a hero. Among them were those who occupied the high positions of bowman and steersman, and when we tell the reader that on these two men frequently hangs the safety of a boat, with all its crew and lading, it will be easily understood how needful it is that they should be men of iron nerve and strength of mind.

Boat-travelling in those regions is conducted in a way that would astonish most people who dwell in the civilised quarters of the globe. The country being intersected in all directions by great lakes and rivers, these have been adopted as the most convenient highways along which to convey the supplies and bring back the furs from outposts. Rivers in America, however, as in other parts of the world, are distinguished by sudden ebullitions and turbulent points of character, in the shape of rapids, falls, and cataracts, up and down which neither men nor boats can by any possibility go with impunity; consequently, on arriving at such obstructions, the cargoes are carried overland to navigable water above or below the falls (as the case may be), then the boats are dragged over and launched, again reloaded, and the travellers proceed. This operation

is called "making a portage;" and as these portages vary from twelve yards to twelve miles in length, it may be readily conceived that a voyageur's life is not an easy one by any means.

This, however, is only one of his difficulties. Rapids occur which are not so dangerous as to make a "portage" necessary, but are sufficiently turbulent to render the descent of them perilous. In such cases, the boats, being lightened of part of their cargo, are run down, and frequently they descend with full cargoes and crews. It is then that the whole management of each boat devolves upon its bowman and steersman. The rest of the crew, or middlemen as they are called, merely sit still and look on, or give a stroke with their oars if required; while the steersman, with powerful sweeps of his heavy oar, directs the flying boat as it bounds from surge to surge like a thing of life; and the bowman stands erect in front to assist in directing his comrade at the stern, having a strong and long pole in his hands, with which, ever and anon, he violently forces the boat's head away from sunken rocks, against which it might otherwise strike and be stove in, capsized, or seriously damaged.

Besides the groups already enumerated, there were one or two others, composed of grave, elderly men, whose wrinkled brows, gray hairs, and slow, quiet step, showed that the strength of their days was past; although their upright figures and warm brown complexions gave promise of their living to see many summers still. These were the principal steersmen and old guidesmen of renown, to whom the others bowed as oracles or looked up to as fathers; men whose youth and manhood had been spent in roaming the trackless wilderness, and who were, therefore, eminently qualified to guide brigades through the length and breadth of the land; men whose power of threading their way among the perplexing intricacies of the forest had become a second nature, a kind of instinct, that was as sure of attaining its end as the instinct of the feathered tribes, which brings the swallow, after a long absence, with unerring certainty back to its former haunts again in spring.

CHAPTER VII.
The store.

At whatever establishment in the fur-trader's dominions you may chance to alight you will find a particular building which is surrounded by a halo of interest; towards which there seems to be a general leaning on the part of everybody, especially of the Indians; and with which are connected, in the minds of all, the most stirring reminiscences and pleasing associations.

This is the trading-store. It is always recognisable, if natives are in the neighbourhood, by the bevy of red men that cluster round it, awaiting the

coming of the storekeeper or the trader with that stoic patience which is peculiar to Indians. It may be further recognised, by a close observer, by the soiled condition of its walls occasioned by loungers rubbing their backs perpetually against it, and the peculiar dinginess round the keyhole, caused by frequent applications of the key, which renders it conspicuous beyond all its comrades. Here is contained that which makes the red man's life enjoyable; that which causes his heart to leap, and induces him to toil for months and months together in the heat of summer and amid the frost and snow of winter; that which actually accomplishes, what music is said to achieve, the "soothing of the savage breast:" in short, here are stored up blankets, guns, powder, shot, kettles, axes, and knives; twine for nets, vermilion for war-paint, fishhooks and scalping-knives, capotes, cloth, beads, needles, and a host of miscellaneous articles, much too numerous to mention. Here, also occur periodical scenes of bustle and excitement, when bands of natives arrive from distant hunting-grounds, laden with rich furs, which are speedily transferred to the Hudson's Bay Company's stores in exchange for the goods aforementioned. And many a tough wrangle has the trader on such occasions with sharp natives, who might have graduated in Billingsgate, so close are they at a bargain. Here, too, voyageurs are supplied with an equivalent for their wages, part in advance, if they desire it (and they generally do desire it), and part at the conclusion of their long and arduous voyages.

It is to one of these stores, reader, that we wish to introduce you now, that you may witness the men of the North brigade receive their advances.

The store at Fort Garry stands on the right of the fort, as you enter by the front gate. Its interior resembles that of the other stores in the country, being only a little larger. A counter encloses a space sufficiently wide to admit a dozen men, and serves to keep back those who are more eager than the rest. Inside this counter, at the time we write of, stood our friend, Peter Mactavish, who was the presiding genius of the scene.

"Shut the door now, and lock it," said Peter, in an authoritative tone, after eight or ten young voyageurs had crushed into the space in front of the counter. "I'll not supply you with so much as an ounce of tobacco if you let in another man."

Peter needed not to repeat the command. Three or four stalwart shoulders were applied to the door, which shut with a bang like a cannon-shot, and the key was turned.

"Come now, Antoine," began the trader, "we've lots to do, and not much time to do it in, so pray look sharp."

Antoine, however, was not to be urged on so easily. He had been meditating deeply all the morning on what he should purchase. Moreover, he had a sweetheart, and of course he had to buy something for her before setting out on his travels. Besides, Antoine was six feet high, and broad shouldered, and well made, with a dark face and glossy black hair; and he entertained a notion that there were one or two points in his costume which required to be carefully rectified, ere he could consider that he had attained to perfection: so he brushed the long hair off his forehead, crossed his arms, and gazed around him.

"Come now, Antoine," said Peter, throwing a green blanket at him; "I know you want that to begin with. What's the use of thinking so long about it, eh? And that, too," he added, throwing him a blue cloth capote. "Anything else?"

"Oui, oui, monsieur," cried Antoine, as he disengaged himself from the folds of the coat which Peter had thrown over his head. "Tabac, monsieur, tabac!"

"Oh, to be sure," cried Peter. "I might have guessed that that was uppermost in your mind. Well, how much will you have?" Peter began to unwind the fragrant weed off a coil of most appalling size and thickness, which looked like a snake of endless length. "Will that do?" and he flourished about four feet of the snake before the eyes of the voyageur.

Antoine accepted the quantity, and young Harry Somerville entered the articles against him in a book.

"Anything more, Antoine?" said the trader. "Ah, some beads and silks, eh? Oho, Antoine!By the way, Louis, have you seen Annette lately?"

Peter turned to another voyageur when he put this question, and the voyageur gave a broad grin as he replied in the affirmative, while Antoine looked a little confused. He did not care much, however, for jesting. So, after getting one or two more articlesnot forgetting half-a-dozen clay pipes, and a few yards of gaudy calico, which called forth from Peter a second reference to Annettehe bundled up his goods, and made way for another comrade.

Louis Peltier, one of the principal guides, and a man of importance therefore, now stood forward. He was probably about forty-five years of age; had a plain, olive-coloured countenance, surrounded by a mass of long jet-black hair, which he inherited, along with a pair of dark, piercing eyes, from his Indian mother; and a robust, heavy, yet active frame, which bore a strong resemblance to what his Canadian father's had been many years before. His arms, in particular, were of herculean mould, with large swelling veins and strongly-marked muscles. They seemed, in fact, just formed for the purpose of pulling the heavy sweep of an inland boat among strong rapids. His face

combined an expression of stern resolution with great good-humour; and truly his countenance did not belie him, for he was known among his comrades as the most courageous and at the same time the most peaceable man in the settlement. Louis Peltier was singular in possessing the latter quality, for assuredly the half-breeds, whatever other good points they boast, cannot lay claim to very gentle or dove-like dispositions. His grey capote and blue leggings were decorated with no unusual ornaments, and the scarlet belt which encircled his massive figure was the only bit of colour he displayed.

The younger men fell respectfully into the rear as Louis stepped forward and begged pardon for coming so early in the day. "Mais, monsieur," he said, "I have to look after the boats to-day, and get them ready for a start to-morrow."

Peter Mactavish gave Louis a hearty shake of the hand before proceeding to supply his wants, which were simple and moderate, excepting in the article of tabac, in the use of which he was im-moderate, being an inveterate smoker; so that a considerable portion of the snake had to be uncoiled for his benefit.

"Fond as ever of smoking, Louis?" said Peter Mactavish, as he handed him the coil.

"Oui, monsieurvery fond," answered the guide, smelling the weed. "Ah, this is very good. I must take a good supply this voyage, because I lost the half of my roll last year;" and the guide gave a sigh as he thought of the overwhelming bereavement.

"Lost the half of it, Louis!" said Mactavish. "Why, how was that? You must have lost more than half your spirits with it!"

"Ah, oui, I lost all my spirits, and my comrade François at the same time!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the clerk, bustling about the store while the guide continued to talk.

"Oui, monsieur, oui. I lost him, and my tabac, and my spirits, and very nearly my life, all in one moment!"

"Why, how came that about?" said Peter, pausing in his work, and laying a handful of pipes on the counter.

"Ah, monsieur, it was very sad (merci, monsieur, merci; thirty pipes, if you please), and I thought at the time that I should give up my voyageur life, and remain altogether in the settlement with my old woman. Mais, monsieur, that was not possible. When I spoke of it to my old woman, she called me an old woman; and you know, monsieur, that two old women never could live

together in peace for twelve months under the same roof. So here I am, you see, ready again for the voyage."

The voyageurs, who had drawn round Louis when he alluded to an anecdote which they had often heard before, but were never weary of hearing over again, laughed loudly at this sally, and urged the guide to relate the story to "monsieur" who, nothing loath to suspend his operations for a little, leaned his arms on the counter and said

"Tell us all about it, Louis; I am anxious to know how you managed to come by so many losses all at one time."

"Bien, monsieur, I shall soon relate it, for the story is very short."

Harry Somerville, who was entering the pipes in Louis's account, had just set down the figures "30" when Louis cleared his throat to begin. Not having the mental fortitude to finish the line, he dropped his pen, sprang off his stool, which he upset in so doing, jumped up, sitting-ways, upon the counter, and gazed with breathless interest into the guide's face as he spoke.

"It was on a cold, wet afternoon," said Louis, "that we were descending the Hill River, at a part of the rapids where there is a sharp bend in the stream, and two or three great rocks that stand up in front of the water, as it plunges over a ledge, as if they were put there a purpose to catch it, and split it up into foam, or to stop the boats and canoes that try to run the rapids, and cut them up into splinters. It was an ugly place, monsieur, I can tell you; and though I've run it again and again, I always hold my breath tighter when we get to the top, and breathe freer when we get to the bottom. Well, there was a chum of mine at the bow, Francois by name, and a fine fellow he was as I ever came across. He used to sleep with me at night under the same blanket, although it was somewhat inconvenient; for being as big as myself and a stone heavier, it was all we could do to make the blanket cover us. However, he and I were great friends, and we managed it somehow. Well, he was at the bow when we took the rapids, and a first-rate bowman he made. His pole was twice as long and twice as thick as any other pole in the boat, and he twisted it about just like a fiddlestick. I remember well the night before we came to the rapids, as he was sitting by the fire, which was blazing up among the pine-branches that overhung us, he said that he wanted a good pole for the rapids next day; and with that he jumped up, laid hold of an axe, and went back into the woods a bit to get one. When he returned, he brought a young tree on his shoulder, which he began to strip of its branches, and bark. 'Louis, says he, 'this is hot work; give us a pipe.' So I rummaged about for some tobacco, but found there was none left in my bag; so I went to my kit and got out my roll, about three fathoms or so, and cutting half of it off, I went to the fire and twisted it round

his neck by way of a joke, and he said he'd wear it as a necklace all night, and so he did, too, and forgot to take it off in the morning; and when we came near the rapids I couldn't get at my bag to stow it away, so says I, 'Francois, you'll have to run with it on, for I can't stop to stow it now.' 'All right,' says he, 'go ahead;' and just as he said it, we came in sight of the first run, foaming and boiling like a kettle of robbiboo. 'Take care, lads,' I cried, and the next moment we were dashing down towards the bend in the river. As we came near to the shoot, I saw Francois standing up on the gunwale to get a better view of the rocks ahead, and every now and then giving me a signal with his hand how to steer; suddenly he gave a shout, and plunged his long pole into the water, to fend off from a rock which a swirl in the stream had concealed. For a second or two his pole bent like a willow, and we could feel the heavy boat jerk off a little with the tremendous strain, but all at once the pole broke off short with a crack, Francois' heels made a flourish in the air, and then he disappeared head foremost into the foaming water, with my tobacco coiled round his neck! As we flew past the place, one of his arms appeared, and I made a grab at it, and caught him by the sleeve; but the effort upset myself and over I went too. Fortunately, however, one of my men caught me by the foot, and held on like a vice; but the force of the current tore Francois' sleeve out of my grasp, and I was dragged into the boat again just in time to see my comrade's legs and arms going like the sails of a windmill, as he rolled over several times and disappeared. Well, we put ashore the moment we got into still water, and then five or six of us started off on foot to look for Francois. After half-an-hour's search, we found him pitched upon a flat rock in the middle of the stream like a bit of driftwood, We immediately waded out to the rock and brought him ashore, where we lighted a fire, took off all his clothes, and rubbed him till he began to show signs of life again. But you may judge, mes garçons, of my misery when I found that the coil of tobacco was gone. It had come off his neck during his struggles, and there wasn't a vestige of it left, except a bright red mark on the throat, where it had nearly strangled him. When he began to recover, he put his hand up to his neck as if feeling for something, and muttered faintly, 'The tabac.' 'Ah, morbleu!' said I, 'you may say that! Where is it?' Well, we soon brought him round, but he had swallowed so much water that it damaged his lungs, and we had to leave him at the next post we came to; and so I lost my friend too."

"Did Francois get better?" said Charley Kennedy, in a voice of great concern.

Charley had entered the store by another door, just as the guide began his story, and had listened to it unobserved with breathless interest.

"Recover! Oh oui, monsieur, he soon got well again.'

"Oh, I'm so glad," cried Charley.

"But I lost him for that voyage," added the guide; "and I lost my tabac for ever."

"You must take better care of it this time, Louis," said Peter
Mactavish, as he resumed his work.
"That I shall, monsieur," replied Louis, shouldering his goods and quitting the store, while a short, slim, active little Canadian took his place.

"Now, then, Baptiste," said Mactavish, "you want a"

"Blanket, monsieur,"

"Good. And"

"A capote, monsieur."

"And"

"An axe"

"Stop, stop!" shouted Harry Somerville from his desk. "Here's an entry in Louis's account that I can't make out30 something or other; what can it have been?"

"How often," said Mactavish, going up to him with a look of annoyance"how often have I told you, Mr. Somerville, not to leave an entry half-finished on any account!"

"I didn't know that I left it so," said Harry, twisting his features, and scratching his head in great perplexity. "What can it have been? 3030not blankets, eh?" (Harry was becoming banteringly bitter.) "He couldn't have got thirty guns, could he? or thirty knives, or thirty copper kettles?"

"Perhaps it was thirty pounds of tea," suggested Charley.

"No doubt it was thirty pipes," said Peter Mactavish.

"Oh, that was it!" cried Harry, "that was it! thirty pipes, to be sure.
What an ass I am!"
"And pray what is that?" said Mactavish, pointing sarcastically to an entry in the previous account"5 yards of superfine Annette. Really, Mr. Somerville, I wish you would pay more attention to your work and less to the conversation."

"Oh dear!" cried Harry, becoming almost hysterical under the combined effects of chagrin at making so many mistakes, and suppressed merriment at the idea of selling Annettes by the yard. "Oh, dear me"

Harry could say no more, but stuffed his handkerchief into his mouth and turned away.

"Well, sir," said the offended Peter, "when you have laughed to your entire satisfaction, we will go on with our work, if you please."

"All right," cried Harry, suppressing his feelings with a strong effort; "what next?"

Just then a tall, raw-boned man entered the store, and rudely thrusting Baptiste aside, asked if he could get his supplies now.
"No," said Mactavish, sharply; "you'll take your turn like the rest."

The new-comer was a native of Orkney, a country from which, and the neighbouring islands, the Fur Company almost exclusively recruits its staff of labourers. These men are steady, useful servants, although inclined to be slow and lazy at first; but they soon get used to the country, and rapidly improve under the example of the active Canadians and half-breeds with whom they associate; some of them are the best servants the Company possess. Hugh Mathison, however, was a very bad specimen of the race, being rough and coarse in his manners, and very lazy withal. Upon receiving the trader's answer, Hugh turned sulkily on his heel and strode towards the door. Now, it happened that Baptiste's bundle lay just behind him, and on turning to leave the place, he tripped over it and stumbled, whereat the voyageurs burst into an ironical laugh (for Hugh was not a favourite).

"Confound your trash!" he cried, giving the little bundle a kick that scattered everything over the floor.

"Crapaud!" said Baptiste, between his set teeth, while his eyes flashed angrily, and he stood up before Hugh with clinched fists, "what mean you by that, eh?"

The big Scotchman held his little opponent in contempt; so that, instead of putting himself on the defensive, he leaned his back against the door, thrust his hands into his pockets, and requested to know "what that was to him."

Baptiste was not a man of many words, and this reply, coupled with the insolent sneer with which it was uttered, caused him to plant a sudden and well-directed blow on the point of Hugh's nose, which flattened it on his face, and brought the back of his head into violent contact with the door.

"Well done!" shouted the men; "bravo, Baptiste! Regardez le nez, mes enfants!"

"Hold!" cried Mactavish, vaulting the counter, and intercepting Hugh, as he

rushed upon his antagonist; "no fighting here, you blackguards! If you want to do that, go outside the fort;" and Peter, opening the door, thrust the Orkneyman out.

In the meantime, Baptiste gathered up his goods and left the store, in company with several of his friends, vowing that he would wreak his vengeance on the "gros chien" before the sun should set.

He had not long to wait, however, for just outside the gate he found Hugh, still smarting under the pain and indignity of the blow, and ready to pounce upon him like a cat on a mouse.

Baptiste instantly threw down his bundle, and prepared for battle by discarding his coat.

Every nation has its own peculiar method of fighting, and its own ideas of what is honourable and dishonourable in combat. The English, as everyone knows, have particularly stringent rules regarding the part of the body which may or may not be hit with propriety, and count it foul disgrace to strike a man when he is down, although, by some strange perversity of reasoning, they deem it right and fair to fall upon him while in this helpless condition, and burst him if possible. The Scotchman has less of the science, and we are half inclined to believe that he would go the length of kicking a fallen opponent; but on this point we are not quite positive. In regard to the style adopted by the half-breeds, however, we have no doubt. They fight any way and every way, without reference to rules at all; and really, although we may bring ourselves into contempt by admitting the fact, we think they are quite right. No doubt the best course of action is not to fight; but if a man does find it necessary to do so, surely the wisest plan is to get it over at once (as the dentist suggested to his timorous patient), and to do it in the most effectual manner.

Be this as it may, Baptiste flew at Hugh, and alighted upon him, not head first, or fist first, or feet first, or anything first, but altogetherin a heap as it were; fist, feet, knees, nails, and teeth, all taking effect at one and the same time, with a force so irresistible that the next moment they both rolled in the dust together.

For a minute or so they struggled and kicked like a couple of serpents, and then, bounding to their feet again, they began to perform a war-dance round each other, revolving their fists at the same time in, we presume, the most approved fashion. Owing to his bulk and natural laziness, which rendered jumping about like a jack-in-the-box impossible, Hugh Mathison preferred to stand on the defensive; while his lighter opponent, giving way to the natural bent of his mercurial temperament and corporeal predilections, comported

himself in a manner that cannot be likened to anything mortal or immortal, human or inhuman, unless it be to an insane cat, whose veins ran wild-fire instead of blood. Or perhaps we might liken him to that ingenious piece of firework called a zigzag cracker, which explodes with unexpected and repeated suddenness, changing its position in a most perplexing manner at every crack. Baptiste, after the first onset, danced backwards with surprising lightness, glaring at his adversary the while, and rapidly revolving his fists as before mentioned; then a terrific yell was heard; his head, arms, and legs became a sort of whirling conglomerate; the spot on which he danced was suddenly vacant, and at the same moment Mathison received a bite, a scratch, a dab on the nose, and a kick on the stomach all at once. Feeling that it was impossible to plant a well-directed blow on such an assailant, he waited for the next onslaught; and the moment he saw the explosive object flying through the air towards him, he met it with a crack of his heavy fist, which, happening to take effect in the middle of the chest, drove it backwards with about as much velocity as it had approached, and poor Baptiste measured his length on the ground.

"Oh, pauvre chien!" cried the spectators, "c'est fini!"

"Not yet," cried Baptiste, as he sprang with a scream to his feet again, and began his dance with redoubled energy, just as if all that had gone before was a mere sketcha sort of playful rehearsal, as it were, of what was now to follow. At this moment Hugh stumbled over a canoe-paddle, and fell headlong into Baptiste's arms, as he was in the very act of making one of his violent descents. This unlooked-for occurrence brought them both to a sudden pause, partly from necessity and partly from surprise. Out of this state Baptiste recovered first, and taking advantage of the accident, threw Mathison heavily to the ground. He rose quickly, however, and renewed the light with freshened vigour.

Just at this moment a passionate growl was heard, and old Mr. Kennedy rushed out of the fort in a towering rage.

Now Mr. Kennedy had no reason whatever for being angry. He was only a visitor at the fort, and so had no concern in the behaviour of those connected with it. He was not even in the Company's service now, and could not, therefore, lay claim, as one of its officers, to any right to interfere with its men. But Mr. Kennedy never acted much from reason; impulse was generally his guiding-star. He had, moreover, been an absolute monarch, and a commander of men, for many years past in his capacity of fur-trader. Being, as we have said, a powerful, fiery man, he had ruled very much by means of brute forcea species of suasion, by the way, which is too common among many of the gentlemen (?) in the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company. On hearing,

therefore, that the men were fighting in front of the fort, Mr. Kennedy rushed out in a towering rage.

"Oh, you precious blackguards!" he cried, running up to the combatants, while with flashing eyes he gazed first at one and then at the other, as if uncertain on which to launch his ire. "Have you no place in the world to fight but here? eh, blackguards?"

"O monsieur," said Baptiste, lowering his hands, and assuming that politeness of demeanour which seems inseparable from French blood, however much mixed with baser fluid, "I was just giving that dog a thrashing, monsieur."

"Go!" cried Mr. Kennedy in a voice of thunder, turning to Hugh, who still stood in a pugilistic attitude, with very little respect in his looks.

Hugh hesitated to obey the order; but Mr. Kennedy continued to advance, grinding his teeth and working his fingers convulsively, as if he longed to lay violent hold of the Orkneyman's swelled nose; so he retreated in his uncertainty, but still with his face to the foe. As has been already said, the Assiniboine River flows within a hundred yards of the gate of Fort Garry. The two men, in their combat, had approached pretty near to the bank, at a place where it descends somewhat precipitately into the stream. It was towards this bank that Hugh Mathison was now retreating, crab fashion, followed by Mr. Kennedy, and both of them so taken up with each other that neither perceived the fact until Hugh's heel struck against a stone just at the moment that Mr. Kennedy raised his clenched fist in a threatening attitude. The effect of this combination was to pitch the poor man head over heels down the bank, into a row of willow bushes, through which, as he rolled with great speed, he went with a loud crash, and shot head first, like a startled alligator, into the water, amid a roar of laughter from his comrades and the people belonging to the fort; most of whom, attracted by the fight, were now assembled on the banks of the river.

Mr. Kennedy's wrath vanished immediately, and he joined in the laughter; but his face instantly changed when he beheld Hugh sputtering in deep water, and heard some one say that he could not swim.

"What! can't swim?" he exclaimed, running down the bank to the edge of the water. Baptiste was before him, however. In a moment he plunged in up to the neck, stretched forth his arm, grasped Hugh by the hair, and dragged him to the land.

CHAPTER VIII.

Farewell to KateDeparture of the brigadeCharley becomes a voyageur.

On the following day at noon, the spot on which the late combat had taken place became the theatre of a stirring and animated scene. Fort Garry, and the space between it and the river, swarmed with voyageurs, dressed in their cleanest, newest, and most brilliant costume. The large boats for the north, six in number, lay moored to the river's bank, laden with bales of furs, and ready to start on their long voyage. Young men, who had never been on the road before, stood with animated looks watching the operations of the guides as they passed critical examination upon their boats, overhauled the oars to see that they were in good condition, or with crooked knives (a species of instrument in the use of which voyageurs and natives are very expert) polished off the top of a mast, the blade of an oar, or the handle of a tiller. Old men, who had passed their lives in similar occupations, looked on in silencesome standing with their heads bent on their bosoms, and an expression of sadness about their faces, as if the scene recalled some mournful event of their early life, or possibly reminded them of wild, joyous scenes of other days, when the blood coursed warmly in their young veins, and the strong muscles sprang lightly to obey their will; when the work they had to do was hard, and the sleep that followed it was soundscenes and days that were now gone by for ever. Others reclined against the wooden fence, their arms crossed, their thin white hair waving gently in the breeze, and a kind smile playing on their sunburned faces, as they observed the swagger and coxcombry of the younger men, or watched the gambols of several dark-eyed little childrenembryo buffalo-hunters and voyageurswhose mothers had brought them to the fort to get a last kiss from papa, and witness the departure of the boats.

Several tender scenes were going on in out-of-the-way placesin angles of the walls and bastions, or behind the gates-between youthful couples about to be separated for a season. Interesting scenes these of pathos and pleasantrya combination of soft glances and affectionate fervent assurances; alternate embraces (that were apparently received with reluctance, but actually with delight, and proffers of pieces of calico and beads and other trinkets (received both apparently and actually with extreme satisfaction) as souvenirs of happy days that were past), and pledges of unalterable constancy and bright hope in days that were yet to come.

A little apart from the others, a youth and a girl might be seen sauntering slowly towards the copse beyond the stable. These were Charley Kennedy and his sister Kate, who had retired from the bustling scene to take a last short walk together, ere they separated, it might be for years, perhaps for ever! Charley held Kate's hand, while her sweet little head rested on his shoulder.

"O Charley, Charley, my own dear, darling Charley, I'm quite miserable, and you ought not to go away; it's very wrong, and I don't mind a bit what you say,

I shall die if you leave me!" And Kate pressed him tightly to her heart, and sobbed in the depth of her woe. "Now, Kate, my darling, don't go on so! You know I can't help it"

"I don't know," cried Kate, interrupting him, and speaking vehemently"I don't know, and I don't believe, and I don't care for anything at all; it's very hard-hearted of you, and wrong, and not right, and I'm just quite wretched!"

Poor Kate was undoubtedly speaking the absolute truth; for a more disconsolate and wretched look of woebegone misery was never seen on so sweet and tender and lovable a little face before. Her blue eyes swam in two lakes of pure crystal, that overflowed continually; her mouth, which was usually round, had become an elongated oval; and her nut-brown hair fell in dishevelled masses over her soft cheeks.

"O Charley," she continued, "why won't you stay?"

"Listen to me, dearest Kate," said Charley, in a very husky voice. "It's too late to draw back now, even if I wished to do so; and you don't consider, darling, that I'll be back again soon. Besides, I'm a man now, Kate, and I must make my own bread. Who ever heard of a man being supported by his old father."

"Well, but can't you do that here?"

"No, don't interrupt me, Kate," said Charley, kissing her forehead; "I'm quite satisfied with two short legs, and have no desire whatever to make my bread on the top of three long ones. Besides, you know I can write to you."

"But you won't; you'll forget."

"No, indeed, I will not. I'll write you long letters about all that I see and do; and you shall write long letters to me about"

"Stop, Charley," cried Kate; "I won't listen to you. I hate to think of it."

And her tears burst forth again with fresh violence. This time Charley's heart sank too. The lump in his throat all but choked him; so he was fain to lay his head upon Kate's heaving bosom, and weep along with her.

For a few minutes they remained silent, when a slight rustling in the bushes was heard. In another moment a tall, broad-shouldered, gentlemanly man, dressed in black, stood before them. Charley and Kate, on seeing this personage, arose, and wiping the tears from their eyes, gave a sad smile as they shook hands with their clergyman.

"My poor children," said Mr. Addison, affectionately, "I know well why your

hearts are sad. May God bless and comfort you! I saw you enter the wood, and came to bid you farewell, Charley, my dear boy, as I shall not have another opportunity of doing so."

"O dear Mr. Addison," cried Kate, grasping his hand in both of hers, and gazing imploringly up at him through a perfect wilderness of ringlets and tears, "do prevail upon Charley to stay at home; please do!"

Mr. Addison could scarcely help smiling at the poor girl's extreme earnestness.

"I fear, my sweet child, that it is too late now to attempt to dissuade Charley. Besides, he goes with the consent of his father; and I am inclined to think that a change of life for a short time may do him good. Come, Kate, cheer up! Charley will return to us again ere long, improved, I trust, both physically and mentally."

Kate did not cheer up, but she dried her eyes, and endeavoured to look more composed; while Mr. Addison took Charley by the hand, and, as they walked slowly through the wood, gave him much earnest advice and counsel.

The clergyman's manner was peculiar. With a large, warm, generous heart, he possessed an enthusiastic nature, a quick, brusque manner, and a loud voice, which, when his spirit was influenced by the strong emotions of pity or anxiety for the souls of his flock, sunk into a deep soft bass of the most thrilling earnestness. He belonged to the Church of England, but conducted service very much in the Presbyterian form, as being more suited to his mixed congregation. After a long conversation with Charley, he concluded by saying

"I do not care to say much to you about being kind and obliging to all whom you may meet with during your travels, nor about the dangers to which you will be exposed by being thrown into the company of wild and reckless, perhaps very wicked, men. There is but one incentive to every good, and one safeguard against all evil, my boy, and that is the love of God. You may perhaps forget much that I have said to you; but remember this, Charley, if you would be happy in this world, and have a good hope for the next, centre your heart's affection on our blessed Lord Jesus Christ; for believe me, boy, His heart's affection is centred upon you."

As Mr. Addison spoke, a loud hello from Mr. Kennedy apprised them that their time was exhausted, and that the boats were ready to start. Charley sprang towards Kate, locked her in a long, passionate embrace, and then, forgetting Mr. Addison altogether in his haste, ran out of the wood, and hastened towards the scene of departure.

"Good-bye, Charley!" cried Harry Somerville, running up to his friend and

giving him a warm grasp of the hand. "Don't forget me, Charley. I wish I were going with you, with all my heart; but I'm an unlucky dog. Good-bye." The senior clerk and Peter Mactavish had also a kindly word and a cheerful farewell for him as he hurried past.

"Good-bye, Charley, my lad!" said old Mr. Kennedy, in an excessively loud voice, as if by such means he intended to crush back some unusual but very powerful feelings that had a peculiar influence on a certain lump in his throat. "Good-bye, my lad; don't forget to write to your oldHang it!" said the old man, brushing his coat-sleeve somewhat violently across his eyes, and turning abruptly round as Charley left him and sprang into the boat"I say, Grant, IIWhat are you staring at, eh?" The latter part of his speech was addressed, in an angry tone, to an innocent voyageur, who happened accidentally to confront him at the moment.

"Come along, Kennedy," said Mr. Grant, interposing, and grasping his excited friend by the arm"come with me."

"Ah, to be sure!yes," said he, looking over his shoulder and waving a last adieu to Charley, "Good-bye, God bless you, my dear boy!I say, Grant, come along; quick, man, and let's have a pipeyes, let's have a pipe." Mr. Kennedy, essaying once more to crush back his rebellious feelings, strode rapidly up the bank, and entering the house, sought to overwhelm his sorrow in smoke: in which attempt he failed.

CHAPTER IX.
The voyageThe encampmentA surprise.

It was a fine sight to see the boats depart for the north. It was a thrilling, heart-stirring sight to behold these picturesque, athletic men, on receiving the word of command from their guides, spring lightly into the long, heavy boats; to see them let the oars fall into the water with a loud splash, and then, taking their seats, give way with a will, knowing that the eyes of friends and sweethearts and rivals were bent earnestly upon them. It was a splendid sight to see boat after boat shoot out from the landing-place, and cut through the calm bosom of the river, as the men bent their sturdy backs until the thick oars creaked and groaned on the gunwales and flashed in the stream, more and more vigorously at each successive stroke, until their friends on the bank, who were anxious to see the last of them, had to run faster and faster in order to keep up with them, as the rowers warmed at their work, and made the water gurgle at the bowstheir bright blue and scarlet and white trappings reflected in the dark waters in broken masses of colour, streaked with long lines of shining ripples, as if they floated on a lake of liquid rainbows. And it was a glorious thing to

hear the wild, plaintive song, led by one clear, sonorous voice, that rang out full and strong in the still air, while at the close of every two lines the whole brigade burst into a loud, enthusiastic chorus, that rolled far and wide over the smooth waterstelling of their approach to settlers beyond the reach of vision in advance, and floating faintly back, a last farewell, to the listening ears of fathers, mothers, wives, and sisters left behind. And it was interesting to observe how, as the rushing boats sped onwards past the cottages on shore, groups of men and women and children stood before the open doors and waved adieu, while ever and anon a solitary voice rang louder than the others in the chorus, and a pair of dark eyes grew brighter as a voyageur swept past his home, and recognised his little ones screaming farewell, and seeking to attract their sire's attention by tossing their chubby arms or flourishing round their heads the bright vermilion blades of canoe-paddles. It was interesting, too, to hear the men shout as they ran a small rapid which occurs about the lower part of the settlement, and dashed in full career up to the Lower Fortwhich stands about twenty miles down the river from Fort Garryand then sped onward again with unabated energy, until they passed the Indian settlement, with its scattered wooden buildings and its small church; passed the last cottage on the bank; passed the low swampy land at the river's mouth; and emerged at last as evening closed, upon the wide, calm, sea-like bosom of Lake Winnipeg.

Charley saw and heard all this during the whole of that long, exciting afternoon, and as he heard and saw it his heart swelled as if it would burst its prison-bars, his voice rang out wildly in the choruses, regardless alike of tune and time, and his spirit boiled within him as he quaffed the first sweet draught of a rover's lifea life in the woods, the wild, free, enchanting woods, where all appeared in his eyes bright, and sunny, and green, and beautiful!

As the sun's last rays sunk in the west, and the clouds, losing their crimson hue, began gradually to fade into gray, the boats' heads were turned landward. In a few seconds they grounded on a low point, covered with small trees and bushes which stretched out into the lake. Here Louis Peltier had resolved to bivouac for the night.

"Now then, mes garçons," he exclaimed, leaping ashore, and helping to drag the boat a little way on to the beach, "vite, vite! à terre, à terre!Take the kettle, Pierre, and let's have supper."

Pierre needed no second bidding. He grasped a large tin kettle and an axe, with which he hurried into a clump of trees. Laying down the kettle, which he had previously filled with water from the lake, he singled out a dead tree, and with three powerful blows of his axe, brought it to the ground. A few additional strokes cut it up into logs, varying from three to five feet in length, which he

piled together, first placing a small bundle of dry grass and twigs beneath them, and a few splinters of wood which he cut from off one of the logs. Having accomplished this, Pierre took a flint and steel out of a gaily ornamented pouch which depended from his waist, and which went by the name of a fire-bag in consequence of its containing the implements for procuring that element. It might have been as appropriately named tobacco-box or smoking-bag, however, seeing that such things had more to do with it, if possible, than fire. Having struck a spark, which he took captive by means of a piece of tinder, he placed in the centre of a very dry handful of soft grass, and whirled it rapidly round his head, thereby producing a current of air, which blew the spark into a flame; which when applied, lighted the grass and twigs; and so, in a few minutes, a blazing fire roared up among the treesspouted volumes of sparks into the air, like a gigantic squib, which made it quite a marvel that all the bushes in the neighbourhood were not burnt up at onceglared out red and fierce upon the rippling water, until it became, as it were, red-hot in the neighbourhood of the boats, and caused the night to become suddenly darker by contrast; the night reciprocating the compliment, as it grew later, by causing the space around the fire to glow brighter and brighter, until it became a brilliant chamber, surrounded by walls of the blackest ebony.

While Pierre was thus engaged there were at least ten voyageurs similarly occupied. Ten steels were made instrumental in creating ten sparks, which were severally captured by ten pieces of tinder, and whirled round by ten lusty arms, until ten flames were produced, and ten fires sprang up and flared wildly on the busy scene that had a few hours before been so calm, so solitary, and so peaceful, bathed in the soft beams of the setting sun.

In less than half-an-hour the several camps were completed, the kettles boiling over the fires, the men smoking in every variety of attitude, and talking loudly. It was a cheerful scene; and so Charley thought as he reclined in his canvas tent, the opening of which faced the fire, and enabled him to see all that was going on.

Pierre was standing over the great kettle, dancing round it, and making sudden plunges with a stick into it, in the desperate effort to stir its boiling contentsdesperate, because the fire was very fierce and large, and the flames seem to take a fiendish pleasure in leaping up suddenly just under Pierre's nose, thereby endangering his beard, or shooting out between his legs and licking round them at most unexpected moments, when the light wind ought to have been blowing them quite in the opposite direction; and then, as he danced round to the other side to avoid them, wheeling about and roaring viciously in his face, until it seemed as if the poor man would be roasted long before the

supper was boiled. Indeed, what between the ever-changing and violent flames, the rolling smoke, the steam from the kettle, the showering sparks, and the man's own wild grimaces and violent antics, Pierre seemed to Charley like a raging demon, who danced not only round, but above, and on, and through, and in the flames, as if they were his natural element, in which he took special delight.

Quite close to the tent the massive form of Louis the guide lay extended, his back supported by the stump of a tree, his eyes blinking sleepily at the blaze, and his beloved pipe hanging from his lips, while wreaths of smoke encircled his head. Louis's day's work was done. Few could do a better; and when his work was over, Louis always acted on the belief that his position and his years entitled him to rest, and took things very easy in consequence.

Six of the boat's crew sat in a semicircle beside the guide and fronting the fire, each paying particular attention to his pipe, and talking between the puffs to anyone who chose to listen.

Suddenly Pierre vanished into the smoke and flames altogether, whence in another moment he issued, bearing in his hand the large tin kettle, which he deposited triumphantly at the feet of his comrades.

"Now, then," cried Pierre.

It was unnecessary to have said even that much by way of invitation. Voyageurs do not require to have their food pressed upon them after a hard day's work. Indeed it was as much as they could do to refrain from laying violent hands on the kettle long before their worthy cook considered its contents sufficiently done.

Charley sat in company with Mr. Parka chief factor, on his way to Norway House. Gibault, one of the men who acted as their servant, had placed a kettle of hot tea before them, which, with several slices of buffalo tongue, a lump of pemmican, and some hard biscuit and butter, formed their evening meal. Indeed, we may add that these viands, during a great part of the voyage, constituted their every meal. In fact, they had no variety in their fare, except a wild duck or two now and then, and a goose when they chanced to shoot one.

Charley sipped a pannikin of tea as he reclined on his blanket, and being somewhat fatigued in consequence of his exertions and excitement during the day, said nothing. Mr. Park, for the same reasons, besides being naturally taciturn, was equally mute, so they both enjoyed in silence the spectacle of the men eating their supper. And it was a sight worth seeing.

Their food consisted of robbiboo, a compound of flour, pemmican, and water,

boiled to the consistency of very thick soup. Though not a species of food that would satisfy the fastidious taste of an epicure, robbiboo is, nevertheless, very wholesome, exceedingly nutritious, and withal palatable. Pemmican, its principal component, is made of buffalo flesh, which fully equals (some think greatly excels) beef. The recipe for making it is as follows:-First, kill your buffaloa matter of considerable difficulty, by the way, as doing so requires you to travel to the buffalo-grounds, to arm yourself with a gun, and mount a horse, on which you have to gallop, perhaps, several miles over rough ground and among badger-holes at the imminent risk of breaking your neck. Then you have to run up alongside of a buffalo and put a ball through his heart, which, apart from the murderous nature of the action, is a difficult thing to do. But we will suppose that you have killed your buffalo. Then you must skin him; then cut him up, and slice the flesh into layers, which must be dried in the sun. At this stage of the process you have produced a substance which in the fur countries goes by the name of dried meat, and is largely used as an article of food. As its name implies, it is very dry, and it is also very tough, and very undesirable if one can manage to procure anything better. But to proceed. Having thus prepared dried meat, lay a quantity of it on a flat stone, and take another stone, with which pound it into shreds. You must then take the animal's hide, while it is yet new, and make bags of it about two feet and a half long by a foot and a half broad. Into this put the pounded meat loosely. Melt the fat of your buffalo over a fire, and when quite liquid pour it into the bag until full; mix the contents well together; sew the whole up before it cools, and you have a bag of pemmican of about ninety pounds weight. This forms the chief food of the voyageur, in consequence of its being the largest possible quantity of sustenance compressed into the smallest possible space, and in an extremely convenient, portable shape. It will keep fresh for years, and has been much used, in consequence, by the heroes of arctic discovery, in their perilous journeys along the shores of the frozen sea.

The voyageurs used no plate. Men who travel in these countries become independent of many things that are supposed to be necessary here. They sat in a circle round the kettle, each man armed with a large wooden or pewter spoon, with which he ladled the robbiboo down his capacious throat, in a style that not only caused Charley to laugh, but afterwards threw him into a deep reverie on the powers of appetite in general, and the strength of voyageur stomachs in particular.

At first the keen edge of appetite induced the men to eat in silence; but as the contents of the kettle began to get low, their tongues loosened, and at last, when the kettles were emptied and the pipes filled, fresh logs thrown on the fires, and their limbs stretched out around them, the babel of English, French, and Indian that arose was quite overwhelming. The middle-aged men told long

stories of what they had done; the young men boasted of what they meant to do; while the more aged smiled, nodded, smoked their pipes, put in a word or two as occasion offered, and listened. While they conversed the quick ears of one of the men of Charley's camp detected some unusual sound.

"Hist!" said he, turning his head aside slightly, in a listening attitude, while his comrades suddenly ceased their noisy laugh.

"Do ducks travel in canoes hereabouts?" said the man, after a moment's silence; "for, if not, there's someone about to pay us a visit. I would wager my best gun that I hear the stroke of paddles."

"If your ears had been sharper, François, you might have heard them some time ago," said the guide, shaking the ashes out of his pipe and refilling it for the third time.

"Ah, Louis, I do not pretend to such sharp ears as you possess, nor to such sharp wit either. But who do you think can be en route so late?"

"That my wit does not enable me to divine," said Louis; "but if you have any faith in the sharpness of your eyes, I would recommend you to go to the beach and see, as the best and shortest way of finding out."

By this time the men had risen, and were peering out into the gloom in the direction whence the sound came, while one or two sauntered down to the margin of the lake to meet the new-comers.

"Who can it be, I wonder?" said Charley, who had left the tent, and was now standing beside the guide.

"Difficult to say, monsieur. Perhaps Injins, though I thought there were none here just now. But I'm not surprised that we've attracted something to us. Livin' creeturs always come nat'rally to the light, and there's plenty of fire on the point to-night."

"Rather more than enough," replied Charley, abruptly, as a slight motion of wind sent the flames curling round his head and singed off his eye-lashes. "Why, Louis, it's my firm belief that if I ever get to the end of this journey, I'll not have a hair left on my head."

Louis smiled.

"O monsieur, you will learn to observe things before you have been long in the wilderness. If you will edge round to leeward of the fire, you can't expect it to respect you."

Just at this moment a loud hurrah rang through the copse, and Harry Somerville sprang over the fire into the arms of Charley, who received him with a hug and a look of unutterable amazement.

"Charley, my boy!"

"Harry Somerville, I declare!"

For at least five minutes Charley could not recover his composure sufficiently to declare anything else, but stood with open mouth and eyes, and elevated eyebrows, looking at his young friend, who capered and danced round the fire in a manner that threw the cook's performances in that line quite into the shade, while he continued all the time to shout fragments of sentences that were quite unintelligible to anyone. It was evident that Harry was in a state of immense delight at something unknown save to himself, but which, in the course of a few minutes, was revealed to his wondering friends.

"Charley, I'm going! hurrah!" and he leaped about in a manner that induced Charley to say he would not only be going but very soon gone, if he did not keep further away from the fire.

"Yes, Charley, I'm going with you! I upset the stool, tilted the ink-bottle over the invoice-book, sent the poker almost through the back of the fireplace, and smashed Tom Whyte's best whip on the back of the 'noo 'oss' as I galloped him over the plains for the last time: all for joy, because I'm going with you, Charley, my darling!"

Here Harry suddenly threw his arms round his friend's neck, meditating an embrace. As both boys were rather fond of using their muscles violently, the embrace degenerated into a wrestle, which caused them to threaten complete destruction to the fire as they staggered in front of it, and ended in their tumbling against the tent and nearly breaking its poles and fastenings, to the horror and indignation of Mr. Park, who was smoking his pipe within, quietly waiting till Harry's superabundant glee was over, that he might get an explanation of his unexpected arrival among them.

"Ah, they will be good voyageurs!" cried one of the men, as he looked on at this scene.

"Oui, oui! good boys, active lads," replied the others, laughing. The two boys rose hastily.

"Yes," cried Harry, breathless, but still excited, "I'm going all the way, and a great deal farther. I'm going to hunt buffaloes in the Saskatchewan, and grizzly

bears in thethein fact everywhere! I'm going down the Mackenzie RiverI'm going mad, I believe;" and Harry gave another caper and another shout, and tossed his cap high into the air. Having been recklessly tossed, it came down into the fire. When it went in, it was dark blue; but when Harry dashed into the flames in consternation to save it, it came out of a rich brown colour.

"Now, youngster," said Mr. Park, "when you've done capering, I should like to ask you one or two questions. What brought you here?"

"A canoe," said Harry, inclined to be impudent.

"Oh, and pray for what purpose have you come here?"

"These are my credentials," handing him a letter.

Mr. Park opened the note and read.

"Ah! oh! Saskatchewanhumyesoutpostwild boyjust sokeep him at itay, fit for nothing else. So," said Mr. Park, folding the paper, "I find that Mr. Grant has sent you to take the place of a young gentleman we expected to pick up at Norway House, but who is required elsewhere; and that he wishes you to see a good deal of rough lifeto be made a trader of, in fact. Is that your desire?"

"That's the very ticket!" replied Harry, scarcely able to restrain his delight at the prospect.

"Well, then, you had better get supper and turn in, for you'll have to begin your new life by rising at three o'clock to-morrow morning. Have you got a tent?"

"Yes," said Harry, pointing to his canoe, which had been brought to the fire and turned bottom up by the two Indians to whom it belonged, and who were reclining under its shelter enjoying their pipes, and watching with looks of great gravity the doings of Harry and his friend.

"That will return whence it came to-morrow. Have you no other?"

"Oh yes," said Harry, pointing to the overhanging branches of a willow close at hand, "lots more."

Mr. Park smiled grimly, and, turning on his heel, re-entered the tent and continued his pipe, while Harry flung himself down beside Charley under the bark canoe.

This species of "tent" is, however, by no means a perfect one. An Indian canoe is seldom three feet broadfrequently much narrowerso that it only affords shelter for the body as far down as the waist, leaving the extremities exposed.

True, one may double up as nearly as possible into half one's length, but this is not a desirable position to maintain throughout an entire night. Sometimes, when the weather is very bad, an additional protection is procured by leaning several poles against the bottom of the canoe, on the weather side, in such a way as to slope considerably over the front; and over these are spread pieces of birch bark or branches and moss, so as to form a screen, which is an admirable shelter. But this involves too much time and labour to be adopted during a voyage, and is only done when the travellers are under the necessity of remaining for some time in one place.

The canoe in which Harry arrived was a pretty large one, and looked so comfortable when arranged for the night that Charley resolved to abandon his own tent and Mr. Park's society, and sleep with his friend.

"I'll sleep with you, Harry, my boy," said he, after Harry had explained to him in detail the cause of his being sent away from Red River; which was no other than that a young gentleman, as Mr. Park said, who was to have gone, had been ordered elsewhere.

"That's right, Charley; spread out our blankets, while I get some supper, like a good fellow." Harry went in search of the kettle while his friend prepared their bed. First, he examined the ground on which the canoe lay, and found that the two Indians had already taken possession of the only level places under it. "Humph!" he ejaculated, half inclined to rouse them up, but immediately dismissed the idea as unworthy of a voyageur. Besides, Charley was an amiable, unselfish fellow, and would rather have lain on the top of a dozen stumps than have made himself comfortable at the expense of anyone else.

He paused a moment to consider. On one side was a hollow "that" (as he soliloquised to himself) "would break the back of a buffalo." On the other side were a dozen little stumps surrounding three very prominent ones, that threatened destruction to the ribs of anyone who should venture to lie there. But Charley did not pause to consider long. Seizing his axe, he laid about him vigorously with the head of it, and in a few seconds destroyed all the stumps, which he carefully collected, and, along with some loose moss and twigs, put into the hollow, and so filled it up. Having improved things thus far, he rose and strode out of the circle of light into the wood. In a few minutes he reappeared, bearing a young spruce fir tree on his shoulder, which with the axe he stripped of its branches. These branches were flat in form, and elasticadmirably adapted for making a bed on; and when Charley spread them out under the canoe in a pile of about four inches in depth by four feet broad and six feet long, the stumps and the hollow were overwhelmed altogether. He then ran to Mr. Park's tent, and fetched thence a small flat bundle covered with oilcloth and tied with a rope. Opening this, he tossed out its contents, which

were two large and very thick blanketsone green, the other white; a particularly minute feather pillow, a pair of moccasins, a broken comb, and a bit of soap. Then he opened a similar bundle containing Harry's bed, which he likewise tossed out; and then kneeling down, he spread the two white blankets on the top of the branches, the two green blankets above these, and the two pillows at the top, as far under the shelter of the canoe as he could push them. Having completed the whole in a manner that would have done credit to a chambermaid, he continued to sit on his knees, with his hands in his pockets, smiling complacently, and saying, "Capitalfirst-rate!"

"Here we are, Charley. Have a second supperdo!"

Harry placed the smoking kettle by the head of the bed, and squatting down beside it, began to eat as only a boy can eat who has had nothing since breakfast.

Charley attacked the kettle tooas he said, "out of sympathy," although he "wasn't hungry a bit." And really, for a man who was not hungry, and had supped half-an-hour before, the appetite of sympathy was wonderfully strong.

But Harry's powers of endurance were now exhausted. He had spent a long day of excessive fatigue and excitement, and having wound it up with a heavy supper, sleep began to assail him with a fell ferocity that nothing could resist. He yawned once or twice, and sat on the bed blinking unmeaningly at the fire, as if he had something to say to it which he could not recollect just then. He nodded violently, much to his own surprise, once or twice, and began to address remarks to the kettle instead of to his friend. "I say, Charley, this won't do. I'm off to bed!" and suiting the action to the word, he took off his coat and placed it on his pillow. He then removed his moccasins, which were wet, and put on a dry pair; and this being all that is ever done in the way of preparation before going to bed in the woods, he lay down and pulled the green blankets over him.

Before doing so, however, Harry leaned his head on his hands and prayed. This was the one link left of the chain of habit with which he had left home. Until the period of his departure for the wild scenes of the Northwest, Harry had lived in a quiet, happy home in the West Highlands of Scotland, where he had been surrounded by the benign influences of a family the members of which were united by the sweet bonds of Christian lovebonds which were strengthened by the additional tie of amiability of disposition. From childhood he had been accustomed to the routine of a pious and well-regulated household, where the Bible was perused and spoken of with an interest that indicated a genuine hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and where the name of JESUS sounded often and sweetly on the ear. Under such training,

Harry, though naturally of a wild, volatile disposition, was deeply and irresistibly impressed with a reverence for sacred things, which, now that he was thousands of miles away from his peaceful home, clung to him with the force of old habit and association, despite the jeers of comrades and the evil influences and ungodliness by which he was surrounded. It is true that he was not altogether unhurt by the withering indifference to God that he beheld on all sides. Deep impression is not renewal of heart. But early training in the path of Christian love saved him many a deadly fall. It guarded him from many of the grosser sins, into which other boys, who had merely broken away from the restraints of home too easily fell. It twined round himas the ivy encircles the oakwith a soft, tender, but powerful grasp, that held him back when he was tempted to dash aside all restraint; and held him up when, in the weakness of human nature, he was about to fall. It exerted its benign sway over him in the silence of night, when his thoughts reverted to home, and during his waking hours, when he wandered from scene to scene in the wide wilderness; and in after years, when sin prevailed, and intercourse with rough men had worn off much of at least the superficial amiability of his character, and to some extent blunted the finer feelings of his nature, it clung faintly to him still, in the memory of his mother's gentle look and tender voice, and never forsook him altogether. Home had a blessed and powerful influence on Harry. May God bless such homes, where the ruling power is love! God bless and multiply such homes in the earth! Were there more of them there would be fewer heart-broken mothers to weep over the memory of the blooming, manly boys they sent away to foreign climeswith trembling hearts but high hopesand never saw them more. They were vessels launched upon the troubled sea of time, with stout timbers, firm masts, and gallant sailswith all that was necessary above and below, from stem to stern, for battling with the billows of adverse fortune, for stemming the tide of opposition, for riding the storms of persecution, or bounding with a press of canvas before the gales of prosperity; but without the rudderwithout the guiding principle that renders the great power of plank and sail and mast available; with which the vessel moves obedient to the owner's will, without which it drifts about with every current, and sails along with every shifting wind that blows. Yes, may the best blessings of prosperity and peace rest on such families, whose bread, cast continually on the waters, returns to them after many days.

After Harry had lain down, Charley, who did not feel inclined for repose, sauntered to the margin of the lake, and sat down upon a rock.

It was a beautiful, calm evening. The moon shone faintly through a mass of heavy clouds, casting a pale light on the waters of Lake Winnipeg, which stretched, without a ripple, out to the distant horizon. The great fresh-water lakes of America bear a strong resemblance to the sea. In storms the waves

rise mountains high, and break with heavy, sullen roar upon a beach composed in many places of sand and pebbles; while they are so large that one not only looks out to a straight horizon, but may even sail out of sight of land altogether.

As Charley sat resting his head on his hand, and listening to the soft hiss that the ripples made upon the beach, he felt all the solemnising influence that steals irresistibly over the mind as we sit on a still night gazing out upon the moonlit sea. His thoughts were sad; for he thought of Kate, and his mother and father, and the home he was now leaving. He remembered all that he had ever done to injure or annoy the dear ones he was leaving; and it is strange how much alive our consciences become when we are unexpectedly or suddenly removed from those with whom we have lived and held daily intercourse. How bitterly we reproach ourselves for harsh words, unkind actions; and how intensely we long for one word more with them, one fervent embrace, to prove at once that all we have ever said or done was not meant ill, and, at any rate, is deeply, sincerely repented of now! As Charley looked up into the starry sky, his mind recurred to the parting words of Mr. Addison. With uplifted hands and a full heart, he prayed that God would bless, for Jesus' sake, the beloved ones in Red River, but especially Kate; for whether he prayed or meditated, Charley's thoughts always ended with Kate.

A black cloud passed across the moon, and reminded him that but a few hours of the night remained; so hastening up to the camp again, he lay gently down beside his friend, and drew the green blanket over him.

In the camp all was silent. The men had chosen their several beds according to fancy, under the shadow of a bush or tree. The fires had burned lowso low that it was with difficulty Charley, as he lay, could discern the recumbent forms of the men, whose presence was indicated by the deep, soft, regular breathing of tired but, healthy constitutions. Sometimes a stray moonbeam shot through the leaves and branches, and cast a ghost-like, flickering light over the scene, which ever and anon was rendered more mysterious by a red flare of the fire as an ember fell, blazed up for an instant, and left all shrouded in greater darkness than before.

At first Charley continued his sad thoughts, staring all the while at the red embers of the expiring fire; but soon his eyes began to blink, and the stumps of trees began to assume the form of voyageurs, and voyageurs to look like stumps of trees. Then a moonbeam darted in, and Mr. Addison stood on the other side of the fire. At this sight Charley started, and Mr. Addison disappeared, while the boy smiled to think how he had been dreaming while only half asleep. Then Kate appeared, and seemed to smile on him; but another ember fell, and another red flame sprang up, and put her to flight too.

Then a low sigh of wind rustled through the branches, and Charley felt sure that he saw Kate again coming through the woods, singing the low, soft tune that she was so fond of singing, because it was his own favourite air. But soon the air ceased; the fire faded away; so did the trees, and the sleeping voyageurs; Kate last of all dissolved, and Charley sank into a deep, untroubled slumber.

CHAPTER X.
Varieties, vexations, and vicissitudes.

Life is checkeredthere is no doubt about that; whatever doubts a man may entertain upon other subjects, he can have none upon this, we feel quite certain. In fact, so true is it that we would not for a moment have drawn the reader's attention to it here, were it not that our experience of life in the backwoods corroborates the truth; and truth, however well corroborated, is none the worse of getting a little additional testimony now and then in this sceptical generation.

Life is checkered, then, undoubtedly. And life in the backwoods strengthens the proverb, for it is a peculiarly striking and remarkable specimen of life's variegated character.

There is a difference between sailing smoothly along the shores of Lake Winnipeg with favouring breezes, and being tossed on its surging billows by the howling of a nor'-west wind, that threatens destruction to the boat, or forces it to seek shelter on the shore. This difference is one of the checkered scenes of which we write, and one that was experienced by the brigade more than once during its passage across the lake.

Since we are dealing in truisms, it may not, perhaps, be out of place here to say that going to bed at night is not by any means getting up in the morning; at least so several of our friends found to be the case when the deep sonorous voice of Louis Peltier sounded through the camp on the following morning, just as a very faint, scarcely perceptible, light tinged the eastern sky.

"Lève, lève, lève!" he cried, "lève, lève, mes enfants!"

Some of Louis's infants replied to the summons in a way that would have done credit to a harlequin. One or two active little Canadians, on hearing the cry of the awful word lève, rose to their feet with a quick bound, as if they had been keeping up an appearance of sleep as a sort of practical joke all night, on purpose to be ready to leap as the first sound fell from the guide's lips. Others lay still, in the same attitude in which they had fallen asleep, having made up their minds, apparently, to lie there in spite of all the guides in the world. Not a

few got slowly into the sitting position, their hair dishevelled, their caps awry, their eyes alternately winking very hard and staring awfully in the vain effort to keep open, and their whole physiognomy wearing an expression of blank stupidity that is peculiar to man when engaged in that struggle which occurs each morning as he endeavours to disconnect and shake off the entanglement of nightly dreams and the realities of the breaking day. Throughout the whole camp there was a low, muffled sound, as of men moving lazily, with broken whispers and disjointed sentences uttered in very deep, hoarse tones, mingled with confused, unearthly noises, which, upon consideration, sounded like prolonged yawns. Gradually these sounds increased, for the guide's lève is inexorable, and the voyageur's fate inevitable.

"Oh dear!yei aaow" (yawning); "hang your lève!"

"Oui, vraimentyei a-aowmorbleu!"

"Eh, what's that? Oh, misère!"

"Tare an' ages!" (from an Irishman), "an' I had only got to slaape yit! butyei aaow!"

French and Irish yawns are very similar, the only difference being, that whereas the Frenchman finishes the yawn resignedly, and springs to his legs, the Irishman finishes it with an energetic gasp, as if he were hurling it remonstratively into the face of Fate, turns round again and shuts his eyes doggedlya piece of bravado which he knows is useless and of very short duration.

"Lève! lève!! lève!!!" There was no mistake this time in the tones of Louis's voice. "Embark, embark! vite, vite!"
The subdued sounds of rousing broke into a loud buzz of active preparation, as the men busied themselves in bundling up blankets, carrying down camp-kettles to the lake, launching the boats, kicking up lazy comrades, stumbling over and swearing at fallen trees which were not visible in the cold, uncertain light of the early dawn, searching hopelessly, among a tangled conglomeration of leaves and broken branches and crushed herbage, for lost pipes and missing tobacco-pouches.

"Hollo!" exclaimed Harry Somerville, starting suddenly from his sleeping posture, and unintentionally cramming his elbow into Charley's mouth, "I declare they're all up and nearly ready to start."

"That's no reason," replied Charley, "why you should knock out all my front teeth, is it?"

Just then Mr. Park issued from his tent, dressed and ready to step into his boat. He first gave a glance round the camp to see that all the men were moving, then he looked up through the trees to ascertain the present state and, if possible, the future prospects of the weather. Having come to a satisfactory conclusion on that head, he drew forth his pipe and began to fill it, when his eye fell on the two boys, who were still sitting up in their lairs, and staring idiotically at the place where the fire had been, as if the white ashes, half-burned logs, and bits of charcoal were a sight of the most novel and interesting character, that filled them with intense amazement.

Mr. Park could scarce forbear smiling.

"Hollo, youngsters, precious voyageurs you'll make, to be sure, if this is the way you're going to begin. Don't you see that the things are all aboard, and we'll be ready to start in five minutes, and you sitting there with your neckcloths off?"

Mr. Park gave a slight sneer when he spoke of neckcloths, as if he thought, in the first place, that they were quite superfluous portions of attire, and in the second place, that having once put them on, the taking of them off at night was a piece of effeminacy altogether unworthy of a Nor'-wester.

Charley and Harry needed no second rebuke. It flashed instantly upon them that sleeping comfortably under their blankets when the men were bustling about the camp was extremely inconsistent with the heroic resolves of the previous day. They sprang up, rolled their blankets in the oil-cloths, which they fastened tightly with ropes; tied the neckcloths, held in such contempt by Mr. Park, in a twinkling; threw on their coats, and in less than five minutes were ready to embark. They then found that they might have done things more leisurely, as the crews had not yet got all their traps on board; so they began to look around them, and discovered that each had omitted to pack up a blanket.

Very much crestfallen at their stupidity, they proceeded to untie the bundles again, when it became apparent to the eyes of Charley that his friend had put on his capote inside out; which had a peculiarly ragged and grotesque effect. These mistakes were soon rectified, and shouldering their beds, they carried them down to the boat and tossed them in. Meanwhile Mr. Park, who had been watching the movements of the boys with a peculiar smile, that filled them with confusion, went round the different camps to see that nothing was left behind. The men were all in their places with oars ready, and the boats floating on the calm water, a yard or two from shore, with the exception of the guide's boat, the stern of which still rested on the sand awaiting Mr. Park.

"Who does this belong to?" shouted that gentleman, holding up a cloth cap,

part of which was of a mottled brown and part deep blue.

Harry instantly tore the covering from his head, and discovered that among his numerous mistakes he had put on the head-dress of one of the Indians who had brought him to the camp. To do him justice the cap was not unlike his own, excepting that it was a little more mottled and dirty in colour, besides being decorated with a gaudy but very much crushed and broken feather.

"You had better change with our friend here, I think," said Mr. Park, grinning from ear to ear, as he tossed the cap to its owner, while Harry handed the other to the Indian, amid the laughter of the crew.

"Never mind, boy," added Mr. Park, in an encouraging tone, "you'll make a voyageur yet.Now then, lads, give way;" and with a nod to the Indians, who stood on the shore watching their departure, the trader sprang into the boat and took his place beside the two boys.

"Ho! sing, mes garçons," cried the guide, seizing the massive sweep and directing the boat out to sea.

At this part of the lake there occurs a deep bay or inlet, to save rounding which travellers usually strike straight across from point to point, making what is called in voyageur parlance a traverse. These traverses are subjects of considerable anxiety and frequently of delay to travellers, being sometimes of considerable extent, varying from four to five, and in such immense seas as Lake Superior, to fourteen miles. With boats, indeed, there is little to fear, as the inland craft of the fur-traders can stand a heavy sea, and often ride out a pretty severe storm; but it is far otherwise with the bark canoes that are often used in travelling. These frail craft can stand very little seatheir frames being made of thin flat slips of wood and sheets of bark, not more than a quarter of an inch thick, which are sewed together with the fibrous roots of the pine (called by the natives wattape), and rendered water-tight by means of melted gum. Although light and buoyant, therefore, and extremely useful in a country where portages are numerous, they require very tender usage; and when a traverse has to be made, the guides have always a grave consultation, with some of the most sagacious among the men, as to the probability of the wind rising or fallingconsultations which are more or less marked by anxiety and tediousness in proportion to the length of the traverse, the state of the weather and the courage or timidity of the guides.

On the present occasion there was no consultation, as has been already seen. The traverse was a short one, the morning fine, and the boats good. A warm glow began to overspread the horizon, giving promise of a splendid day, as the numerous oars dipped with a plash and a loud hiss into the water, and sent the

boats leaping forth upon the white wave.

"Sing, sing!" cried the guide again, and clearing his throat, he began the beautiful quick-tuned canoe-song "Rose Blanche," to which the men chorused with such power of lungs that a family of plovers, which up to that time had stood in mute astonishment on a sandy point, tumbled precipitately into the water, from which they rose with a shrill, inexpressibly wild, plaintive cry, and fled screaming away to a more secure refuge among the reeds and sedges of a swamp. A number of ducks too, awakened by the unwonted sound, shot suddenly out from the concealment of their night's bivouac with erect heads and startled looks, sputtered heavily over the surface of their liquid bed, and rising into the air, flew in a wide circuit, with whistling wings, away from the scene of so much uproar and confusion.

The rough voices of the men grew softer and softer as the two Indians listened to the song of their departing friends, mellowing down and becoming more harmonious and more plaintive as the distance increased, and the boats grew smaller and smaller, until they were lost in the blaze of light that now bathed both water and sky in the eastern horizon, and began rapidly to climb the zenith, while the sweet tones became less and less audible as they floated faintly across the still water, and melted at last into the deep silence of the wilderness.

The two Indians still stood with downcast heads and listening ears, as if they loved the last echo of the dying music, while their grave, statue-like forms added to rather than detracted from, the solitude of the deserted scene.

CHAPTER XI.
Charley and Harry begin their sporting career without much successWhisky-john catching.

The place in the boats usually allotted to gentlemen in the Company's service while travelling is the stern. Here the lading is so arranged as to form a pretty level hollow, where the flat bundles containing their blankets are placed, and a couch is thus formed that rivals Eastern effeminacy in luxuriance. There are occasions, however, when this couch is converted into a bed, not of thorns exactly, but of corners; and really it would be hard to say which of the two is the more disagreeable. Should the men be careless in arranging the cargo, the inevitable consequence is that "monsieur" will find the leg of an iron stove, the sharp edge of a keg, or the corner of a wooden box occupying the place where his ribs should be. So common, however, is this occurrence that the clerks usually superintend the arrangements themselves, and so secure comfort.

On a couch, then, of this kind Charley and Harry now found themselves

constrained to sit all morningsometimes asleep, occasionally awake, and always earnestly desiring that it was time to put ashore for breakfast, as they had now travelled for four hours without halt, except twice for about five minutes, to let the men light their pipes.

"Charley," said Harry Somerville to his friend, who sat beside him, "it strikes me that we are to have no breakfast at all to-day. Here have I been holding my breath and tightening my belt, until I feel much more like a spider or a wasp than aa"

"Man, Harry; out with it at once, don't be afraid," said Charley.

"Well, no, I wasn't going to have said that exactly, but I was going to have said a voyageur, only I recollected our doings this morning, and hesitated to take the name until I had won it."

"It's well that you entertain so modest an opinion of yourself," said Mr. Park, who still smoked his pipe as if he were impressed with the idea that to stop for a moment would produce instant death. "I may tell you for your comfort, youngster, that we shan't breakfast till we reach yonder point."

The shores of Lake Winnipeg are flat and low, and the point indicated by Mr. Park lay directly in the light of the sun, which now shone with such splendour in the cloudless sky, and flashed on the polished water, that it was with difficulty they could look towards the point of land.

"Where is it?" asked Charley, shading his eyes with his hand; "I cannot make out anything at all."

"Try again, my boy; there's nothing like practice."

"Ah yes! I make it out now; a faint shadow just under the sun. Is that it?"

"Ay, and we'll break our fast there."

"I would like very much to break your head here," thought Charley, but he did not say it, as, besides being likely to produce unpleasant consequences, he felt that such a speech to an elderly gentleman would be highly improper; and Charley had some respect for gray hairs for their own sake, whether the owner of them was a good man or a goose.

"What shall we do, Harry? If I had only thought of keeping out a book."

"I know what I shall do," said Harry, with a resolute air: "I'll go and shoot!"

"Shoot!" cried Charley. "You don't mean to say that you're going to waste your

powder and shot by firing at the clouds! for unless you take them, I see nothing else here."

"That's because you don't use your eyes," retorted Harry. "Will you just look at yonder rock ahead of us, and tell me what you see?"

Charley looked earnestly at the rock, which to a cursory glance seemed as if composed of whiter stone on the top. "Gulls, I declare!" shouted Charley, at the same time jumping up in haste.

Just then one of the gulls, probably a scout sent out to watch the approaching enemy, wheeled in a circle overhead. The two youths dragged their guns from beneath the thwarts of the boat, and rummaged about in great anxiety for shot-belts and powder-horns. At last they were found; and having loaded, they sat on the edge of the boat, looking out for game with as muchay, with more intense interest than a Blackfoot Indian would have watched for a fat buffalo cow.

"There he goes," said Harry; "take the first shot, Charley."

"Where? where is it?"

"Right ahead. Look out!"

As Harry spoke, a small white gull, with bright-red legs and beak, flew over the boat so close to them that, as the guide remarked, "he could see it wink!" Charley's equanimity, already pretty well disturbed, was entirely upset at the suddenness of the bird's appearance; for he had been gazing intently at the rock when his friend's exclamation drew his attention in time to see the gull within about four feet of his head. With a sudden "Oh!" Charley threw forward his gun, took a short, wavering aim, and blew the cock-tail feather out of Baptiste's hat; while the gull sailed tranquilly away, as much as to say, "If that's all you can do, there's no need for me to hurry!"

"Confound the boy!" cried Mr. Park. "You'll be the death of someone yet; I'm convinced of that."

"Parbleu! you may say that, c'est vrai," remarked the voyageur with a rueful gaze at his hat, which, besides having its ornamental feather shattered, was sadly cut up about the crown.

The poor lad's face became much redder than the legs or beak of the gull as he sat down in confusion, which he sought to hide by busily reloading his gun; while the men indulged in a somewhat witty and sarcastic criticism of his powers of shooting, remarking, in flattering terms, on the precision of the shot

that blew Baptiste's feather into atoms, and declaring that if every shot he fired was as truly aimed, he would certainly be the best in the country.

Baptiste also came in for a share of their repartee. "It serves you right," said the guide, laughing, "for wearing such things on the voyage. You should put away such foppery till you return to the settlement, where there are girls to admire you." (Baptiste had continued to wear the tall hat, ornamented with gold cords and tassels, with which he had left Red River).

"Ah!" cried another, pulling vigorously at his oar, "I fear that Marie won't look at you, now that all your beauty's gone."

"'Tis not quite gone," said a third; "there's all the brim and half a tassel left, besides the wreck of the remainder."

"Oh, I can lend you a few fragments," retorted Baptiste, endeavouring to parry some of the thrusts. "They would improve you vastly."

"No, no, friend; gather them up and replace them: they will look more picturesque and becoming now. I believe if you had worn them much longer all the men in the boat would have fallen in love with you."

"By St. Patrick," said Mike Brady, an Irishman who sat at the oar immediately behind the unfortunate Canadian, "there's more than enough o' rubbish scattered over mysilf nor would do to stuff a fither-bed with."

As Mike spoke, he collected the fragments of feathers and ribbons with which the unlucky shot had strewn him, and placed them slyly on the top of the dilapidated hat, which Baptiste, after clearing away the wreck, had replaced on his head.

"It's very purty," said Mike, as the action was received by the crew with a shout of merriment.

Baptiste was waxing wrathful under this fire, when the general attention was drawn again towards Charley and his friend, who, having now got close to the rock, had quite forgotten their mishap in the excitement of expectation.

This excitement in the shooting of such small game might perhaps surprise our readers, did we not acquaint them with the fact that neither of the boys had, up to that time, enjoyed much opportunity of shooting. It is true that Harry had once or twice borrowed the fowling-piece of the senior clerk, and had sallied forth with a beating heart to pursue the grouse which are found in the belt of woodland skirting the Assiniboine River near to Fort Garry. But these expeditions were of rare occurrence, and they had not sufficed to rub off much

of the bounding excitement with which he loaded and fired at anything and everything that came within range of his gun. Charley, on the other hand, had never fired a shot before, except out of an old horse-pistol; having up to this period been busily engaged at school, except during the holidays, which he always spent in the society of his sister Kate, whose tastes were not such as were likely to induce him to take up the gun, even if he had possessed such a weapon. Just before leaving Red River, his father presented him with his own gun, remarking, as he did so, with a sigh, that his day was past now; and adding that the gun was a good one for shot or ball, and if he (Charley) brought down half as much game with it as he (Mr. Kennedy) had brought down in the course of his life, he might consider himself a crack shot undoubtedly.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the two friends went nearly mad with excitation when the whole flock of gulls rose into the air like a white cloud, and sailed in endless circles and gyrations above and around their headsflying so close at times that they might almost have been caught by the hand. Neither was it surprising that innumerable shots were fired, by both sportsmen, without a single bird being a whit the worse for it, or themselves much the better; the energetic efforts made to hit being rendered abortive by the very eagerness which caused them to miss. And this was the less extraordinary, too, when it is remembered that Harry in his haste loaded several times without shot, and Charley rendered the right barrel of his gun hors de combat at last, by ramming down a charge of shot and omitting powder altogether, whereby he snapped and primed, and snapped and primed again, till he grew desperate, and then suspicious of the true cause, which he finally rectified with much difficulty.

Frequently the gulls flew straight over the heads of the youthswhich produced peculiar consequences, as in such cases they took aim while the birds were approaching; but being somewhat slow at taking aim, the gulls were almost perpendicularly above them ere they were ready to shoot, so that they were obliged to fire hastily in hope, feeling that they were losing their balance, or give up the chance altogether.

Mr. Park sat grimly in his place all the while, enjoying the scene, and smoking.

"Now then, Charley," said he, "take that fellow."

"Which? where? Oh, if I could only get one!" said Charley, looking up eagerly at the screaming birds, at which he had been staring so long, in their varying and crossing flight, that his sight had become hopelessly unsteady.

"There! Look sharp; fire away!"

Bang went Charley's piece, as he spoke, at a gull which flew straight towards him, but so rapidly that it was directly above his head; indeed, he was leaning a little backwards at the moment, which caused him to miss again, while the recoil of the gun brought matters to a climax, by toppling him over into Mr. Park's lap, thereby smashing that gentleman's pipe to atoms. The fall accidentally exploded the second barrel, causing the butt to strike Charley in the pit of his stomachas if to ram him well home into Mr. Park's open armsand hitting with a stray shot a gull that was sailing high up in the sky in fancied security. It fell with a fluttering crash into the boat while the men were laughing at the accident.

"Didn't I say so?" cried Mr. Park, wrathfully, as he pitched Charley out of his lap, and spat out the remnants of his broken pipe.

Fortunately for all parties, at this moment the boat approached a spot on which the guide had resolved to land for breakfast; and seeing the unpleasant predicament into which poor Charley had fallen, he assumed the strong tones of command with which guides are frequently gifted, and called out,

"Ho, ho! à terre! à terre! to land! to land! Breakfast, my boys; breakfast!"at the same time sweeping the boat's head shoreward, and running into a rocky bay, whose margin was fringed by a growth of small trees. Here, in a few minutes, they were joined by the other boats of the brigade, which had kept within sight of each other nearly the whole morning.

While travelling through the wilds of North America in boats, voyageurs always make a point of landing to breakfast. Dinner is a meal with which they are unacquainted, at least on the voyage, and luncheon is likewise unknown. If a man feels hungry during the day, the pemmican-bag and its contents are there; he may pause in his work at any time, for a minute, to seize the axe and cut off a lump, which he may devour as he best can; but there is no going ashoreno resting for dinner. Two great meals are recognised, and the time allotted to their preparation and consumption held inviolablebreakfast and supper: the first varying between the hours of seven and nine in the morning; the second about sunset, at which time travellers usually encamp for the night. Of the two meals it would be difficult to say which is more agreeable. For our own part, we prefer the former. It is the meal to which a man addresses himself with peculiar gusto, especially if he has been astir three or four hours previously in the open air. It is the time of day, too, when the spirits are freshest and highest, animated by the prospect of the work, the difficulties, the pleasures, or the adventures of the day that has begun; and cheered by that cool, clear buoyancy of Nature which belongs exclusively to the happy morning hours, and has led poets in all ages to compare these hours to the first sweet months of spring or the early years of childhood.

Voyageurs, not less than poets, have felt the exhilarating influence of the young day, although they have lacked the power to tell it in sounding numbers; but where words were wanting, the sparkling eye, the beaming countenance, the light step, and hearty laugh, were more powerful exponents of the feelings within. Poet, and painter too, might have spent a profitable hour on the shores of that great sequestered lake, and as they watched the picturesque groupsclustering round the blazing fires, preparing their morning meal, smoking their pipes, examining and repairing the boats, or suning their stalwart limbs in wild, careless attitudes upon the greenswardmight have found a subject worthy the most brilliant effusions of the pen, or the most graphic touches of the pencil.

An hour sufficed for breakfast. While it was preparing, the two friends sauntered into the forest in search of game, in which they were unsuccessful; in fact, with the exception of the gulls before mentioned, there was not a feather to be seensave, always, one or two whisky-johns.

Whisky-johns are the most impudent, puffy, conceited little birds that exist. Not much larger in reality than sparrows, they nevertheless manage to swell out their feathers to such an extent that they appear to be as large as magpies, which they further resemble in their plumage. Go where you will in the woods of Rupert's Land, the instant that you light a fire two or three whisky-johns come down and sit beside you, on a branch, it may be, or on the ground, and generally so near that you cannot but wonder at their recklessness. There is a species of impudence which seems to be specially attached to little birds. In them it reaches the highest pitch of perfection. A bold, swelling, arrogant effronterya sort of stark, staring, self-complacent, comfortable, and yet innocent impertinence, which is at once irritating and amusing, aggravating and attractive, and which is exhibited in the greatest intensity in the whisky-john. He will jump down almost under your nose, and seize a fragment of biscuit or pemmican. He will go right into the pemmican-bag, when you are but a few paces off, and pilfer, as it were, at the fountain-head. Or if these resources are closed against him, he will sit on a twig, within an inch of your head, and look at you as only a whisky-john can look.

"I'll catch one of these rascals," said Harry, as he saw them jump unceremoniously into and out of the pemmican-bag.

Going down to the boat, Harry hid himself under the tarpaulin, leaving a hole open near to the mouth of the bag. He had not remained more than a few minutes in this concealment when one of the birds flew down, and alighted on the edge of the boat. After a glance round to see that all was right, it jumped into the bag. A moment after, Harry, darting his hand through the aperture,

grasped him round the neck and secured him. Poor whisky-john screamed and pecked ferociously, while Harry brought him in triumph to his friend; but so unremittingly did the bird scream that its captor was fain at last to let him off, the more especially as the cook came up at the moment and announced that breakfast was ready.

CHAPTER XII.
The storm.

Two days after the events of the last chapter, the brigade was making one of the traverses which have already been noticed as of frequent occurrence in the great lakes. The morning was calm and sultry. A deep stillness pervaded Nature, which tended to produce a corresponding quiescence in the mind, and to fill it with those indescribably solemn feelings that frequently arise before a thunderstorm. Dark, lurid clouds hung overhead in gigantic masses, piled above each other like the battlements of a dark fortress, from whose ragged embrasures the artillery of heaven was about to play.

"Shall we get over in time, Louis?" asked Mr. Park, as he turned to the guide, who sat holding the tiller with a firm grasp; while the men, aware of the necessity of reaching shelter ere the storm burst upon them, were bending to the oars with steady and sustained energy.

"Perhaps," replied Louis, laconically."Pull, lads, pull! else you'll have to sleep in wet skins to-night."

A low growl of distant thunder followed the guide's words, and the men pulled with additional energy; while the slow measured hiss of the water, and clank of oars, as they cut swiftly through the lake's clear surface, alone interrupted the dead silence that ensued.

Charley and his friend conversed in low whispers; for there is a strange power in a thunder-storm, whether raging or about to break, that overawes the heart of man,as if Nature's God were nearer then than at other times; as if Hewhose voice, indeed, if listened to, speaks even in the slightest evolution of natural phenomenawere about to tread the visible earth with more than usual majesty, in the vivid glare of the lightning flash, and in the awful crash of thunder.

"I don't know how it is, but I feel more like a coward," said Charley, "just before a thunderstorm than I think I should do in the arms of a polar bear. Do you feel queer, Harry?"

"A little," replied Harry, in a low whisper, "and yet I'm not frightened. I can scarcely tell what I feel, but I'm certain it's not fear."

"Well, I don't know," said Charley. "When father's black bull chased Kate and me in the prairies, and almost overtook us as we ran for the fence of the big field, I felt my heart leap to my mouth, and the blood rush to my cheeks, as I turned about and faced him, while Kate climbed the fence; but after she was over, I felt a wild sort of wickedness in me, as if I should like to tantalise and torment him,and I felt altogether different from what I feel now while I look up at these black clouds. Isn't there something quite awful in them, Harry?"

Ere Harry replied, a bright flash of lightning shot athwart the sky, followed by a loud roll of thunder, and in a moment the wind rushed, like a fiend set suddenly free, down upon the boats, tearing up the smooth surface of the water as it flew, and cutting it into gleaming white streaks. Fortunately the storm came down behind the boats, so that, after the first wild burst was over, they hoisted a small portion of their lug sails, and scudded rapidly before it.

There was still a considerable portion of the traverse to cross, and the guide cast an anxious glance over his shoulder occasionally, as the dark waves began to rise, and their crests were cut into white foam by the increasing gale. Thunder roared in continued, successive peals, as if the heavens were breaking up, while rain descended in sheets. For a time the crews continued to ply their oars; but as the wind increased, these were rendered superfluous. They were taken in, therefore, and the men sought partial shelter under the tarpaulin; while Mr. Park and the two boys were covered, excepting their heads, by an oilcloth, which was always kept at hand in rainy weather.

"What think you now, Louis?" said Mr. Park, resuming the pipe which the sudden outburst of the storm had caused him to forget. "Have we seen the worst of it?"

Louis replied abruptly in the negative, and in a few seconds shouted loudly, "Look out, lads! here comes a squall. Stand by to let go the sheet there!"

Mike Brady, happening to be near the sheet, seized hold of the rope, and prepared to let go, while the men rose, as if by instinct, and gazed anxiously at the approaching squall, which could be seen in the distance, extending along the horizon, like a bar of blackest ink, spotted with flakes of white. The guide sat with compressed lips, and motionless as a statue, guiding the boat as it bounded madly towards the land, which was now not more than half-a-mile distant.

"Let go!" shouted the guide, in a voice that was heard loud and clear above the roar of the elements.

"Ay, ay," replied the Irishman, untwisting the rope instantly, as with a sharp

hiss the squall descended on the boat.

At that moment the rope became entangled round one of the oars, and the gale burst with all its fury on the distended sail, burying the prow in the waves, which rushed inboard in a black volume, and in an instant half filled the boat.

"Let go!" roared the guide again, in a voice of thunder; while Mike struggled with awkward energy to disentangle the rope.

As he spoke, an Indian, who during the storm had been sitting beside the mast, gazing at the boiling water with a grave, contemplative aspect, sprang quickly forward, drew his knife, and with two blows (so rapidly delivered that they seemed but one) cut asunder first the sheet and then the halyards, which let the sail blow out and fall flat upon the boat. He was just in time. Another moment and the gushing water, which curled over the bow, would have filled them to the gunwale. As it was, the little vessel was so full of water that she lay like a log, while every toss of the waves sent an additional torrent into her.

"Bail for your lives, lads!" cried Mr. Park, as he sprang forward, and, seizing a tin dish, began energetically to bail out the water. Following his example, the whole crew seized whatever came first to hand in the shape of dish or kettle, and began to bail. Charley and Harry Somerville acted a vigorous part on this occasionthe one with a bark dish (which had been originally made by the natives for the purpose of holding maple sugar), the other with his cap.

For a time it seemed doubtful whether the curling waves should send most water into the boat, or the crew should bail most out of it. But the latter soon prevailed, and in a few minutes it was so far got under that three of the men were enabled to leave off bailing and reset the sail, while Louis Pettier returned to his post at the helm. At first the boat moved but slowly, owing to the weight of water in her; but as this gradually grew less, she increased her speed and neared the land.

"Well done, Redfeather," said Mr. Park, addressing the Indian as he resumed his seat; "your knife did us good service that time, my fine fellow."

Redfeather, who was the only pure native in the brigade, acknowledged the compliment with a smile.

"Ah, oui," replied the guide, whose features had now lost their stern expression. "These Injins are always ready enough with their knives. It's not the first time my life has been saved by the knife of a red-skin."

"Humph! bad luck to them," muttered Mike Brady; "it's not the first time that my windpipe has been pretty near spiflicated by the knives o' the redskins, the

murtherin' varmints."

As Mike gave vent to this malediction, the boat ran swiftly past a low rocky point, over which the surf was breaking wildly.

"Down with the sail, Mike," cried the guide, at the same time putting the helm hard up. The boat flew round, obedient to the ruling power, made one last plunge as it left the rolling surf behind, and slid gently and smoothly into still water under the lee of the point.

Here, in the snug shelter of a little bay, two of the other boats were found, with their prows already on the beach, and their crews actively employed in landing their goods, opening bales that had received damage from the water, and preparing the encampment; while ever and anon they paused a moment to watch the various boats as they flew before the gale, and one by one doubled the friendly promontory.

If there is one thing that provokes a voyageur more than another, it is being wind-bound on the shores of a large lake. Rain or sleet, heat or cold, icicles forming on the oars, or a broiling sun glaring in a cloudless sky, the stings of sand-flies, or the sharp probes of a million musquitoes, he will bear with comparative indifference; but being detained by high wind for two, three, or four days togetherlying inactively on shore, when everything else, it may be, is favourable: the sun bright, the sky blue, the air invigorating, and all but the wind propitiousis more than his philosophy can carry him through with equanimity. He grumbles at it; sometimes makes believe to laugh at it; very often, we are sorry to say, swears at it; does his best to sleep through it; but whatever he does, he does with a bad grace, because he's in a bad humour, and can't stand it.

For the next three days this was the fate of our friends. Part of the time it rained, when the whole party slept as much as was possible, and then endeavoured to sleep more than was possible, under the shelter afforded by the spreading branches of the trees. Part of the time was fair, with occasional gleams of sunshine, when the men turned out to eat and smoke and gamble round the fires; and the two friends sauntered down to a sheltered place on the shore, sunned themselves in a warm nook among the rocks, while they gazed ruefully at the foaming billows, told endless stories of what they had done in time past, and equally endless prospective adventures that they earnestly hoped should befall them in time to come.

While they were thus engaged, Redfeather, the Indian who had cut the ropes so opportunely during the storm, walked down to the shore, and sitting down on a rock not far distant, fell apparently into a reverie.

"I like that fellow," said Harry, pointing to the Indian.

"So do I. He's a sharp, active man. Had it not been for him we should have had to swim for it."

"Indeed, had it not been for him I should have had to sink for it," said Harry, with a smile, "for I can't swim."

"Ah, true, I forgot that. I wonder what the red-skin, as the guide calls him, is thinking about," added Charley in a musing tone.

"Of home, perhaps, 'sweet home,'" said Harry, with a sigh. "Do you think much of home, Charley, now that you have left it?"

Charley did not reply for a few seconds. He seemed to muse over the question.

At last he said slowly

"Think of home? I think of little else when I am not talking with you, Harry. My dear mother is always in my thoughts, and my poor old father. Home? ay; and darling Kate, too, is at my elbow night and day, with the tears streaming from her eyes, and her ringlets scattered over my shoulder, as I saw her the day we parted, beckoning me back again, or reproaching me for having gone awayGod bless her! Yes, I often, very often, think of home, Harry."

Harry made no reply. His friend's words had directed his thoughts to a very different and far-distant sceneto another Kate, and another father and mother, who lived in a glen far away over the waters of the broad Atlantic. He thought of them as they used to be when he was one of the number, a unit in the beloved circle, whose absence would have caused a blank there. He thought of the kind voice that used to read the Word of God, and the tender kiss of his mother as they parted for the night. He thought of the dreary day when he left them all behind, and sailed away, in the midst of strangers, across the wide ocean to a strange land. He thought of them nowwithout himaccustomed to his absence, and forgetful, perhaps, at times that he had once been there. As he thought of all this a tear rolled down his cheek, and when Charley looked up in his face, that tear-drop told plainly that he too thought sometimes of home.

"Let us ask Redfeather to tell us something about the Indians," he said at length, rousing himself. "I have no doubt he has had many adventures in his life. Shall we, Charley?"

"By all meansHo, Redfeather; are you trying to stop the wind by looking it out of countenance?"

The Indian rose and walked towards the spot where the boys lay.

"What was Redfeather thinking about?" said Charley, adopting the somewhat pompous style of speech occasionally used by Indians. "Was he thinking of the white swan and his little ones in the prairie; or did he dream of giving his enemies a good licking the next time he meets them?"

"Redfeather has no enemies," replied the Indian. "He was thinking of the great Manito, [Footnote: God.] who made the wild winds, and the great lakes, and the forest."

"And pray, good Redfeather, what did your thoughts tell you?"

"They told me that men are very weak, and very foolish, and wicked; and that Manito is very good and patient to let them live."

"That is to say," cried Harry, who was surprised and a little nettled to hear what he called the heads of a sermon from a red-skin, "that you, being a man, are very weak, and very foolish, and wicked, and that Manito is very good and patient to let you live?"

"Good," said the Indian calmly; "that is what I mean."

"Come, Redfeather," said Charley, laying his hand on the Indian's arm, "sit down beside us, and tell us some of your adventures. I know that you must have had plenty, and it's quite clear that we're not to get away from this place all day, so you've nothing better to do."

The Indian readily assented, and began his story in English.

Redfeather was one of the very few Indians who had acquired the power of speaking the English language. Having been, while a youth, brought much into contact with the fur-traders, and having been induced by them to enter their service for a time, he had picked up enough of English to make himself easily understood. Being engaged at a later period of life as a guide to one of the exploring parties sent out by the British Government to discover the famous North West Passage, he had learned to read and write, and had become so much accustomed to the habits and occupations of the "pale faces," that he spent more of his time, in one way or another, with them than in the society of his tribe, which dwelt in the thick woods bordering on one of the great prairies of the interior. He was about thirty years of age; had a tall, thin, but wiry and powerful frame; and was of a mild, retiring disposition. His face wore a habitually grave expression, verging towards melancholy; induced, probably, by the vicissitudes of a wild life (in which he had seen much of the rugged side of nature in men and things) acting upon a sensitive heart, and a naturally warm temperament. Redfeather, however, was by no means morose; and when

seated along with his Canadian comrades round the camp fire, he listened with evidently genuine interest to their stories, and entered into the spirit of their jests. But he was always an auditor, and rarely took part in their conversations. He, was frequently consulted by the guide in matters of difficulty, and it was observed that the "red-skin's" opinion always carried much weight with it, although it was seldom given unless asked for. The men respected him much because he was a hard worker, obliging, and modest-three qualities that insure respect, whether found under a red skin or a white one.

"I shall tell you," he began, in a soft, musing tone, as if he were wandering in memories of the past"I shall tell you how it was that I came by the name of Redfeather."

"Ah!" interrupted Charley, "I intended to ask you about that; you don't wear one."

"I did once. My father was a great warrior in his tribe," continued the Indian; "and I was but a youth when I got the name.
"My tribe was at war at the time with the Chipewyans, and one of our scouts having come in with the intelligence that a party of our enemies was in the neighbourhood, our warriors armed themselves to go in pursuit of them. I had been out once before with a war-party, but had not been successful, as the enemy's scouts gave notice of our approach in time to enable them to escape. At the time the information was brought to us, the young men of our village were amusing themselves with athletic games, and loud challenges were being given and accepted to wrestle, or race, or swim in the deep water of the river, which flowed calmly past the green bank on which our wigwams stood. On a bank near to us sat about a dozen of our womensome employed in ornamenting moccasins with coloured porcupine quills; others making rogans of bark for maple sugar, or nursing their young infants; while a few, chiefly the old women, grouped themselves together and kept up an incessant chattering, chiefly with reference to the doings of the young men.

"Apart from these stood three or four of the principal men of our tribe, smoking their pipes, and although apparently engrossed in conversation, still evidently interested in what was going forward on the bank of the river.

"Among the young men assembled there was one of about my own age, who had taken a violent dislike to me because the most beautiful girl in all the village preferred me before him. His name was Misconna. He was a hot-tempered, cruel youth; and although I endeavoured as much as possible to keep out of his way, he sought every opportunity of picking a quarrel with me. I had just been running a race along with several other youths, and although not the winner, I had kept ahead of Misconna all the distance. He now stood

leaning against a tree, burning with rage and disappointment. I was sorry for this, because I bore him no ill-will, and if it had occurred to me at the time, I would have allowed him to pass me, since I was unable to gain the race at any rate.

"'Dog!' he said at length, stepping forward and confronting me, 'will you wrestle?'

"Just as he approached I had turned round to leave the place. Not wishing to have more to do with him, I pretended not to hear, and made a step or two towards the lodges. 'Dog,' he cried again, while his eyes flashed fiercely, as he grasped me by the arm, 'will you wrestle, or are you afraid? Has the brave boy's heart changed into that of a girl?'

"'No, Misconna,' said I. 'You know that I am not afraid; but I have no desire to quarrel with you.'

"'You lie!' cried he, with a cold sneer,'you are afraid; and see,' he added, pointing towards the women with a triumphant smile, 'the dark-eyed girl sees it and believes it too!'

"I turned to look, and there I saw Wabisca gazing on me with a look of blank amazement. I could see, also, that several of the other women, and some of my companions, shared in her surprise.

"With a burst of anger I turned round. 'No,' Misconna,' said I, 'I am not afraid, as you shall find;' and springing upon him, I grasped him round the body. He was nearly, if not quite, as strong a youth as myself; but I was burning with indignation at the insolence of his conduct before so many of the women, which gave me more than usual energy. For several minutes we swayed to and fro, each endeavouring in vain to bend the other's back; but we were too well matched for this, and sought to accomplish our purpose by taking advantage of an unguarded movement. At last such a movement occurred. My adversary made a sudden and violent attempt to throw me to the left, hoping that an inequality in the ground would favour his effort. But he was mistaken. I had seen the danger and was prepared for it, so that the instant he attempted it I threw forward my right leg, and thrust him backwards with all my might. Misconna was quick in his motions. He saw my intentiontoo late, indeed, to prevent it altogether, but in time to throw back his left foot and stiffen his body till it felt like a block of stone. The effort was now entirely one of endurance. We stood each with his muscles strained to the utmost, without the slightest motion. At length I felt my adversary give way a little. Slight though the motion was, it instantly removed all doubt as to who should go down. My heart gave a bound of exaltation, and with the energy which such a feeling

always inspires, I put forth all my strength, threw him heavily over on his back, and fell upon him.

"A shout of applause from my comrades greeted me as I rose and left the ground; but at the same moment the attention of all was taken from myself and the baffled Misconna by the arrival of the scout, bringing us information that a party of Chipewyans were in the neighbourhood. In a moment all was bustle and preparation. An Indian war-party is soon got ready. Forty of our braves threw off the principal parts of their clothing; painted their faces with stripes of vermilion and charcoal; armed themselves with guns, bows, tomahawks and scalping knives, and in a few minutes left the camp in silence, and at a quick pace.

"One or two of the youths who had been playing on the river's bank were permitted to accompany the party, and among these were Misconna and myself. As we passed a group of women, assembled to see us depart, I observed the girl who had caused so much jealousy between us. She cast down her eyes as we came up, and as we advanced close to the group she dropped a white feather, as if by accident. Stooping hastily down, I picked it up in passing, and stuck it in an ornamented band that bound my hair. As we hurried on I heard two or three old hags laugh, and say, with a sneer, 'His hand is as white as a feather: it has never seen blood.' The next moment we were hid in the forest, and pursued our rapid course in dead silence.

"The country through which we passed was varied, extending in broken bits of open prairie, and partly covered with thick wood, yet not so thick as to offer any hindrance to our march. We walked in single file, each treading in his comrade's footsteps, while the band was headed by the scout who had brought the information. The principal chief of our tribe came next, and he was followed by the braves according to their age or influence. Misconna and I brought up the rear. The sun was just sinking as we left the belt of woodland in which our village stood, crossed over a short plain, descended a dark hollow, at the bottom of which the river flowed, and following its course for a considerable distance, turned off to the right and emerged upon a sweep of prairieland. Here the scout halted, and taking the chief and two or three braves aside, entered into earnest consultation with them.

"What they said we could not hear; but as we stood leaning on our guns in the deep shade of the forest, we could observe by their animated gestures that they differed in opinion. We saw that the scout pointed several times to the moon, which was just rising above the treetops, and then to the distant horizon: but the chief shook his head, pointed to the woods, and seemed to be much in doubt, while the whole band watched his motions in deep silence but evident interest. At length they appeared to agree. The scout took his place at the head

of the line, and we resumed our march, keeping close to the margin of the wood. It was perhaps three hours after this ere we again halted to hold another consultation. This time their deliberations were shorter. In a few seconds our chief himself took the lead, and turned into the woods, through which he guided us to a small fountain which bubbled up at the root of a birch tree, where there was a smooth green spot of level ground. Here we halted, and prepared to rest for an hour, at the end of which time the moon, which now shone bright and full in the clear sky, would be nearly down, and we could resume our march. We now sat down in a circle, and taking a hasty mouthful of dried meat, stretched ourselves on the ground with our arms beside us, while our chief kept watch, leaning against the birch tree. It seemed as if I had scarcely been asleep five minutes when I felt a light touch on my shoulder. Springing up, I found the whole party already astir, and in a few minutes more we were again hurrying onwards.

"We travelled thus until a faint light in the east told us that the day was at hand, when the scout's steps became more cautious, and he paused to examine the ground frequently. At last we came to a place where the ground sank slightly, and at a distance of a hundred yards rose again, forming a low ridge which was crowned with small bushes. Here we came to a halt, and were told that our enemies were on the other side of that ridge; that they were about twenty in number, all Chipewyan warriors, with the exception of one palefacea trapper, and his Indian wife. The scout had learned, while lying like a snake in the grass around their camp, that this man was merely travelling with them on his way to the Rocky Mountains, and that, as they were a war-party, he intended to leave them soon. On hearing this the warriors gave a grim smile, and our chief, directing the scout to fall behind, cautiously led the way to the top of the ridge. On reaching it we saw a valley of great extent, dotted with trees and shrubs, and watered by one of the many rivers that flow into the great Saskatchewan. It was nearly dark, however, and we could only get an indistinct view of the land. Far ahead of us, on the right bank of the stream, and close to its margin, we saw the faint red light of watch fires; which caused us some surprise, for watch-fires are never lighted by a war-party so near to an enemy's country. So we could only conjecture that they were quite ignorant of our being in that part of the country; which was, indeed, not unlikely, seeing that we had shifted our camp during the summer.

"Our chief now made arrangements for the attack. We were directed to separate and approach individually as near to the camp as was possible without risk of discovery, and then, taking up an advantageous position, to await our chief's signal, which was to be the hooting of an owl. We immediately separated. My course lay along the banks of the stream, and as I strode rapidly along, listening to its low solemn murmur, which sounded clear

and distinct in the stillness of a calm summer night, I could not help feeling as if it were reproaching me for the bloody work I was hastening to perform. Then the recollection of what the old woman said of me raised a desperate spirit in my heart. Remembering the white feather in my head, I grasped my gun and quickened my pace. As I neared the camp I went into the woods and climbed a low hillock to look out. I found that it still lay about five hundred yards distant, and that the greater part of the ground between it and the place where I stood was quite flat, and without cover of any kind. I therefore prepared to creep towards it, although the attempt was likely to be attended with great danger, for Chipewyans have quick ears and sharp eyes. Observing, however, that the river ran close past the camp, I determined to follow its course as before. In a few seconds more I came to a dark narrow gap where the river flowed between broken rocks, overhung by branches, and from which I could obtain a clear view of the camp within fifty yards of me. Examining the priming of my gun, I sat down on a rock to await the chief's signal.

"It was evident from the careless manner in which the fires were placed, that no enemy was supposed to be near. From my concealment I could plainly distinguish ten or fifteen of the sleeping forms of our enemies, among which the trapper was conspicuous, from his superior bulk, and the reckless way in which his brawny arms were flung on the turf, while his right hand clutched his rifle. I could not but smile as I thought of the proud boldness of the pale-facelying all exposed to view in the gray light of dawn while an Indian's rifle was so close at hand. One Indian kept watch, but he seemed more than half asleep. I had not sat more than a minute when my observations were interrupted by the cracking of a branch in the bushes near me. Starting up, I was about to bound into the underwood, when a figure sprang down the bank and rapidly approached me. My first impulse was to throw forward my gun, but a glance sufficed to show me that it was a woman.

"'Wah!' I exclaimed, in surprise, as she hurried forward and laid her hand on my shoulder. She was dressed partly in the costume of the Indians, but wore a shawl on her shoulders and a handkerchief on her head that showed she had been in the settlements; and from the lightness of her skin and hair, I judged at once that she was the trapper's wife, of whom I had heard the scout speak.

"'Has the light-hair got a medicine-bag, or does she speak with spirits, that she has found me so easily?'

"The girl looked anxiously up in my face as if to read my thoughts, and then said, in a low voice,

"'No, I neither carry the medicine-bag nor hold palaver with spirits; but I do think the good Manito must have led me here. I wandered into the woods

because I could not sleep, and I saw you pass. But tell me,' she added with still deeper anxiety, 'does the white-feather come alone? Does he approach friends during the dark hours with a soft step like a fox?'

"Feeling the necessity of detaining her until my comrades should have time to surround the camp, I said: 'The white-feather hunts far from his lands. He sees Indians whom he does not know, and must approach with a light step. Perhaps they are enemies.'

"'Do Knisteneux hunt at night, prowling in the bed of a stream?' said the girl, still regarding me with a keen glance. 'Speak truth, stranger' (and she started suddenly back); 'in a moment I can alarm the camp with a cry, and if your tongue is forkedBut I do not wish to bring enemies upon you, if they are indeed such. I am not one of them. My husband and I travel with them for a time. We do not desire to see blood. God knows,' she added in French, which seemed her native tongue, 'I have seen enough of that already.'

"As her earnest eyes looked into my face a sudden thought occurred to me. 'Go,' said I, hastily, 'tell your husband to leave the camp instantly and meet me here; and see that the Chipewyans do not observe your departure. Quick! his life and yours may depend on your speed.'

"The girl instantly comprehended my meaning. In a moment she sprang up the bank; but as she did so the loud report of a gun was heard, followed by a yell, and the war-whoop of the Knisteneux rent the air as they rushed upon the devoted camp, sending arrows and bullets before them.

"On the instant I sprang after the girl and grasped her by the arm. 'Stay, white-cheek; it is too late now. You cannot save your husband, but I think he'll save himself. I saw him dive into the bushes like a cariboo. Hide yourself here; perhaps you may escape.'

"The half-breed girl sank on a fallen tree with a deep groan, and clasped her hands convulsively before her eyes, while I bounded over the tree, intending to join my comrades in pursuing the enemy.

"As I did so a shrill cry arose behind me, and looking back, I beheld the trapper's wife prostrate on the ground, and Misconna standing over her, his spear uplifted, and a fierce frown on his dark face.

"'Hold!' I cried, rushing back and seizing his arm. 'Misconna did not come to kill women. She is not our enemy.'

"'Does the young wrestler want another wife?' he said, with a wild laugh, at the same time wrenching his arm from my gripe, and driving his spear through

the fleshy part of the woman's breast and deep into the ground. A shriek rent the air as he drew it out again to repeat the thrust; but before he could do so, I struck him with the butt of my gun on the head. Staggering backwards, he fell heavily among the bushes. At this moment a second whoop rang out, and another of our band sprang from the thicket that surrounded us. Seeing no one but myself and the bleeding girl, he gave me a short glance of surprise, as if he wondered why I did not finish the work which he evidently supposed I had begun.

"'Wah!' he exclaimed; and uttering another yell plunged his spear into the woman's breast, despite my efforts to prevent himthis time with more deadly effect, as the blood spouted from the wound, while she uttered a piercing scream, and twined her arms round my legs as I stood beside her, as if imploring for mercy. Poor girl! I saw that she was past my help. The wound was evidently mortal. Already the signs of death overspread her features, and I felt that a second blow would be one of mercy; so that when the Indian stooped and passed his long knife through her heart, I made but a feeble effort to prevent it. Just as the man rose, with the warm blood dripping from his keen blade, the sharp crack of a rifle was heard, and the Indian fell dead at my feet, shot through the forehead, while the trapper bounded into the open space, his massive frame quivering, and his sunburned face distorted with rage and horror. From the other side of the brake six of our band rushed forward and levelled their guns at him. For one moment the trapper paused to cast a glance at the mangled corpse of his wife, as if to make quite sure that she was dead; and then uttering a howl of despair, he hurled his axe with a giant's force at the Knisteneux, and disappeared over the precipitous bank of the stream.

"So rapid was the action that the volley which immediately succeeded passed harmlessly over his head, while the Indians dashed forward in pursuit. At the same instant I myself was felled to the earth. The axe which the trapper had flung struck a tree in its flight, and as it glanced off the handle gave me a violent blow in passing. I fell stunned. As I did so my head alighted on the shoulder of the woman, and the last thing I felt, as my wandering senses forsook me, was her still warm blood flowing over my face and neck.

"While this scene was going on, the yells and screams of the warriors in the camp became fainter and fainter as they pursued and fled through the woods. The whole band of Chipewyans was entirely routed, with the exception of four who escaped, and the trapper whose flight I have described; all the rest were slain, and their scalps hung at the belts of the victorious Knisteneux warriors, while only one of our party was killed.

"Not more than a few minutes after receiving the blow that stunned me, I recovered, and rising as hastily as my scattered faculties would permit me, I

staggered towards the camp, where I heard the shouts of our men as they collected the arms of their enemies. As I rose, the feather which Wabisca had dropped fell from my brow, and as I picked it up to replace it, I perceived that it was red, being entirely covered with the blood of the half-breed girl.

"The place where Misconna had fallen was vacant as I passed, and I found him standing among his comrades round the camp fires, examining the guns and other articles which they had collected. He gave me a short glance of deep hatred as I passed, and turned his head hastily away. A few minutes sufficed to collect the spoils, and so rapidly had everything been done that the light of day was still faint as we silently returned on our track. We marched in the same order as before, Misconna and I bringing up the rear. As we passed near the place where the poor woman had been murdered, I felt a strong desire to return to the spot. I could not very well understand the feeling, but it lay so strong upon me that, when we reached the ridge where we first came in sight of the Chipewyan camp, I fell behind until my companions disappeared in the woods, and then ran swiftly back. Just as I was about to step beyond the circle of bushes that surrounded the spot, I saw that some one was there before me. It was a man, and as he advanced into the open space and the light fell on his face, I saw that it was the trapper. No doubt he had watched us off the ground, and then, when all was safe, returned to bury his wife. I crouched to watch him. Stepping slowly up to the body of his murdered wife, he stood beside it with his arms folded on his breast and quite motionless. His head hung down, for the heart of the white man was heavy, and I could see, as the light increased, that his brows were dark as the thunder-cloud, and the corners of his mouth twitched from a feeling that the Indian scorns to show. My heart is full of sorrow for him now" (Redfeather's voice sank as he spoke); "it was full of sorrow for him even then, when I was taught to think that pity for an enemy was unworthy of a brave. The trapper stood gazing very long. His wife was young; he could not leave her yet. At length a deep groan burst from his heart, as the waters of a great river, long held down, swell up in spring and burst the ice at last. Groan followed groan as the trapper still stood and pressed his arms on his broad breast, as if to crush the heart within. At last he slowly knelt beside her, bending more and more over the lifeless form, until he lay extended on the ground beside it, and twining his arms round the neck, he drew the cold cheek close to his, and pressed the blood-covered bosom tighter and tighter, while his form quivered with agony as he gave her a last, long embrace. Oh!" continued Redfeather, while his brow darkened, and his black eye flashed with an expression of fierceness that his young listeners had never seen before, "may the curse" He paused. "God forgive them! How could they know better?

"At length the trapper rose hastily. The expression of his brow was still the

same, but his mouth was altered. The lips were pressed tightly like those of a brave when led to torture, and there was a fierce activity in his motions as he sprang down the bank and proceeded to dig a hole in the soft earth. For half an hour he laboured, shovelling away the earth with a large, flat stone; and carrying down the body, he buried it there, under the shadow of a willow. The trapper then shouldered his rifle and hurried away. On reaching the turn of the stream which shuts the little hollow out from view, he halted suddenly, gave one look into the prairie he was henceforth to tread alone, one short glance back, and then, raising both arms in the air, looked up into the sky, while he stretched himself to his full height. Even at that distance I could see the wild glare of his eye and the heaving of his breast. A moment after, and he was gone."

"And did you never see him again?" inquired Harry Somerville, eagerly.

"No, I never saw him more. Immediately afterwards I turned to rejoin my companions, whom I soon overtook, and entered our village along with them. I was regarded as a poor warrior, because I brought home no scalps, and ever afterwards I went by the name of Redfeather in our tribe."

"But are you still thought a poor warrior?" asked Charley, in some concern, as if he were jealous of the reputation of his new friend.

The Indian smiled. "No," he said: "our village was twice attacked afterwards, and in defending it, Redfeather took many scalps. He was made a chief!"

"Ah!" cried Charley, "I'm glad of that. And Wabisca, what came of her?
Did Misconna get her?"
"She is my wife," replied Redfeather.

"Your wife! Why, I thought I heard the voyageurs call your wife the white swan."

"Wabisca is white in the language of the Knisteneux. She is beautiful in form, and my comrades call her the white swan."

Redfeather said this with an air of gratified pride. He did not, perhaps, love his wife with more fervour than he would have done had he remained with his tribe; but Redfeather had associated a great deal with the traders, and he had imbibed much of that spirit which prompts "white men" to treat their females with deference and respecta feeling which is very foreign to an Indian's bosom. To do so was, besides, more congenial to his naturally unselfish and affectionate disposition, so that any flattering allusion to his partner was always received by him with immense gratification.

"I'll pay you a visit some day, Redfeather, if I'm sent to any place within fifty miles of your tribe," said Charley with the air of one who had fully made up his mind.

"And Misconna?" asked Harry.

"Misconna is with his tribe," replied the Indian, and a frown overspread his features as he spoke; "but Redfeather has been following in the track of his white friends; he has not seen his nation for many moons."

CHAPTER XIII.
The canoeAscending the rapidsThe portageDeer shooting and life in the woods.

We must now beg the patient reader to take a leap with us, not only through space, but also through time. We must pass over the events of the remainder of the journey along the shore of Lake Winnipeg. Unwilling though we are to omit anything in the history of our friends that would be likely to prove interesting, we think it wise not to run the risk of being tedious, or of dwelling too minutely on the details of scenes which recall powerfully the feelings and memories of bygone days to the writer, but may, nevertheless, appear somewhat flat to the reader.

We shall not, therefore, enlarge at present on the arrival of the boats at Norway House, which lies at the north end of the lake, nor on what was said and done by our friends and by several other young comrades whom they found there. We shall not speak of the horror of Harry Somerville, and the extreme disappointment of his friend Charley Kennedy, when the former was told that instead of hunting grizzly bears up the Saskatchewan he was condemned to the desk again at York Fort, the depot on Hudson's Bay,a low, swampy place near the sea-shore, where the goods for the interior are annually landed and the furs shipped for England, where the greater part of the summer and much of the winter is occupied by the clerks who may be doomed to vegetate there in making up the accounts of what is termed the Northern Department, and where the brigades converge from all the wide scattered and far-distant outposts, and the ship from Englandthat great event of the yeararrives, keeping the place in a state of constant bustle and effervescence until autumn, when ship and brigades finally depart, leaving the residents (about thirty in number) shut up for eight long, dreary months of winter, with a tenantless wilderness around and behind them, and the wide, cold frozen sea before. This was among the first of Harry's disappointments. He suffered many afterwards, poor fellow!

Neither shall we accompany Charley up the south branch of the Saskatchewan,

where his utmost expectations in the way of hunting were more than realised, and where he became so accustomed to shooting ducks and geese, and bears and buffaloes, that he could not forbear smiling when he chanced to meet with a red-legged gull, and remembered how he and his friend Harry had comported themselves when they first met with these birds on the shores of Lake Winnipeg! We shall pass over all this, and the summer, autumn, and winter too, and leap at once into the spring of the following year.

On a very bright, cheery morning of that spring a canoe might have been seen slowly ascending one of the numerous streams which meander through a richly-wooded fertile country, and mingle their waters with those of the Athabasca River, terminating their united career in a large lake of the same name. The canoe was smallone of the kind used by the natives while engaged in hunting, and capable of holding only two persons conveniently, with their baggage. To any one unacquainted with the nature and capabilities of a northern Indian canoe, the fragile, bright orange-coloured machine that was battling with the strong current of a rapid must indeed have appeared an unsafe and insignificant craft; but a more careful study of its performances in the rapid, and of the immense quantity of miscellaneous goods and chattels which were, at a later period of the day, disgorged from its interior, would have convinced the beholder that it was in truth the most convenient and serviceable craft that could be devised for the exigencies of such a country.

True, it could only hold two men (it might have taken three at a pinch), because men, and women too, are awkward, unyielding baggage, very difficult to stow compactly; but it is otherwise with tractable goods. The canoe is exceedingly thin, so that no space is taken up or rendered useless by its own structure, and there is no end to the amount of blankets, and furs, and coats, and paddles, and tent-covers, and dogs, and babies, that can be stowed away in its capacious interior. The canoe of which we are now writing contained two persons, whose active figures were thrown alternately into every graceful attitude of manly vigour, as with poles in hand they struggled to force their light craft against the boiling stream. One was a man apparently of about forty-five years of age. He was a square-shouldered, muscular man, and from the ruggedness of his general appearance, the soiled hunting-shirt that was strapped round his waist with a party-coloured worsted belt, the leather leggings, a good deal the worse for wear, together with the quiet, self-possessed glance of his gray eye, the compressed lip and the sunburned brow, it was evident that he was a hunter, and one who had seen rough work in his day. The expression of his face was pleasing, despite a look of habitual severity which sat upon it, and a deep scar which traversed his brow from the right temple to the top of his nose. It was difficult to tell to what country he belonged. His father was a Canadian, his mother a Scotchwoman. He was born

in Canada, brought up in one of the Yankee settlements on the Missouri, and had, from a mere youth, spent his life as a hunter in the wilderness. He could speak English, French, or Indian with equal ease and fluency, but it would have been hard for anyone to say which of the three was his native tongue. The younger man, who occupied the stern of the canoe, acting the part of steersman, was quite a youth, apparently about seventeen, but tall and stout beyond his years, and deeply sunburned. Indeed, were it not for this fact, the unusual quantity of hair that hung in massive curls down his neck, and the voyageur costume, we should have recognised our young friend Charley Kennedy again more easily. Had any doubts remained in our mind, the shout of his merry voice would have scattered them at once.

"Hold hard, Jacques," he cried, as the canoe trembled in the current, "one moment, till I get my pole fixed behind this rock. Now, then, shove ahead. Ah!" he exclaimed with chagrin, as the pole slipped on the treacherous bottom and the canoe whirled round.

"Mind the rock," cried the bowsman, giving an energetic thrust with his pole, that sent the light bark into an eddy formed by a large rock which rose above the turbulent waters. Here it rested while Jacques and Charley raised themselves on their knees (travellers in small canoes always sit in a kneeling position) to survey the rapid.

"It's too much for us, I fear, Mr. Charles," said Jacques, shading his brow with his horny hand. "I've paddled up it many a time alone, but never saw the water so big as now."

"Humph! we shall have to make a portage then, I presume. Could we not give it one trial more? I think we might make a dash for the tail of that eddy, and then the stream above seems not quite so strong. Do you think so, Jacques?"

Jacques was not the man to check a daring young spirit. His motto through life had ever been, "Never venture, never win"a sentiment which his intercourse among fur-traders had taught him to embody in the pithy expression, "Never say die;" so that, although quite satisfied that the thing was impossible, he merely replied to his companion's speech by an assenting "Ho," and pushed out again into the stream. An energetic effort enabled them to gain the tail of the eddy spoken of, when Charley's pole snapped across, and, falling heavily on the gunwale, he would have upset the little craft had not Jacques, whose wits were habitually on the qui vive, thrown his own weight at the same moment on the opposite side, and counterbalanced Charley's slip. The action saved them a ducking; but the canoe, being left to its own devices for an instant, whirled off again into the stream, and before Charley could seize a paddle to prevent it, they were floating in the still water at the foot of the

rapids.

"Now isn't that a bore?" said Charley, with a comical look of disappointment at his companion.

Jacques laughed.

"It was well to try, master. I mind a young clerk who came into these parts the same year as I did, and he seldom tried anything. He couldn't abide canoes. He didn't want for courage neither; but he had a nat'ral dislike to them, I suppose, that he couldn't help, and never entered one except when he was obliged to do so. Well, one day he wounded a grizzly bear on the banks o' the Saskatchewan (mind the tail o' that rapid, Mr. Charles; we'll land t'other side o' yon rock). Well, the bear made after him, and he cut stick right away for the river, where there was a canoe hauled up on the bank. He didn't take time to put his rifle aboard, but dropped it on the gravel, crammed the canoe into the water and jumped in, almost driving his feet through its bottom as he did so, and then plumped down so suddenly, to prevent its capsizing, that he split it right across. By this time the bear was at his heels, and took the water like a duck. The poor clerk, in his hurry, swayed from side to side tryin' to prevent the canoe goin' over. But when he went to one side, he was so unused to it that he went too far, and had to jerk over to the other pretty sharp; and so he got worse and worse, until he heard the bear give a great snort beside him. Then he grabbed the paddle in desperation, but at the first dash he missed his stroke, and over he went. The current was pretty strong at the place, which was lucky for him, for it kept him down a bit, so that the bear didn't observe him for a little; and while it was pokin' away at the canoe, he was carried down stream like a log and stranded on a shallow. Jumping up he made tracks for the wood, and the bear (which had found out its mistake), after him; so he was obliged at last to take to a tree, where the beast watched him for a day and a night, till his friends, thinking that something must be wrong, sent out to look for him. (Steady, now, Mr. Charles; a little more to the right. That's it.) Now, if that young man had only ventured boldly into small canoes when he got the chance, he might have laughed at the grizzly and killed him too."

As Jacques finished, the canoe glided into a quiet bay formed by an eddy of the rapid, where the still water was overhung with dense foliage.

"Is the portage a long one?" asked Charley, as he stepped out on the bank, and helped to unload the canoe.

"About half-a-mile," replied his companion. "We might make it shorter by poling up the last rapid; but it's stiff work, Mr. Charles, and we'll do the thing quicker and easier at one lift."

The two travellers now proceeded to make a portage. They prepared to carry their canoe and baggage overland, so as to avoid a succession of rapids and waterfalls which intercepted their further progress.

"Now, Jacques, up with it," said Charley, after the loading had been taken out and placed on the grassy bank.

The hunter stooped, and seizing the canoe by its centre bar, lifted it out of the water, placed it on his shoulders, and walked off with it into the woods. This was not accomplished by the man's superior strength. Charley could have done it quite as well; and, indeed, the strong hunter could have carried a canoe twice the size with perfect ease. Immediately afterwards Charley followed with as much of the lading as he could carry, leaving enough on the bank to form another load.

The banks of the river were steepin some places so much so that Jacques found it a matter of no small difficulty to climb over the broken rocks with the unwieldy canoe on his back; the more so that the branches interlaced overhead so thickly as to present a strong barrier, through which the canoe had to be forced, at the risk of damaging its delicate bark covering. On reaching the comparatively level land above, however, there was more open space, and the hunter threaded his way among the tree stems more rapidly, making a detour occasionally to avoid a swamp or piece of broken ground; sometimes descending a deep gorge formed by a small tributary of the stream they were ascending, and which to an unpractised eye would have appeared almost impassable, even without the encumbrance of a canoe. But the said canoe never bore Jacques more gallantly or safely over the surges of lake or stream than did he bear it through the intricate mazes of the forest; now diving down and disappearing altogether in the umbrageous foliage of a dell; anon reappearing on the other side and scrambling up the bank on all-fours, he and the canoe together looking like some frightful yellow reptile of antediluvian proportions; and then speeding rapidly forward over a level plain until he reached a sheet of still water above the rapids. Here he deposited his burden on the grass, and halting only for a few seconds to carry a few drops of the clear water to his lips, retraced his steps to bring over the remainder of the baggage. Soon afterwards Charley made his appearance on the spot where the canoe was left, and throwing down his load, seated himself on it and surveyed the prospect. Before him lay a reach of the stream which spread out so widely as to resemble a small lake, in whose clear, still bosom were reflected the overhanging foliage of graceful willows, and here and there the bright stem of a silver birch, whose light-green leaves contrasted well with scattered groups and solitary specimens of the spruce fir. Reeds and sedges grew in the water along the banks, rendering the junction of the land and the stream uncertain

and confused. All this and a great deal more Charley noted at a glance; for the hundreds of beautiful and interesting objects in nature which take so long to describe even partially, and are feebly set forth after all even by the most graphic language, flash upon the eye in all their force and beauty, and are drunk in at once in a single glance.

But Charley noted several objects floating on the water which we have not yet mentioned. These were five gray geese feeding among the rocks at a considerable distance off, and all unconscious of the presence of a human foe in their remote domains. The travellers had trusted very much to their guns and nets for food, having only a small quantity of pemmican in reserve, lest these should failan event which was not at all likely, as the country through which they passed was teeming with wild-fowl of all kinds, besides deer. These latter, however, were only shot when they came inadvertently within rifle range, as our voyageurs had a definite object in view, and could not afford to devote much of their time to the chase.

During the day previous to that on which we have introduced them to our readers, Charley and his companion had been so much occupied in navigating their frail bark among a succession of rapids, that they had not attended to the replenishing of their larder, so that the geese which now showed themselves were looked upon by Charley with a longing eye. Unfortunately they were feeding on the opposite side of the river, and out of shot. But Charley was a hunter now, and knew how to overcome slight difficulties. He first cut down a pretty large and leafy branch of a tree, and placed it in the bow of the canoe in such a way as to hang down before it and form a perfect screen, through the interstices of which he could see the geese, while they could only see, what was to them no novelty, the branch of a tree floating down the stream. Having gently launched the canoe, Charley was soon close to the unsuspecting birds, from among which he selected one that appeared to be unusually complacent and self-satisfied, concluding at once, with an amount of wisdom that bespoke him a true philosopher, that such must as a matter of course be the fattest.

"Bang" went the gun, and immediately the sleek goose turned round upon its back and stretched out its feet towards the sky, waving them once or twice as if bidding adieu to its friends. The others thereupon took to flight, with such a deal of sputter and noise as made it quite apparent that their astonishment was unfeigned. Bang went the gun again, and down fell a second goose.

"Ha!" exclaimed Jacques, throwing down the remainder of the cargo as Charley landed with his booty, "that's well. I was just thinking as I comed across that we should have to take to pemmican to-night."

"Well, Jacques, and if we had, I'm sure an old hunter like you, who have

roughed it so often, need not complain," said Charley, smiling.

"As to that, master," replied Jacques, "I've roughed it often enough; and when it does come to a clear fix, I can eat my shoes without grumblin' as well as any man. But, you see, fresh meat is better than dried meat when it's to be had; and so I'm glad to see that you've been lucky, Mr. Charles."

"To say truth, so am I; and these fellows are delightfully plump. But you spoke of eating your shoes, Jacques. When were you reduced to that direful extremity?"

Jacques finished reloading the canoe while they conversed, and the two were seated in their places, and quietly but swiftly ascending the stream again, ere the hunter replied.

"You've heerd of Sir John Franklin, I s'pose?" he inquired, after a minute's consideration.

"Yes, often."

"An' p'r'aps you've heerd tell of his first trip of discovery along the shores of the Polar Sea?"

"Do you refer to the time when he was nearly starved to death, and when poor Hood was shot by the Indian?"

"The same," said Jacques.

"Oh, yes; I know all about that. Were you with them?" inquired Charley, in great surprise.

"Why, nonot exactly on the trip; but I was sent in winter with provisions to themand much need they had of them, poor fellows! I found them tearing away at some old parchment skins that had lain under the snow all winter, and that an Injin's dog would ha' turned up his nose atand they don't turn up their snouts at many things, I can tell ye. Well, after we had left all our provisions with them, we started for the fort again, just keepin' as much as would drive off starvation; for, you see, we thought that surely we would git something on the road. But neither hoof nor feather did we see all the way (I was travellin' with an Injin), and our grub was soon done, though we saved it up, and only took a mouthful or two the last three days. At last it was done, and we was pretty well used up, and the fort two days ahead of us. So says I to my comradewho had been looking at me for some time as if he thought that a cut off my shoulder wouldn't be a bad thingsays I, 'Nipitabo, I'm afeard the shoes must go for it now;' so with that I pulls out a pair o' deerskin moccasins. 'They

looks tender,' said I, trying to be cheerful. 'Wah!' said the Injin; and then I held them over the fire till they was done black, and Nipitabo ate one, and I ate the tother, with a lump o' snow to wash it down!"

"It must have been rather dry eating," said Charley, laughing.

"Raythe; but it was better than the Injin's leather breeches, which we took in hand next day. They was uncommon tough, and very dirty, havin' been worn about a year and a half. Hows'ever, they kept us up; an' as we only ate the legs, he had the benefit o' the stump to arrive with at the fort next day."

"What's yon ahead?" exclaimed Charley, pausing as he spoke, and shading his eyes with his hand.

"It's uncommon like trees," said Jacques. "It's likely a tree that's been tumbled across the river; and from its appearance, I think we'll have to cut through it."

"Cut through it!" exclaimed Charley; "if my sight is worth a gun-flint, we'll have to cut through a dozen trees."

Charley was right. The river ahead of them became rapidly narrower; and either from the looseness of the surrounding soil, or the passing of a whirlwind, dozens of trees had been upset, and lay right across the narrow stream in terrible confusion. What made the thing worse was that the banks on either side, which were low and flat, were covered with such a dense thicket down to the water's edge, that the idea of making a portage to overcome the barrier seemed altogether hopeless.

"Here's a pretty business, to be sure!" cried Charley, in great disgust.

"Never say die, Mister Charles," replied Jacques, taking up the axe from the bottom of the canoe; "it's quite clear that cuttin' through the trees is easier than cuttin' through the bushes, so here goes."

For fully three hours the travellers were engaged in cutting their way up the encumbered stream, during which time they did not advance three miles; and it was evening ere they broke down the last barrier and paddled out into a sheet of clear water again.

"That'll prepare us for the geese, Jacques," said Charley, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow; "there's nothing like warm work for whetting the appetite, and making one sleep soundly."

"That's true," replied the hunter, resuming his paddle. "I often wonder how them white-faced fellows in the settlements manage to keep body and soul

togethera-sittin', as they do, all day in the house, and a-lyin' all night in a feather bed. For my part, rather than live as they do, I would cut my way up streams like them we've just passed every day and all day, and sleep on top of a flat rock o' nights, under the blue sky, all my life through."

With this decided expression of his sentiments, the stout hunter steered the canoe up alongside of a huge flat rock, as if he were bent on giving a practical illustration of the latter part of his speech then and there.

"We'd better camp now, Mister Charles; there's a portage o' two miles here, and it'll take us till sundown to get the canoe and things over."

"Be it so," said Charley, landing. "Is there a good place at the other end to camp on?"

"First-rate. It's smooth as a blanket on the turf, and a clear spring bubbling at the root of a wide tree that would keep off the rain if it was to come down like water-spouts."

The spot on which the travellers encamped that evening overlooked one of those scenes in which vast extent, and rich, soft variety of natural objects, were united with much that was grand and savage. It filled the mind with the calm satisfaction that is experienced when one gazes on the wide lawns studded with noble trees; the spreading fields of waving grain that mingle with stream and copse, rock and dell, vineyard and garden, of the cultivated lands of civilized men; while it produced that exulting throb of freedom which stirs man's heart to its centre, when he casts a first glance over miles and miles of broad lands that are yet unowned, unclaimed; that yet lie in the unmutilated beauty with which the beneficent Creator originally clothed themfar away from the well-known scenes of man's checkered history; entirely devoid of those ancient monuments of man's power and skill that carry the mind back with feelings of awe to bygone ages, yet stamped with evidences of an antiquity more ancient still in the wild primeval forests, and the noble trees that have sprouted, and spread, and towered in their strength for centuriestrees that have fallen at their posts, while others took their place, and rose and fell as they did, like long-lived sentinels whose duty it was to keep perpetual guard over the vast solitudes of the great American Wilderness.

The fire was lighted, and the canoe turned bottom up in front of it, under the branches of a spreading tree which stood on an eminence, whence was obtained a bird's-eye view of the noble scene. It was a flat valley, on either side of which rose two ranges of hills, which were clothed to the top with trees of various kinds, the plain of the valley itself being dotted with clumps of wood, among which the fresh green foliage of the plane tree and the silver-

stemmed birch were conspicuous, giving an airy lightness to the scene and enhancing the picturesque effect of the dark pines. A small stream could be traced winding out and in among clumps of willows, reflecting their drooping boughs and the more sombre branches of the spruce fir and the straight larch, with which in many places its banks were shaded. Here and there were stretches of clearer ground where the green herbage of spring gave to it a lawn-like appearance, and the whole magnificent scene was bounded by blue hills that became fainter as they receded from the eye and mingled at last with the horizon. The sun had just set, and a rich glow of red bathed the whole scene, which was further enlivened by flocks of wild-fowls and herds of reindeer.

These last soon drew Charley's attention from the contemplation of the scenery, and observing a deer feeding in an open space, towards which he could approach without coming between it and the wind, he ran for his gun and hurried into the woods while Jacques busied himself in arranging their blankets under the upturned canoe, and in preparing supper.

Charley discovered soon after starting, what all hunters discover sooner or laternamely, that appearances are deceitful; for he no sooner reached the foot of the hill than he found, between him and the lawn-like country, an almost impenetrable thicket of underwood. Our young hero, however, was of that disposition which sticks at nothing, and instead of taking time to search for an opening, he took a race and sprang into the middle of it, in hopes of forcing his way through. His hopes were not disappointed. He got throughquite throughand alighted up to the armpits in a swamp, to the infinite consternation of a flock of teal ducks that were slumbering peacefully there with their heads under their wings, and had evidently gone to bed for the night. Fortunately he held his gun above the water and kept his balance, so that he was able to proceed with a dry charge, though with an uncommonly wet skin. Half-an-hour brought Charley within range, and watching patiently until the animal presented his side towards the place of his concealment, he fired and shot it through the heart.

"Well done, Mister Charles," exclaimed Jacques, as the former staggered into camp with the reindeer on his shoulders. "A fat doe, too."

"Ay," said Charley; "but she has cost me a wet skin. So pray, Jacques, rouse up the fire, and let's have supper as soon as you can."

Jacques speedily skinned the deer, cut a couple of steaks from its flank, and placing them on wooden spikes, stuck them up to roast, while his young friend put on a dry shirt, and hung his coat before the blaze. The goose which had been shot earlier in the day was also plucked, split open, impaled in the same

manner as the steaks, and set up to roast. By this time the shadows of night had deepened, and ere long all was shrouded in gloom, except the circle of ruddy light around the camp fire, in the centre of which Jacques and Charley sat, with the canoe at their backs, knives in their hands, and the two spits, on the top of which smoked their ample supper, planted in the ground before them.

One by one the stars went out, until none were visible except the bright, beautiful morning star, as it rose higher and higher in the eastern sky. One by one the owls and the wolves, ill-omened birds and beasts of night, retired to rest in the dark recesses of the forest. Little by little, the gray dawn overspread the sky, and paled the lustre of the morning star, until it faded away altogether; and then Jacques awoke with a start, and throwing out his arm, brought it accidentally into violent contact with Charley's nose.

This caused Charley to awake, not only with a start, but also with a roar, which brought them both suddenly into a sitting posture, in which they continued for some time in a state between sleeping and waking, their faces meanwhile expressive of mingled imbecility and extreme surprise. Bursting into a simultaneous laugh, which degenerated into a loud yawn, they sprang up, launched and reloaded their canoe, and resumed their journey.

CHAPTER XIV.
The Indian campThe new outpostCharley sent on a mission to the Indians.

In the councils of the fur-traders, on the spring previous to that about which we are now writing, it had been decided to extend their operations a little in the lands that lie in central America, to the north of the Saskatchewan River; and in furtherance of that object, it had been intimated to the chief trader in charge of the district that an expedition should be set on foot, having for its object the examination of a territory into which they had not yet penetrated, and the establishment of an outpost therein. It was, furthermore, ordered that operations should be commenced at once, and that the choice of men to carry out the end in view was graciously left to the chief trader's well-known sagacity.

Upon receiving this communication, the chief trader selected a gentleman named Mr. Whyte to lead the party; gave him a clerk and five men, provided him with a boat and a large supply of goods necessary for trade, implements requisite for building an establishment, and sent him off with a hearty shake of the hand and a recommendation to "go and prosper."

Charles Kennedy spent part of the previous year at Rocky Mountain House,

where he had shown so much energy in conducting the trade, especially what he called the "rough and tumble" part of it, that he was selected as the clerk to accompany Mr. Whyte to his new ground. After proceeding up many rivers, whose waters had seldom borne the craft of white men, and across innumerable lakes, the party reached a spot that presented so inviting an aspect that it was resolved to pitch their tent there for a time, and, if things in the way of trade and provision looked favourable, establish themselves altogether. The place was situated on the margin of a large lake, whose shores were covered with the most luxuriant verdure, and whose waters teemed with the finest fish, while the air was alive with wild-fowl, and the woods swarming with game. Here Mr. Whyte rested awhile; and having found everything to his satisfaction, he took his axe, selected a green lawn that commanded an extensive view of the lake, and going up to a tall larch, struck the steel into it, and thus put the first touch to an establishment which afterwards went by the name of Stoney Creek.

A solitary Indian, whom they had met with on the way to their new home, had informed them that a large band of Knisteneux had lately migrated to a river about four days' journey beyond the lake at which they halted; and when the new fort was just beginning to spring up, our friend Charley and the interpreter, Jacques Caradoc, were ordered by Mr. Whyte to make a canoe, and then, embarking in it, to proceed to the Indian camp, to inform the natives of their rare good luck in having a band of white men come to settle near their lands to trade with them. The interpreter and Charley soon found birch bark, pine roots for sewing it, and gum for plastering the seams, wherewith they constructed the light machine whose progress we have partly traced in the last chapter, and which, on the following day at sunset, carried them to their journey's end.

From some remarks made by the Indian who gave them information of the camp, Charley gathered that it was the tribe to which Redfeather belonged, and furthermore that Redfeather himself was there at the time; so that it was with feelings of no little interest that he saw the tops of the yellow tents embedded among the green trees, and soon afterwards beheld them and their picturesque owners reflected in the clear river, on whose banks the natives crowded to witness the arrival of the white men.

Upon the greensward, and under the umbrageous shade of the forest trees, the tents were pitched to the number of perhaps eighteen or twenty, and the whole population, of whom very few were absent on the present occasion, might number a hundredmen, women, and children. They were dressed in habiliments formed chiefly of materials procured by themselves in the chase, but ornamented with cloth, beads, and silk thread, which showed that they had

had intercourse with the fur-traders before now. The men wore leggings of deerskin, which reached more than half-way up the thigh, and were fastened to a leathern girdle strapped round the waist. A loose tunic or hunting-shirt of the same material covered the figure from the shoulders almost to the knees, and was confined round the middle by a beltin some cases of worsted, in others of leather gaily ornamented with quills. Caps of various indescribable shapes, and made chiefly of skin, with the animal's tail left on by way of ornament, covered their heads, and moccasins for the feet completed their costume. These last may be simply described as leather mittens for the feet, without fingers, or rather toes. They were gaudily ornamented, as was almost every portion of costume, with porcupines' quills dyed with brilliant colours, and worked into fanciful, and in many cases extremely elegant, figures and designs; for North American Indians oftentimes display an amount of taste in the harmonious arrangement of colour that would astonish those who fancy that education is absolutely necessary to the just appreciation of the beautiful.

The women attired themselves in leggings and coats differing little from those of the men, except that the latter were longer, the sleeves detached from the body, and fastened on separately; while on their heads they wore caps, which hung down and covered their backs to the waist. These caps were of the simplest construction, being pieces of cloth cut into an oblong shape, and sewed together at one end. They were, however, richly ornamented with silk-work and beads.

On landing, Charley and Jacques walked up to a tall, good-looking Indian, whom they judged from his demeanour, and the somewhat deferential regard paid to him by the others, to be one of the chief men of the little community.

"Ho! what cheer?" said Jacques, taking him by the hand after the manner of Europeans, and accosting him with the phrase used by the fur-traders to the natives. The Indian returned the compliment in kind, and led the visitors to his tent, where he spread a buffalo robe for them on the ground, and begged them to be seated. A repast of dried meat and reindeer-tongues was then served, to which our friends did ample justice; while the women and children satisfied their curiosity by peering at them through chinks and holes in the tent. When they had finished, several of the principal men assembled, and the chief who had entertained them made a speech, to the effect that he was much gratified by the honour done to his people by the visit of his white brothers; that he hoped they would continue long at the camp to enjoy their hospitality; and that he would be glad to know what had brought them so far into the country of the red men.

During the course of this speech the chief made eloquent allusion to all the good qualities supposed to belong to white men in general, and (he had no

doubt) to the two white men before him in particular. He also boasted considerably of the prowess and bravery of himself and his tribe, launched a few sarcastic hits at his enemies, and wound up with a poetical hope that his guests might live for ever in these beautiful plains of bliss, where the sun never sets, and nothing goes wrong anywhere, and everything goes right at all times, and where, especially, the deer are outrageously fat, and always come out on purpose to be shot! During the course of these remarks his comrades signified their hearty concurrence to his sentiments, by giving vent to sundry low-toned "hums!" and "has!" and "wahs!" and "hos!" according to circumstances. After it was over Jacques rose, and addressing them in their own language, said,

"My Indian brethren are great. They are brave, and their fame has travelled far. Their deeds are known even so far as where the Great Salt Lake beats on the shore where the sun rises. They are not women, and when their enemies hear the sound of their name they grow pale; their hearts become like those of the reindeer. My brethren are famous, too, in the use of the snow-shoe, the snare, and the gun. The fur-traders know that they must build large stores when they come into their lands. They bring up much goods, because the young men are active, and require much. The silver fox and the marten are no longer safe when their traps and snares are set. Yes, they are good hunters: and we have now come to live among you" (Jacques changed his style as he came nearer to the point), "to trade with you, and to save you the trouble of making long journeys with your skins. A few days' distance from your wigwams we have pitched our tents. Our young men are even now felling the trees to build a house. Our nets are set, our hunters are prowling in the woods, our goods are ready, and my young master and I have come to smoke the pipe of friendship with you, and to invite you to come to trade with us."

Having delivered this oration, Jacques sat down amid deep silence. Other speeches, of a highly satisfactory character, were then made, after which "the house adjourned," and the visitors, opening one of their packages, distributed a variety of presents to the delighted natives.

Several times during the course of these proceedings, Charley's eyes wandered among the faces of his entertainers, in the hope of seeing Redfeather among them, but without success; and he began to fear that his friend was not with the tribe.

"I say, Jacques," he said, as they left the tent, "ask whether a chief called Redfeather is here. I knew him of old, and half expected to find him at this place."

The Indian to whom Jacques put the question replied that Redfeather was with

them, but that he had gone out on a hunting expedition that morning, and might be absent a day or two.

"Ah!" exclaimed Charley, "I'm glad he's here. Come, now, let us take a walk in the wood; these good people stare at us as if we were ghosts." And taking Jacques's arm, he led him beyond the circuit of the camp, turned into a path which, winding among the thick underwood, speedily screened them from view, and led them into a sequestered glade, through which a rivulet trickled along its course, almost hid from view by the dense foliage and long grasses that overhung it.

"What a delightful place to live in!" said Charley. "Do you ever think of building a hut in such a spot as this, Jacques, and settling down altogether?" Charley's thoughts reverted to his sister Kate when he said this.

"Why, no," replied Jacques, in a pensive tone, as if the question had aroused some sorrowful recollections; "I can't say that I'd like to settle here now. There was a time when I thought nothin' could be better than to squat in the woods with one or two jolly comrades, and" (Jacques sighed); "but times is changed now, master, and so is my mind. My chums are most of them dead or gone one way or other. No; I shouldn't care to squat alone."

Charley thought of the hut without Kate, and it seemed so desolate and dreary a dwelling, notwithstanding its beautiful situation, that he agreed with his companion that to "squat" alone would never do at all.

"No, man was not made to live alone," continued Jacques, pursuing the subject; "even the Injins draw together. I never knew but one as didn't like his fellows, and he's gone now, poor fellow. He cut his foot with an axe one day, while fellin' a tree. It was a bad cut; and havin' nobody to look after him, he half bled and half starved to death."

"By the way, Jacques," said Charley, stepping over the clear brook, and following the track which led up the opposite bank, "what did you say to those red-skins? You made them a most eloquent speech apparently."

"Why, as to that, I can't boast much of its eloquence, but I think it was clear enough. I told them that they were a great nation; for you see, Mr. Charles, the red men are just like the white in their fondness for butter; so I gave them some to begin with, though, for the matter o' that, I'm not overly fond o' givin' butter to any man, red or white. But I holds that it's as well always to fall in with the ways and customs o' the people a man happens to be among, so long as them ways and customs a'n't contrary to what's right. It makes them feel more kindly to you, and don't raise any onnecessary ill-will. However, the Knisteneux are a brave race; and when I told them that the hearts of their

enemies trembled when they heard of them, I told nothing but the truth; for the Chipewyans are a miserable set, and not much given to fighting."

"Your principles on that point won't stand much sifting, I fear," replied Charley: "according to your own showing, you would fall into the Chipewyan's way of glorifying themselves on account of their bravery, if you chanced to be dwelling among them, and yet you say they are not brave. That would not be sticking to truth, Jacques, would it?"

"Well," replied Jacques with a smile, "perhaps not exactly, but I'm sure there could be small harm in helping the miserable objects to boast sometimes, for they've little else than boasting to comfort them."

"And yet, Jacques, I cannot help feeling that truth is a grand, a glorious thing, that should not be trifled with even in small matters."

Jacques opened his eyes a little. "Then do you think, master, that a man should never tell a lie, no matter what fix he may be in?"

"I think not, Jacques."

The hunter paused a few minutes, and looked as if an unusual train of ideas had been raised in his mind by the turn their conversation had taken. Jacques was a man of no religion, and little morality, beyond what flowed from a naturally kind, candid disposition, and entertained the belief that the end, if a good one, always justifies the meansa doctrine which, had it been clearly exposed to him in all its bearings and results, would have been spurned by his straightforward nature with the indignant contempt that it merits.

"Mr. Charles," he said at length, "I once travelled across the plains to the head waters of the Missouri with a party of six trappers. One night we came to a part of the plains which was very much broken up with wood here and there, and bein' a good place for water we camped. While the other lads were gettin' ready the supper, I started off to look for a deer, as we had been unlucky that daywe had shot nothin'. Well, about three miles from the camp I came upon a band o' somewhere about thirty Sieux (ill-looking, sneaking dogs they are, too!), and before I could whistle they rushed upon me, took away my rifle and hunting-knife, and were dancing round me like so many devils. At last a big black-lookin' thief stepped forward, and said in the Cree language, 'White men seldom travel through this country alone; where are your comrades?' Now, thought I, here's a nice fix! If I pretend not to understand, they'll send out parties in all directions, and as sure as fate they'll find my companions in half-an-hour, and butcher them in cold blood (for, you see, we did not expect to find Sieux, or indeed any Injins, in them parts); so I made believe to be very narvous, and tried to tremble all over and look pale. Did you ever try to look

pale and frighttened, Mr. Charles?"

"I can't say that I ever did," said Charley, laughing.

"You can't think how troublesome it is," continued Jacques, with a look of earnest simplicity. "I shook and trembled pretty well, but the more I tried to grow pale, the more I grew red in the face, and when I thought of the six broad-shouldered, raw-boned lads in the camp, and how easy they would have made these jumping villains fly like chaff if they only knew the fix I was in, I gave a frown that had well-nigh showed I was shamming. Hows'ever, what with shakin' a little more and givin' one or two most awful groans, I managed to deceive them. Then I said I was hunter to a party of white men that were travellin' from Red River to St. Louis, with all their goods, and wives, and children, and that they were away in the plains about a league off.

"The big chap looked very hard into my face when I said this, to see if I was telling the truth; and I tried to make my teeth chatter, but it wouldn't do, so I took to groanin' very bad instead. But them Sieux are such awful liars nat'rally that they couldn't understand the signs of truth, even if they saw them. 'Whitefaced coward,' said he to me, 'tell me in what direction your people are.' At this I made believe not to understand; but the big chap flourished his knife before my face, called me a dog, and told me to point out the direction. I looked as simple as I could and said I would rather not. At this they laughed loudly and then gave a yell, and said if I didn't show them the direction they would roast me alive. So I pointed towards apart of the plains pretty wide o' the spot where our camp was. 'Now lead us to them,' said the big chap, givin' me a shove with the butt of his gun; 'an' if you have told lies'he gave the handle of his scalpin'-knife a slap, as much as to say he'd tickle up my liver with it. Well, away we went in silence, me thinkin' all the time how I was to get out o' the scrape. I led them pretty close past our camp, hopin' that the lads would hear us. I didn't dare to yell out, as that would have showed them there was somebody within hearin', and they would have made short work of me. Just as we came near the place where my companions lay, a prairie wolf sprang out from under a bush where it had been sleepin', so I gave a loud hurrah, and shied my cap at it. Giving a loud growl, the big Injin hit me over the head with his fist, and told me to keep silence. In a few minutes I heard the low, distant howl of a wolf. I recognised the voice of one of my comrades, and knew that they had seen us, and would be on our track soon. Watchin' my opportunity, and walkin' for a good bit as if I was awful tiredall but done upto throw them off their guard, I suddenly tripped up the big chap as he was stepping over a small brook, and dived in among the bushes. In a moment a dozen bullets tore up the bark on the trees about me, and an arrow passed

through my hair. The clump of wood into which I had dived was about half-a-mile long; and as I could run well (I've found in my experience that white men are more than a match for red-skins at their own work), I was almost out of range by the time I was forced to quit the cover and take to the plain. When the blackguards got out of the cover, too, and saw me cuttin' ahead like a deer, they gave a yell of disappointment, and sent another shower of arrows and bullets after me, some of which came nearer than was pleasant. I then headed for our camp with the whole pack screechin' at my heels. 'Yell away, you stupid sinners,' thought I; 'some of you shall pay for your music.' At that moment an arrow grazed my shoulder, and looking over it, I saw that the black fellow I had pitched into the water was far ahead of the rest, strainin' after me like mad, and every now and then stopping to try an arrow on me; so I kept a look-out, and when I saw him stop to draw, I stopped too, and dodged, so the arrows passed me, and then we took to our heels again. In this way I ran for dear life till I came up to the cover. As I came close up I saw our six fellows crouchin' in the bushes, and one o' them takin' aim almost straight for my face. 'Your day's come at last,' thought I, looking over my shoulder at the big Injin, who was drawing his bow again. Just then there was a sharp crack heard; a bullet whistled past my ear, and the big fellow fell like a stone, while my comrade stood coolly up to reload his rifle. The Injins, on seein' this, pulled up in a moment; and our lads stepping forward, delivered a volley that made three more o' them bite the dust. There would have been six in that fix, but, somehow or other, three of us pitched upon the same man, who was afterwards found with a bullet in each eye, and one through his heart. They didn't wait for more, but turned about and bolted like the wind. Now, Mr. Charles, if I had told the truth that time, we would have been all killed; and if I had simply said nothin' to their questions, they would have sent out to scour the country, and have found out the camp for sartin, so that the only way to escape was by tellin' them a heap o' downright lies."

Charley looked very much perplexed at this.

"You have indeed placed me in a difficulty. I know not what I would have done. I don't know even what I ought to do under these circumstances. Difficulties may perplex me, and the force of circumstances might tempt me to do what I believed to be wrong. I am a sinner, Jacques, like other mortals, I know; but one thing I am quite sure ofnamely, that when men speak it should always be truth and never falsehood."

Jacques looked perplexed too. He was strongly impressed with the necessity of telling falsehoods in the circumstances in which he had been placed, as just related, while at the same time he felt deeply the grandeur and the power of Charley's last remark.

"I should have been under the sod now," said he, "if I had not told a lie then. Is it better to die than to speak falsehood?"

"Some men have thought so," replied Charley. "I acknowledge the difficulty of your case and of all similar cases. I don't know what should be done, but I have read of a minister of the gospel whose people were very wicked and would not attend to his instructions, although they could not but respect himself, he was so consistent and Christianlike in his conduct. Persecution arose in the country where he lived, and men and women were cruelly murdered because of their religious belief. For a long time he was left unmolested, but one day a band of soldiers came to his house, and asked him whether he was a Papist or a Protestant (Papist, Jacques, being a man who has sold his liberty in religious matters to the Pope, and a Protestant being one who protests against such an ineffably silly and unmanly state of slavery). Well, his people urged the good old man to say he was a Papist, telling him that he would then be spared to live among them, and preach the true faith for many years perhaps. Now, if there was one thing that this old man would have toiled for and died for, it was that his people should become true Christiansand he told them so; 'but,' he added, 'I will not tell a lie to accomplish that end, my childrenno, not even to save my life.' So he told the soldiers that he was a Protestant, and immediately they carried him away, and he was soon afterwards burned to death."

"Well," said Jacques, "he didn't gain much by sticking to the truth,
I think."
"I'm not so sure of that. The story goes on to say that he rejoiced that he had done so, and wouldn't draw back even when he was in the flames. But the point lies here, Jacques: so deep an impression did the old man's conduct make on his people, that from that day forward they were noted for their Christian life and conduct. They brought up their children with a deeper reverence for the truth than they would otherwise have done, always bearing in affectionate remembrance, and holding up to them as an example, the unflinching truthfulness of the good old man who was burned in the year of the terrible persecutions; and at last their influence and example had such an effect that the Protestant religion spread like wild-fire, far and wide around them, so that the very thing was accomplished for which the old pastor said he would have diedaccomplished, too, very much in consequence of his death, and in a way and to an extent that very likely would not have been the case had he lived and preached among them for a hundred years."

"I don't understand it, nohow," said Jacques; "it seems to me right both ways and wrong both ways, and all upside down every how."

Charley smiled. "Your remark is about as clear as my head on the subject,

Jacques; but I still remain convinced that truth is right and that falsehood is wrong, and that we should stick to the first through thick and thin."

"I s'pose," remarked the hunter, who had walked along in deep cogitation, for the last five minutes, and had apparently come to some conclusion of profound depth and sagacity"I s'pose that it's all human natur'; that some men takes to preachin' as Injins take to huntin', and that to understand sich things requires them to begin young,' and risk their lives in it, as I would in followin' up a grizzly she-bear with cubs."

"Yonder is an illustration of one part of your remark. They begin young enough, anyhow," said Charley, pointing as he spoke to an opening in the bushes, where a particularly small Indian boy stood in the act of discharging an arrow.

The two men halted to watch his movements. According to a common custom among juvenile Indians during the warm months of the year, he was dressed in nothing save a mere rag tied round his waist. His body was very brown, extremely round, fat, and wonderfully diminutive, while his little legs and arms were disproportionately small. He was so young as to be barely able to walk, and yet there he stood, his black eyes glittering with excitement, his tiny bow bent to its utmost, and a blunt-headed arrow about to be discharged at a squirrel, whose flight had been suddenly arrested by the unexpected apparition of Charley and Jacques. As he stood there for a single instant, perfectly motionless, he might have been mistaken for a grotesque statue of an Indian cupid. Taking advantage of the squirrel's pause the child let fly the arrow, hit it exactly on the point of the nose, and turned it over, deada consummation which he greeted with a rapid succession of frightful yells.

"Cleverly done, my lad; you're a chip of the old block, I see," said Jacques, patting the child's head as he passed, and retraced his steps, with Charley, to the Indian camp.

CHAPTER XV.
The feastCharley makes his first speech in public, and meets with an old friendAn evening in the grass.

Savages, not less than civilized men, are fond of a good dinner. In saying this, we do not expect our reader to be overwhelmed with astonishment. He might have guessed as much; but when we state that savages, upon particular occasions, eat six dinners in one, and make it a point of honour to do so, we apprehend that we have thrown a slightly new light on an old subject. Doubtless there are men in civilised society who would do likewise if they could; but they cannot, fortunately, as great gastronomic powers are dependent

on severe, healthful, and prolonged physical exertion. Therefore it is that in England we find men capable only of eating about two dinners at once, and suffering a good deal for it afterwards; while in the backwoods we see men consume a week's dinners in one, without any evil consequences following the act.

The feast which was given by the Knisteneux in honour of the visit of our two friends was provided on a more moderate scale than usual, in order to accommodate the capacities of the "white men;" three days' allowance being cooked for each man. (Women are never admitted to the public feasts.) On the day preceding the ceremony, Charley and Jacques had received cards of invitation from the principal chief in the shape of two quills; similar invites being issued at the same time to all the braves. Jacques being accustomed to the doings of the Indians, and aware of the fact that whatever was provided for each man must be eaten before he quitted the scene of operations, advised Charley to eat no breakfast, and to take a good walk as a preparative. Charley had strong faith, however, in his digestive powers, and felt much inclined, when morning came, to satisfy the cravings of his appetite as usual; but Jacques drew such a graphic picture of the work that lay before him, that he forbore to urge the matter, and went off to walk with a light step, and an uncomfortable feeling of vacuity about the region of the stomach.

About noon, the chiefs and braves assembled in an open enclosure situated in an exposed place on the banks of the river, where the proceedings were watched by the women, children, and dogs. The oldest chief sat himself down on the turf at one end of the enclosure, with Jacques Caradoc on his right hand, and next to him Charley Kennedy, who had ornamented himself with a blue stripe painted down the middle of his nose, and a red bar across his chin. Charley's propensity for fun had led him thus to decorate his face, in spite of his companion's remonstrances,urging, by way of excuse, that worthy's former argument, "that it was well to fall in with the ways o' the people a man happened to be among, so long as these ways and customs were not contrary to what was right." Now Charley was sure there was nothing wrong in his painting his nose sky blue, if he thought fit.

Jacques thought it was absurd, and entertained the opinion that it would be more dignified to leave his face "its nat'ral colour."

Charley didn't agree with him at all. He thought it would be paying the Indians a high compliment to follow their customs as far as possible, and said that, after all, his blue nose would not be very conspicuous, as he (Jacques) had told him that he would "look blue" at any rate when he saw the quantity of deer's meat he should have to devour.

Jacques laughed at this, but suggested that the bar across his chin was red. Whereupon Charley said that he could easily neutralise that by putting a green star under each eye; and then uttered a fervent wish that his friend Harry Somerville could only see him in that guise. Finding him incorrigible, Jacques, who, notwithstanding his remonstrances, was more than half imbued with Charley's spirit, gave in, and accompanied him to the feast, himself decorated with the additional ornament of a red night-cap, to whose crown was attached a tuft of white feathers.

A fire burned in the centre of the enclosure, round which the Indians seated themselves according to seniority, and with deep solemnity; for it is a trait in the Indian's character that all his ceremonies are performed with extreme gravity. Each man brought a dish or platter, and a wooden spoon.

The old chief, whose hair was very gray, and his face covered with old wounds and scars, received either in war or in hunting, having seated himself, allowed a few minutes to elapse in silence, during which the company sat motionless, gazing at their plates as if they half expected them to become converted into beefsteaks. While they were seated thus, another party of Indians, who had been absent on a hunting expedition, strode rapidly but noiselessly into the enclosure, and seated themselves in the circle. One of these passed close to Charley, and in doing so stooped, took his hand, and pressed it. Charley looked up in surprise, and beheld the face of his old friend Redfeather, gazing at him with an expression in which were mingled affection, surprise, and amusement at the peculiar alteration in his visage.

"Redfeather!" exclaimed Charlie, in delight, half rising, but the
Indian pressed him down.
"You must not rise," he whispered, and giving his hand another squeeze, passed round the circle, and took his place directly opposite.

Having continued motionless for five minutes with becoming gravity, the company began operations by proceeding to smoke out of the sacred stema ceremony which precedesall occasions of importance, and is conducted as follows:The sacred stem is placed on two forked sticks to prevent its touching the ground, as that would be considered a great evil. A stone pipe is then filled with tobacco, by an attendant specially appointed to that office, and affixed to the stem, which is presented to the principal chief. That individual, with a gravity and hauteur that is unsurpassed in the annals of pomposity, receives the pipe in both hands, blows a puff to the east (probably in consequence of its being the quarter whence the sun rises), and thereafter pays a similar mark of attention to the other three points. He then raises the pipe above his head, points and balances it in various directions (for what reason and with what end in view is best known to himself), and replaces it again on the forks. The

company meanwhile observe his proceedings with sedate interest, evidently imbued with the idea that they are deriving from the ceremony a vast amount of edificationan idea which is helped out, doubtless, by the appearance of the women and children, who surround the enclosure, and gaze at the proceedings with looks of awe-struck seriousness that is quite solemnizing to behold.

The chief then makes a speech relative to the circumstance which has called them together; and which is always more or less interlarded with boastful reference to his own deeds, past, present, and prospective, eulogistic remarks on those of his forefathers, and a general condemnation of all other Indian tribes whatever. These speeches are usually delivered with great animation, and contain much poetic allusion to the objects of nature that surround the homes of the savage. The speech being finished, the chief sits down amid a universal "Ho!" uttered by the company with an emphatic prolongation of the last letterthis syllable being the Indian substitute, we presume, for "rapturous applause."

The chief who officiated on the present occasion, having accomplished the opening ceremonies thus far, sat down; while the pipe-bearer presented the sacred stem to the members of the company in succession, each of whom drew a few whiffs and mumbled a few words.

"Do as you see the red-skins, Mr. Charles," whispered Jacques, while the pipe was going round.

"That's impossible," replied Charley, in a tone that could not be heard except by his friend. "I couldn't make a face of hideous solemnity like that black thief opposite if I was to try ever so hard."

"Don't let them think you're laughing at them," returned the hunter; "they would be ill-pleased if they thought so."

"I'll try," said Charley, "but it is hard work, Jacques, to keep from laughing; I feel like a high-pressure steam-engine already. There's a woman standing out there with a little brown baby on her back; she has quite fascinated me; I can't keep my eyes off her, and if she goes on contorting her visage much longer, I feel that I shall give way."

"Hush!"

At this moment the pipe was presented to Charley, who put it to his lips, drew three whiffs, and returned it with a bland smile to the bearer.

The smile was a very sweet one, for that was a peculiar trait in the native urbanity of Charley's disposition, and it would have gone far in civilized

society to prepossess strangers in his favour; but it lowered him considerably in the estimation of his red friends, who entertained a wholesome feeling of contempt for any appearance of levity on high occasions. But Charley's face was of that agreeable stamp that, though gentle and bland when lighted up with a smile, is particularly masculine and manly in expression when in repose, and the frown that knit his brows when he observed the bad impression he had given almost reinstated him in their esteem. But his popularity became great, and the admiration of his swarthy friends greater, when he rose and made an eloquent speech in English, which Jacques translated into the Indian language.

He told them, in reply to the chief's oration (wherein that warrior had complimented his pale-faced brothers on their numerous good qualities), that he was delighted and proud to meet with his Indian friends; that the object of his mission was to acquaint them with the fact that a new trading-fort was established not far off, by himself and his comrades, for their special benefit and behoof; that the stores were full of goods which he hoped they would soon obtain possession of, in exchange for furs; that he had travelled a great distance on purpose to see their land and ascertain its capabilities in the way of fur-bearing animals and game; that he had not been disappointed in his expectations, as he had found the animals to be as numerous as bees, the fish plentiful in the rivers and lakes, and the country at large a perfect paradise. He proceeded to tell them further that he expected they would justify the report he had heard of them, that they were a brave nation and good hunters, by bringing in large quantities of furs.

Being strongly urged by Jacques to compliment them, on their various good qualities, Charley launched out into an extravagantly poetic vein, said that he had heard (but he hoped to have many opportunities of seeing it proved) that there was no nation under the sun equal to them in bravery, activity, and perseverance; that he had heard of men in olden times who made it their profession to fight with wild bulls for the amusement of their friends, but he had no doubt whatever their courage would be made conspicuous in the way of fighting wild bears and buffaloes, not for the amusement but the benefit of their wives and children (he might have added of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he didn't, supposing that that was self-evident, probably). He complimented them on the way in which they had conducted themselves in war in times past, comparing their stealthy approach to enemies' camps to the insidious snake that glides among the bushes, and darts unexpectedly on its prey; said that their eyes were sharp to follow the war-trail through the forest or over the dry sward of the prairie; their aim with gun or bow true and sure as the flight of the goose when it leaves the lands of the sun, and points its beak to the icy regions of the north; their war-whoops loud as the thunders of the

cataract; and their sudden onset like the lightning flash that darts from the sky and scatters the stout oak in splinters on the plain.

At this point Jacques expressed his satisfaction at the style in which his young friend was progressing.

"That's your sort, Mr. Charles. Don't spare the butter; lay it on thick. You've not said too much yet, for they are a brave race, that's a fact, as I've good reason to know."

Jacques, however, did not feel quite so well satisfied when Charley went on to tell them that although bravery in war was an admirable thing, war itself was a thing not at all to be desired, and should only be undertaken in case of necessity. He especially pointed out that there was not much glory to be earned in fighting against the Chipewyans, who, everybody knew, were a poor, timid set of people, whom they ought rather to pity than to destroy; and recommended them to devote themselves more to the chase than they had done in times past, and less to the prosecution of war in time to come.

All this, and a great deal more, did Charley say, in a manner, and with a rapidity of utterance, that surprised himself, when he considered the fact that he had never adventured into the field of public speaking before. All this, and a great deal morea very great deal moredid Jacques Caradoc interpret to the admiring Indians, who listened with the utmost gravity and profound attention, greeting the close with a very emphatic "Ho!"

Jacques's translation was by no means perfect. Many of the flights into which Charley ventured, especially in regard to the manners and customs of the savages of ancient Greece and Rome, were quite incomprehensible to the worthy backwoodsman; but he invariably proceeded when Charley halted, giving a flight of his own when at a loss, varying and modifying when he thought it advisable, and altering, adding, or cutting off as he pleased.

Several other chiefs addressed the assembly, and then dinner, if we may so call it, was served. In Charley's case it was breakfast; to the Indians it was breakfast, dinner, and supper in one. It consisted of a large platter of dried meat, reindeer tongues (considered a great delicacy), and marrow-bones.

Notwithstanding the graphic power with which Jacques had prepared his young companion for this meal, Charley's heart sank when he beheld the mountain of boiled meat that was placed before him. He was ravenously hungry, it is true, but it was patent to his perception at a glance that no powers of gormandizing of which he was capable could enable him to consume the mass in the course of one day.

Jacques observed his consternation, and was not a little entertained by it, although his face wore an expression of profound gravity while he proceeded to attack his own dish, which was equal to that of his friend.

Before commencing, a small portion of meat was thrown into the fire as a sacrifice to the Great Master of Life.

"How they do eat, to be sure!" whispered Charley to Jacques, after he had glanced in wonder at the circle of men who were devouring their food with the most extraordinary rapidity.

"Why, you must know," replied Jacques, "that it's considered a point of honour to get it over soon, and the man that is done first gets most credit. But it's hard work" (he sighed, and paused a little to breathe), "and I've not got half through yet."

"It's quite plain that I must lose credit with them, then, if it depends on my eating that. Tell me, Jacques, is there no way of escape? Must I sit here till it is all consumed?"

"No doubt of it. Every bit that has been cooked must be crammed down our throats somehow or other." Charley heaved a deep sigh, and made another desperate attack on a large steak, while the Indians around him made considerable progress in reducing their respective mountains.

Several times Charley and Redfeather exchanged glances as they paused in their labours.

"I say, Jacques," said Charley, pulling up once more, "how do you get on? Pretty well stuffed by this time, I should imagine?"

"Oh no! I've a good deal o' room yet."

"I give in. Credit or disgrace, it's all one. I'll not make a pig of myself for any red-skin in the land."

Jacques smiled.

"See," continued Charley, "there's a fellow opposite who has devoured as much as would have served me for three days. I don't know whether it's imagination or not, but I do verily believe that he's blacker in the face than when we sat down!"

"Very likely," replied Jacques, wiping his lips, "Now I've done."

"Done! you have left at least a third of your supply."

"True, and I may as well tell you for your comfort that there is one way of escape open to you. It is a custom among these fellows, that when any one cannot gulp his share o' the prog, he may get help from any of his friends that can cram it down their throats; and as there are always such fellows among these Injins, they seldom have any difficulty."

"A most convenient practice," replied Charley, "I'll adopt it at once."

Charley turned to his next neighbour with the intent to beg of him to eat his remnant of the feast.

"Bless my heart, Jacques, I've no chance with the fellow on my left hand; he's stuffed quite full already, and is not quite done with his own share."

"Never fear," replied his friend, looking at the individual in question, who was languidly lifting a marrowbone to his lips; "he'll do it easy. I knows the gauge o' them chaps, and for all his sleepy looks just now he's game for a lot more."

"Impossible," replied Charley, looking in despair at his unfinished viands and then at the Indian. A glance round the circle seemed further to convince him that if he did not eat it himself there were none of the party likely to do so.

"You'll have to give him a good lump o' tobacco to do it, though; he won't undertake so much for a trifle, I can tell you." Jacques chuckled as he said this, and handed his own portion over to another Indian, who readily undertook to finish it for him.

"He'll burst; I feel certain of that," said Charley, with a deep sigh, as he surveyed his friend on the left.

At last he took courage to propose the thing to him, and just as the man finished the last morsel of his own repast, Charley placed his own plate before him, with a look that seemed to say, "Eat it, my friend, if you can."

The Indian, much to his surprise, immediately commenced to it, and in less than half-an-hour the whole was disposed of.

During this scene of gluttony, one of the chiefs entertained the assembly with a wild and most unmusical chant, to which he beat time on a sort of tambourine, while the women outside the enclosure beat a similar accompaniment.

"I say, master," whispered Jacques, "it seems to my observation that the fellow you call Redfeather eats less than any Injin I ever saw. He has got a comrade to eat more than half his share; now that's strange."

"It won't appear strange, Jacques, when I tell you that Redfeather has lived

much more among white men than Indians during the last ten years; and although voyageurs eat an enormous quantity of food, they don't make it a point of honour, as these fellows seem to do, to eat much more than enough. Besides, Redfeather is a very different man from those around him; he has been partially educated by the missionaries on Playgreen Lake, and I think has a strong leaning towards them."

While they were thus conversing in whispers, Redfeather rose, and holding forth his hand, delivered himself of the following oration:

"The time has come for Redfeather to speak. He has kept silence for many moons now, but his heart has been full of words. It is too full; he must speak now. Redfeather has fought with his tribe, and has been accounted a brave, and one who loves his people. This is true. He does love, even more than they can understand. His friends know that he has never feared to face danger and death in their defence, and that, if it were necessary, he would do so still. But Redfeather is going to leave his people now. His heart is heavy at the thought. Perhaps many moons will come and go, many snows may fall and melt away, before he sees his people again; and it is this that makes him full of sorrow, it is this that makes his head to droop like the branches of the weeping willow."

Redfeather paused at this point, but not a sound escaped from the listening circle: the Indians were evidently taken by surprise at this abrupt announcement. He proceeded:

"When Redfeather travelled not long since with the white men, he met with a pale-face who came from the other side of the Great Salt Lake towards the rising sun. This man was called by some of the people a missionary. He spoke wonderful things in the ear of Redfeather. He told him of things about the Great Spirit which he did not know before, and he asked Redfeather to go and help him to speak to the Indians about these strange things. Redfeather would not go. He loved his people too much, and he thought that the words of the missionary seemed foolishness. But he has thought much about it since. He does not understand the strange things that were told to him, and he has tried to forget them, but he cannot. He can get no rest. He hears strange sounds in the breeze that shakes the pine. He thinks that there are voices in the waterfall; the rivers seem to speak, Redfeather's spirit is vexed. The Great Spirit, perhaps, is talking to him. He has resolved to go to the dwelling of the missionary and stay with him."

The Indian paused again, but still no sound escaped from his comrades.
Dropping his voice to a soft plaintive tone, he continued
"But Redfeather loves his kindred. He desires very much that they should hear

the things that the missionary said. He spoke of the happy hunting grounds to which the spirits of our fathers have gone, and said that we required a guide to lead us there; that there was but one guide, whose name, he said, was Jesus. Redfeather would stay and hunt with his people, but his spirit is troubled; he cannot rest; he must go!"

Redfeather sat down, and a long silence ensued. His words had evidently taken the whole party by surprise, although not a countenance there showed the smallest symptom of astonishment, except that of Charley Kennedy, whose intercourse with Indians had not yet been so great as to have taught him to conceal his feelings.

At length the old chief rose, and after complimenting Redfeather on his bravery in general, and admitting that he had shown much love to his people on all occasions, went into the subject of his quitting them at some length. He reminded him that there were evil spirits as well as good; that it was not for him to say which kind had been troubling him, but that he ought to consider well before he went to live altogether with pale-faces. Several other speeches were made, some to the same effect, and others applauding his resolve. These latter had, perhaps, some idea that his bringing the pale-faced missionary among them would gratify their taste for the marvellousa taste that is pretty strong in all uneducated minds.

One man, however, was particularly urgent in endeavouring to dissuade him from his purpose. He was a tall, low-browed man; muscular and well built, but possessed of a most villainous expression of countenance. From a remark that fell from one of the company, Charley discovered that his name was Misconna, and so learned, to his surprise, that he was the very Indian mentioned by Redfeather as the man who had been his rival for the hand of Wabisca, and who had so cruelly killed the wife of the poor trapper the night on which the Chipewyan camp was attacked, and the people slaughtered.

What reason Misconna had for objecting so strongly to Redfeather's leaving the community no one could tell, although some of those who knew his unforgiving nature suspected that he still entertained the hope of being able, some day or other, to weak his vengeance on his old rival. But whatever was his object, he failed in moving Redfeather's resolution; and it was at last admitted by the whole party that Redfeather was a "wise chief;" that he knew best what ought to be done under the circumstances, and it was hoped that his promised visit, in company with the missionary, would not be delayed many moons.

That night, in the deep shadow of the trees, by the brook that murmured near the Indian camp, while the stars twinkled through the branches overhead,

Charley introduced Redfeather to his friend Jacques Caradoc, and a friendship was struck up between the bold hunter and the red man that grew and strengthened as each successive day made them acquainted with their respective good qualities. In the same place, and with the same stars looking down upon them, it was further agreed that Redfeather should accompany his new friends, taking his wife along with him in another canoe, as far as their several routes led them in the same direction, which was about four or five days' journey; and that while the one party diverged towards the fort at Stoney Creek, the other should pursue its course to the missionary station on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

But there was a snake in the grass there that they little suspected. Misconna had crept through the bushes after them, with a degree of caution that might have baffled their vigilance, even had they suspected treason in a friendly camp. He lay listening intently to all their plans, and when they returned to their camp, he rose out from among the bushes, like a dark spirit of evil, clutched the handle of his scalping-knife, and gave utterance to a malicious growl; then, walking hastily after them, his dusky figure was soon concealed among the trees.

CHAPTER XVI.
The returnNarrow escapeA murderous attempt, which failsAnd a discovery.

All nature was joyous and brilliant, and bright and beautiful. Morning was still very youngabout an hour old. Sounds of the most cheerful, light-hearted character floated over the waters and echoed through the woods, as birds and beasts hurried to and fro with all the bustling energy that betokened preparation and search for breakfast. Fish leaped in the pools with a rapidity that brought forcibly to mind that wise saying, "The more hurry, the less speed;" for they appeared constantly to miss their mark, although they jumped twice their own length out of the water in the effort.

Ducks and geese sprang from their liquid beds with an amazing amount of unnecessary sputter, as if they had awakened to the sudden consciousness of being late for breakfast, then alighted in the water again with a squash, on finding (probably) that it was too early for that meal, but, observing other flocks passing and re-passing on noisy wing, took to flight again, unable, apparently, to restrain their feelings of delight at the freshness of the morning air, the brightness of the rising sun, and the sweet perfume of the dewy verdure, as the mists cleared away over the tree-tops and lost themselves in the blue sky. Everything seemed instinct not only with life, but with a large amount of superabundant energy. Earth, air, sky, animal, vegetable, and

mineral, solid and liquid, all were either actually in a state of lively exulting motion, or had a peculiarly sprightly look about them, as if nature had just burst out of prison en masse, and gone raving mad with joy.

Such was the delectable state of things the morning on which two canoes darted from the camp of the Knisteneux, amid many expressions of goodwill. One canoe contained our two friends, Charley and Jacques; the other, Redfeather and his wife Wabisca.

A few strokes of the paddle shot them out into the stream, which carried them rapidly away from the scene of their late festivities. In five minutes they swept round a point which shut them out from view, and they were swiftly descending those rapid rivers that had cost Charley and Jacques so much labour to ascend.

"Look out for rocks ahead, Mr. Charles," cried Jacques, as he steered the light bark into the middle of a rapid, which they had avoided when ascending by making a portage. "Keep well to the left of yon swirl. Parbleu, if we touch the rock there it'll be all over with us."

"All right," was Charley's laconic reply. And so it proved, for their canoe, after getting fairly into the run of the rapid, was evidently under the complete command of its expert crew, and darted forward amid the foaming waters like a thing instinct with life. Now it careered and plunged over the waves where the rough bed of the stream made them more than usually turbulent. Anon it flew with increased rapidity through a narrow gap where the compressed water was smooth and black, but deep and powerful, rendering great care necessary to prevent the canoe's frail sides from being dashed on the rocks. Then it met a curling wave, into which it plunged like an impetuous charger, and was checked for a moment by its own violence. Presently an eddy threw the canoe a little out of its course, disconcerting Charley's intention of shaving a rock, which lay in their track, so that he slightly grazed it in passing.

"Ah, Mr. Charles," said Jacques, shaking his head, "that was not well done; an inch more would have sent us down the rapids like drowned cats."

"True," replied Charley, somewhat crestfallen; "but you see the other inch was not lost, so we're not much the worse for it."

"Well, after all, it was a ticklish bit, and I should have guessed that your experience was not up to it quite. I've seen many a man in my day who wouldn't ha' done it half so slick, an' yet ha' thought no small beer of himself; so you needn't be ashamed, Mr. Charles. But Wabisca beats you for all that," continued the hunter, glancing hastily over his shoulder at Redfeather, who followed closely in their wake, he and his modest-looking wife guiding their

little craft through the dangerous passages with the utmost sangfroid and precision.

"We've about run them all now," said Jacques, as they paddled over a sheet of still water which intervened between the rapid they had just descended and another which thundered about a hundred yards in advance.

"I was so engrossed with the one we have just come down," said Charley, "that I quite forgot this one."

"Quite right, Mr. Charles," said Jacques, in an approving tone, "quite right. I holds that a man should always attend to what he's at, an' to nothin' else. I've lived long in the woods now, and the fact becomes more and more sartin every day. I've know'd chaps, now, as timersome as settlement girls, that were always in such a mortal funk about what was to happen, or might happen, that they were never fit for anything that did happen; always lookin' ahead, and never around them. Of coorse, I don't mean that a man shouldn't look ahead at all, but their great mistake was that they looked out too far ahead, and always kep' their eyes nailed there, just as if they had the fixin' o' everything, an' Providence had nothin' to do with it at all. I mind a Canadian o' that sort that travelled in company with me once. We were goin' just as we are now, Mr. Charles, two canoes of us; him and a comrade in one, and me and a comrade in t'other. One night we got to a lot o' rapids that came one after another for the matter o' three miles or thereabouts. They were all easy ones, however, except the last; but it was a tickler, with a sharp turn o' the land that hid it from sight until ye were right into it, with a foamin' current, and a range o' ragged rocks that stood straight in front o' ye, like the teeth of a cross-cut saw. It was easy enough, however, if a man knew it, and was a cool hand. Well, the pauvre Canadian was in a terrible takin' about this shoot long afore he came to it. He had run it often enough in boats where he was one of a half-dozen men, and had nothin' to do but look on; but he had never steered down it before. When he came to the top o' the rapids, his mind was so filled with this shoot that he couldn't attend to nothin', and scraped agin' a dozen rocks in almost smooth water, so that when he got a little more than half-way down, the canoe was as rickety as if it had just come off a six months' cruise. At last we came to the big rapid, and after we'd run down our canoe I climbed the bank to see them do it. Down they came, the poor Canadian white as a sheet, and his comrade, who was brave enough, but knew nothin' about light craft, not very comfortable. At first he could see nothin' for the point, but in another moment round they went, end on, for the big rocks. The Canadian gave a great yell when he saw them, and plunged at the paddle till I thought he'd have capsized altogether. They ran it well enough, straight between the rocks (more by good luck than good guidance), and sloped down to the smooth water below; but the

canoe had got such a battering in the rapids above, where an Injin baby could have steered it in safety, that the last plunge shook it all to pieces. It opened up, and lay down flat on the water, while the two men fell right through the bottom, screechin' like mad, and rolling about among shreds o' birch bark!"

While Jacques was thus descanting philosophically on his experience in time past, they had approached the head of the second rapid, and in accordance with the principles just enunciated, the stout backwoodsman gave his undivided attention to the work before him. The rapid was short and deep, so that little care was required in descending it, excepting at one point, where the stream rushed impetuously between two rocks about six yards asunder. Here it was requisite to keep the canoe as much in the middle of the stream as possible.

Just as they began to feel the drag of the water, Redfeather was heard to shout in a loud warning tone, which caused Jacques and Charley to back their paddles hurriedly.

"What can the Injin mean, I wonder?" said Jacques, in a perplexed tone. "He don't look like a man that would stop us at the top of a strong rapid for nothin'."

"It's too late to do that now, whatever is his reason," said Charley, as he and his companion struggled in vain to paddle up stream.

"It's no use, Mr. Charles; we must run it nowthe current's too strong to make head against; besides, I do think the man has only seen a bear, or something o' that sort, for I see he's ashore, and jumpin' among the bushes like a cariboo."

Saying this, they turned the canoe's head down stream again, and allowed it to drift, merely retarding its progress a little with the paddles.

Suddenly Jacques uttered a sharp exclamation. "Mon Dieu!" said he, "it's plain enough now. Look there!"

Jacques pointed as he spoke to the narrows to which they were now approaching with tremendous speed, which increased every instant. A heavy tree lay directly across the stream, reaching from rock to rock, and placed in such a way that it was impossible for a canoe to descend without being dashed in pieces against it. This was the more curious that no trees grew in the immediate vicinity, so that this one must have been designedly conveyed there.

"There has been foul work here," said Jacques, in a deep tone. "We must dive, Mr. Charles; there's no chance any way else, and that's but a poor one."

This was true. The rocks on each side rose almost perpendicularly out of the water, so that it was utterly impossible to run ashore, and the only way of escape, as Jacques said, was by diving under the tree, a thing involving great risk, as the stream immediately below was broken by rocks, against which it dashed in foam, and through which the chances of steering one's way in safety by means of swimming were very slender indeed.

Charley made no reply, but with tightly-compressed lips, and a look of stern resolution on his brow, threw off his coat, and hastily tied his belt tightly round his waist. The canoe was now sweeping forward with lightning speed; in a few minutes it would be dashed to pieces.

At that moment a shout was heard in the woods, and Redfeather darting out, rushed over the ledge of rock on which one end of the tree rested, seized the trunk in his arms, and exerting all his strength, hurled it over into the river. In doing so he stumbled, and ere he could recover himself a branch caught him under the arm as the tree fell over, and dragged him into the boiling stream. This accident was probably the means of saving his life, for just as he fell the loud report of a gun rang through the woods, and a bullet passed through his cap. For a second or two both man and tree were lost in the foam, while the canoe dashed past in safety. The next instant Wabisca passed the narrows in her small craft, and steered for the tree. Redfeather, who had risen and sunk several times, saw her as she passed, and making a violent effort, he caught hold of the gunwale, and was carried down in safety.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Jacques, as the party stood on a rock promontory after the events just narrated: "I would give a dollar to have that fellow's nose and the sights o' my rifle in a line at any distance short of two hundred yards."

"It was Misconna," said Redfeather. "I did not see him, but there's not another man in the tribe that could do that."

"I'm thankful we escaped, Jacques. I never felt so near death before, and had it not been for the timely aid of our friend here, it strikes me that our wild life would have come to an abrupt close.God bless you, Redfeather," said Charley, taking the Indian's hand in both of his and kissing it.

Charley's ebullition of feeling was natural. He had not yet become used to the dangers of the wilderness so as to treat them with indifference. Jacques, on the other hand, had risked his life so often that escape from danger was treated very much as a matter of course, and called forth little expression of feeling. Still, it must not be inferred from this that his nature had become callous. The backwoodsman's frame was hard and unyielding as iron, but his heart was as

soft still as it was on the day on which he first donned the hunting-shirt, and there was much more of tenderness than met the eye in the squeeze that he gave Redfeather's hand on landing.

As the four travellers encircled the fire that night, under the leafy branches of the forest, and smoked their pipes in concert, while Wabisca busied herself in clearing away the remnants of their evening meal, they waxed communicative, and stories, pathetic, comic, and tragic, followed each other in rapid succession.

"Now, Redfeather," said Charley, while Jacques rose and went down to the luggage to get more tobacco, "tell Jacques about the way in which you got your name. I am sure he will feel deeply interested in that storyat least I am certain that Harry Somerville and I did when you told it to us the day we were wind-bound on Lake Winnipeg."

Redfeather made no reply for a few seconds. "Will Mr. Charles speak for me?" he said at length. "His tongue is smooth and quick."

"A doubtful kind of compliment," said Charley, laughing; "but I will, if you don't wish to tell it yourself."

"And don't mention names. Do not let him know that you speak of me or my friends," said the Indian, in a low whisper, as Jacques returned and sat down by the fire again.

Charley gave him a glance of surprise; but being prevented from asking questions, he nodded in reply, and proceeded to relate to his friend the story that has been recounted in a previous chapter. Redfeather leaned back against a tree, and appeared to listen intently.

Charley's powers of description were by no means inconsiderable, and the backwoodsman's face assumed a look of good-humoured attention as the story proceeded. But when the narrator went on to tell of the meditated attack and the midnight march, his interest was aroused, the pipe which he had been smoking was allowed to go out, and he gazed at his young friend with the most earnest attention. It was evident that the hunter's spirit entered with deep sympathy into such scenes; and when Charley described the attack, and the death of the trapper's wife, Jacques seemed unable to restrain his feelings. He leaned his elbows on his knees, buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud.

"Mr. Charles," he said, in a deep voice, when the story was ended, "there are two men I would like to meet with in this world before I die. One is the young Injin who tried to save that girl's life, the other is the cowardly villain that took

it. I don't mean the one who finished the bloody work: my rifle sent his accursed spirit to its own place"

"Your rifle!" cried Charley, in amazement.

"Ay, mine! It was my wife who was butchered by these savage dogs on that dark night. Oh, what avails the strength o' that right arm!" said Jacques, bitterly, as he lifted up his clenched fist; "it was powerless to save herthe sweet girl who left her home and people to follow me, a rough hunter, through the lonesome wilderness!"

He covered his face again, and groaned in agony of spirit, while his whole frame quivered with emotion.

Jacques remained silent, and his sympathising friends refrained from intruding on a sorrow which they felt they had no power to relieve.

At length he spoke. "Yes," said he, "I would give much to meet with the man who tried to save her. I saw him do it twice; but the devils about him were too eager to be balked of their prey."

Charley and the Indian exchanged glances. "That Indian's name," said the former, "was Redfeather!"

"What!" exclaimed the trapper, jumping to his feet, and grasping Redfeather, who had also risen, by the two shoulders, stared wildly in his face; "was it you that did it?"

Redfeather smiled, and held out his hand, which the other took and wrung with an energy that would have extorted a cry of pain from any one but an Indian. Then, dropping it suddenly and clinching his hands, he exclaimed,

"I said that I would like to meet the villain who killed heryes, I said it in passion, when your words had roused all my old feelings again; but I am thankfulI bless God that I did not know this soonerthat you did not tell me of it when I was at the camp, for I verily believe that I would not only have fixed him, but half the warriors o' your tribe too, before they had settled me!"

It need scarcely be added that the friendship which already subsisted between Jacques and Redfeather was now doubly cemented; nor will it create surprise when we say that the former, in the fulness of his heart, and from sheer inability to find adequate outlets for the expression of his feelings, offered Redfeather in succession all the articles of value he possessed, even to the much-loved rifle, and was seriously annoyed at their not being accepted. At last he finished off by assuring the Indian that he might look out for him soon

at the missionary settlement, where he meant to stay with him evermore in the capacity of hunter, fisherman, and jack-of-all-trades to the whole clan.