

OONOMOO THE HURON



EDWARD S. ELLIS

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OONOMOO

THE HURON

BY
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER

- I. [Hans Vanderbum](#)
- II. [Other Characters](#)
- III. [Oonomoo and the Shawnees](#)
- IV. [The Young Lieutenant and Cato](#)
- V. [The Home of the Huron](#)
- VI. [Adventures on the Way](#)
- VII. [The Plan for the Rescue](#)
- VIII. [The Exploit of Hans Vanderbum](#)
- IX. [A New Danger](#)
- X. [Conclusion](#)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, ain't you got dat cooked?"

A girl, fifteen or sixteen years of age, seated on the ground, beside a squaw.

Mary Prescott.

"If you don't want to be killed, get up," said the young officer.

"Niniotan, my son, is late."

"You have saved me, and I want to grasp your hand for it."

But Oonomoo and the Miami had whipped out their knives.

So terrible did the exasperated Huron appear, that the entire party of Shawnees paused out of sheer horror.

Niniotan stood like a statue, his arms folded and his stony gaze fixed upon the senseless forms of his parents.

OONOMOO, THE HURON.

CHAPTER I.

HANS VANDERBUM.

The mountain's sides
Are flecked with gleams of light and spots of shade;
Here, golden sunshine spreads in mellow rays, and there,
Stretching across its hoary breast, deep shadows lurk.
A stream, with many a turn, now lost to sight,
And then, again revealed, winds through the vale,
Shimmering in the early morning sun.
A few white clouds float in the blue expanse,
Their forms revealed in the clear lake beneath,
Which bears upon its breast a bark canoe,
Cautiously guided by a sinewy arm.
High in the heavens, three eagles proudly poise,
Keeping their mountain eyrie still in view,
Although their flight has borne them far away.
Upon the cliff which beetles o'er the pool,
Two Indians, peering from the brink, appear,
Clad in the gaudy dress their nature craves—
Robes of bright blue and scarlet, but which blend
In happy union with the landscape round.
Near by a wigwam stands—a fire within
Sends out a ruddy glow—and from its roof,
Cone-shaped, a spiral wreath of smoke ascends.
Not far away, though deeper in the woods,
Another hut, with red-men grouped about,
Attracts the eye, and wakens saddened thoughts
Of that brave race who once were masters here,
But now, like autumn leaves, are dying out.—BARRY GRAY.

"Shtop dat noise! shtop dat noise!" vociferated Hans Vanderbum, growing red in the face with fury, because his repeated commands had received so little attention.

The scene was deep in the forests of Ohio, a short distance from the Miami river. An Indian town of twenty-five or thirty lodges here stood, resembling a giant apiary, with its inhabitants flitting in and out, darting hither and thither, like so many bees. The time was early in the morning of a radiant spring, when the atmosphere was still and charming; the dew lingered upon the grass and undergrowth; birds were singing in every tree; the sky glowed with the pure blue of Italy; and the whole wilderness in its bloom looked like a sea of emerald. Everything was life and exhilaration, one personage alone excepted—Hans Vanderbum was unhappy!

The Indian lodges differed very little from each other, being of a rough, substantial character, built with an eye to comfort rather than beauty. One at the extreme northern edge of the village is that with which our story deals. A brief description of it will serve as a general daguerreotype of all those wild abodes.

The wigwam was composed of skins and bark, the latter greatly predominating. The shape was that of a cone. The framework was of poles, the lower ends of which were placed in a sort of circle, while the tops were intersected, leaving a small opening, through which the smoke reached the clear air above. Unsightly and repulsive as this might seem from the outside view, the dwelling, nevertheless, was water-proof and comfortable, and abundantly answered the end for which it was built.

A thin vapor was ascending in a bluish spiral at the top of the lodge indicated. A Shawnee squaw was occupied in preparing the morning meal, while her liege lord still reclined in one corner, in the vain effort to secure a few minutes more of slumber. This latter personage was Hans Vanderbum—our friend Hans—a huge, plethoric, stolid, lazy Dutchman, who had "married" an Indian widow several years before. At the time of her marriage this squaw

had a boy some three or four years of age, while a second one, the son of the Dutchman, was now just large enough to be as mischievous as a kitten. They were a couple of greasy, copper-hued little rascals, with eyes as black as midnight, and long, wiry hair, like that of a horse's mane. Brimful of animal spirits, they were just the reverse of Hans Vanderbum, whose laziness and stupidity were only excelled by his indifference to the dignity and rights of human nature.

Hans Vanderbum lay fiat upon his back, for the atmosphere of the wigwam was too warm for covering, his ponderous belly rising and falling like a wave of the sea, and his throat giving forth that peculiar rattling of the glottis, which might be mistaken for suffocation. The boys certainly would have been outside, basking in the genial sunshine, had not their mother, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, positively denied them that coveted privilege. The commands of the father might be trampled upon with impunity, but the young half-breeds knew better than to disobey their mother.

"Shtop dat noise! shtop dat noise!" repeated Hans, raising his head without stirring his body or limbs.

His broad face seemed all ablaze from its fiery red color, and the threatening fury throned upon his lowering forehead would almost have annihilated him who encountered it for the first time. As it was, the two boys suddenly straightened their faces, and assumed an air of meek penitence, as if suffering the most harrowing remorse for what they had done; and the father, after glaring at them a moment, as if to drive in and clinch the impression he had made, let his head drop back with a dull thump upon the ground, and again closed his eyes.

The black, snaky orbs of the boys twinkled like stars through their overhanging hair. Glancing first at their mother, who did not deign to notice them, the eldest picked up his younger brother, who was grinning from ear to ear with delight, and, summoning all his strength, he poised him over the prostrate form of his father for a moment, and then dropped him! The prolonged snore which was steadily issuing from the throat of the sleeping parent, terminated in a sharp, explosive grunt. As his eyes opened, the boys scrambled away like frogs to the opposite side of the lodge, under the protecting care of their mother.

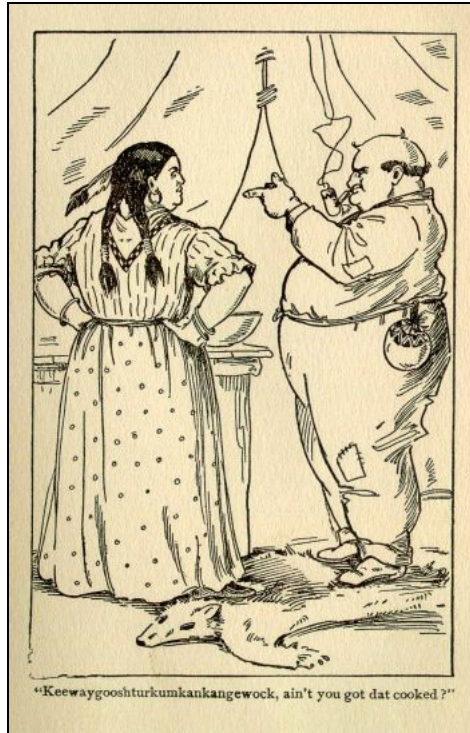
"Dunder and blixen! You dunderin' Dutch Indians, dishturbin' your poor old dad dat is wearing his life out for you! I'll pound both of you till you're dead!"

Hans Vanderbum's system had suffered too great a shock for further slumber. He rose to the sitting position, and, digging both hands into his head, glared at his offspring a moment, and then began his regular lecture.

"Quanonshet, you little Dutchman, and Madokawandock, you little bigger Dutchman, vot does you t'ink of yourselves? Vot does you t'ink will become of you, disgracing your parents in this manner? You oughter be pounded to death to treat your poor old fader in this manner, who is working of himself away to bring you up in the way you ought for to go. Eh? vot do you t'ink of yourself, eh? Vot do you t'ink of yourself?" demanded Hans, furiously shaking his head toward the boys at each word.

Quanonshet and Madokawandock were too confounded for reply.

"Shposing your poor old fader should go crazy!! Here he is working himself to skin and bone— Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, ain't you got dat cooked?"



[Illustration: "Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, ain't you got dat cooked?"]

"No!" screamed the wife. "You big, lazy man, get up and stir yourself! You don't do anything but sleep and smoke, while *I'm* working all the flesh off *my* bones for you!"

These forcible remarks were made in the pure Shawnee tongue, and were accompanied by gesticulation too pointed and significant for Hans to mistake the spirit in which they were given. Although it is the invariable custom among the North American Indians for the husband to rule the wife, and impose all burdens upon her, except those of the hunt, and fight, such, by no means, was the case with the present couple. Hans Vanderbum's body was too unwieldy for him to accompany the young men (or even the old men) upon their hunting expeditions; in short, he contributed nothing toward the support of his interesting family. The first husband of Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock had been an Indian, with all the characteristics of his race—indolent, selfish and savage; and her life with him had been that of the usual servitude and drudgery. Accordingly, when she ventured a second time upon the sea of matrimony, she naturally fell into the same routine of labor, planting and cultivating what little corn, beans and vegetables were raised for the family, and doing all the really hard work. Hans Vanderbum sometimes gathered firewood, and frequently, when the weather was pleasant, spent hours in fishing. He was an inveterate smoker and sleeper; and, beyond doubt, was perfectly content in his situation. Having been taken a prisoner some years before, and adopted into this branch of the Shawnee tribe, he was offered the hand of Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock in marriage, and accepted it at once, totally forgetful of his first love, which had been the beautiful inmate of the Hunter's Cabin.

Hans Vanderbum sat and gazed at his wife with an admiring eye, as she busied herself with the preparations of the morning meal. Hoping to mollify her, he commenced flattering her, speaking in a low tone as if it were not his wish that she should hear him, but taking good care, at the same time, that nothing should escape her ears.

"Shplendid figger, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock has got. No wonder all te braves of te Shawnee tribe should love her, and dat Hans Vanderbum gots her at last. Jis' look at *dat* foot! long and flat like a board, and she's de same shape all de way down from her head to her heels. Ishn't dat breakfast ready, my dear wife?"

The wife gave a spiteful nod, and Hans Vanderbum shambled up beside her, where the food, consisting of meat and a few simple vegetables, was spread upon a rude table which had no legs. Quanonshet and Madokawandock

were not behind-hand in their movements, and the whole four fell to with such voracity, that, in a very short time, their hunger was satisfied.

"Now, you two fellers come out doors and learn your lessons," said the father, lighting his pipe, and putting on a very stern and dignified look.

The boys tumbled over each other in their eagerness to get into the open air. Hans followed them, while Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock busied herself about her household duties. Quanonshet and Madokawandock rollicked and frisked awhile before they were "called to order." After repeated commands, they approached their father, and standing side by side, awaited his instructions.

Hans Vanderbum had provided himself with a long pole, and stood by a sandy portion of ground, upon which he had no difficulty in tracing what letters and characters he wished. With due preparation and importance he marked out the first letter of the German alphabet, and then, straightening himself up, demanded in a thundering tone "vot dat was." His two sons looked mute and dumbfounded. They had not the remotest idea in the world of its name and significance. For over three months the patient father had instructed them daily in regard to this character, and the two together must have repeated it several thousand times. But, it mattered not; neither had any conception now of it, and their looks showed such unmistakably to their instructor.

"Dunder and blixen, vot Dutch Indians!" he exclaimed, impatiently. Repeating its name, he again demanded "vot dat was." This time they answered readily, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Shmart boys," said he, approvingly. "You learns well, now. One dese days—"

Hans Vanderbum's words were cut short by the sudden sharp explosion of his pipe, the bowl being shattered in a hundred pieces, while nothing but the stem remained in his mouth.

"Where's mine pipe?" he asked, looking around in the vain hope of descrying it somewhere upon the ground. Quanonshet and Madokawandock indulged in one short scream of laughter, then instantly straightened their faces and looked as meek and innocent as lambs. Gradually the truth began to work its way into the head of Hans. Looking sternly at the two, he asked, in a threatening voice:

"Which of you put dat powder in mine meerschaum, eh? which of you done dat, eh?"

Neither answered, except by hanging their heads and looking at their bare feet.

"I axes you once more, and dis is de last time."

Each now protested that it was not himself but the other, so that if there really were but one culprit, Hans had no means of determining. Under the circumstances, he concluded the safest plan was to believe both guilty. Accordingly he made a sudden dash and commenced whacking them soundly with the stick he held in his hand. They yelled, kicked, and screamed; and squirming themselves loose, scampered quickly away from their irate instructor.

"Dat meerschaum can't be fixed," he soliloquized, taking the bare stem out of his mouth and looking sorrowfully at it. "'Cause dere isn't anything to fix it mit. It ish wonderful what mischief gets into dem boys; dere ain't no time when dey ain't doin' notting what dey hadn't not ought to—all de times just de same way, while I toils myself to death to educate dem and bring 'em up in de way apout which dey ought to go."

Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock being in the habit of frequently indulging in the use of tobacco, her husband was not deprived entirely of his solace. Going into the wigwam, he unbosomed his griefs to her, and she kindly loaned him her own pipe.

"I hopes dere ain't no powder in dat," he remarked, glancing uneasily into the bowl.

"Nothing but tobac," replied his spouse, in her native tongue, "unless you've put the powder in yourself."

"Dunderation, I don't does dat, and blow mine eyes out my head. Dem little Dutchmen is up to all kinds of such

tricks, and some dese days dey will blow deir poor fader's brains out of his head, and den what will become of dem?" feelingly inquired Hans Vanderbum.

"What will become of them?" repeated Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, her voice rising higher and higher at each word. "Who is it that supports them now and takes care of them? Who is it that does that? Who is it—"

"It's you—it's you," replied her husband, seeing the mistake he had made. "I doesn't do nottings—I doesn't do nottings; it's my wife, my good Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, dat does it all. She's a very nice squaw, de same shape all de way down."

These concessions and compliments greatly soothed the feelings of the incensed spouse. She scolded her husband no more.

"What you going to do, my dear frau?" he asked, in a voice as cooing and winning as a dove's.

"Going to work, to plant the corn, to get food for you and Quanonshet and Madokawandock when the snow falls."

"Very kind, clever woman; good frau is mine Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock."

"What are *you* going to do?" asked the wife, as the two passed out the wigwam.

"Going to shmoke and *meditate*—meditate *hard*," replied Hans Vanderbum, impressively.

"Can't you think as well while you're *fishing*?"

"I shpose I can; if my Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock t'inks so, I can."

"Well, she thinks so."

The fact that his wife "thought so" was equivalent to a command with Hans. He manifested no unwillingness or reluctance in obeying. Accordingly, he furnished himself with a hook, line and bait, and set out for the river.

It was now getting well along in the forenoon, the sun being above the tree-tops. The Shawnee Indians had left their wigwams to engage in their daily avocations. The women were mostly toiling in the field, their papposes hanging from the trees or leaning against their trunks. The older children were frolicking through the woods, or fishing or hunting. A few warriors and old men still lounged about the wigwams, but the majority either were engaged in the hunt, or were upon the war-trail.

Stolid and indifferent as was the nature of Hans, it struck him that there was something unusual in the appearance and actions of the Indians. It seemed as though some startling event had occurred from which they had not fully recovered. They were uneasy and restless in their movements, constantly passing to and from the river. Upon reaching the banks of the latter, the Dutchman found a considerable number already there. They were not engaged in fishing, but lay close to the edge of the water, as if they expected the appearance of something upon its surface. Had he been a little more observant, there was something else which would have attracted his attention, on his passage through the woods. Fully a dozen times a peculiar sound, like the whistle of a bird, reached his ears, and he supposed it to be nothing more, although it did seem odd to him that the bird should follow him almost to the river bank. Besides this, he caught a flitting glimpse of an Indian now and then, some distance in the woods, that appeared to be watching him; but Hans did not care, even if such were the case, and he paid no further heed to him.

Reaching the river, he made his preparations with great care and elaboration. He had several hooks pendent from his line, upon each of which he shoved the wriggling worms, spitting upon them during the operation, as if to make them more tractable. To the line also was fastened a pebble, to make it sink. Swinging this several times around his head, he let go, when it spun far out in the river, and he commenced cautiously following it by means of a projecting tree-trunk. This latter extended a dozen feet out over the surface of the water, and had been used as a seat a great many times by him. Passing out to the extremity, he was afforded a comfortable resting-place where he could sit hour after hour smoking his pipe and engage in fishing. Had he noticed the large branch of the tree upon which he seated himself, he would have hesitated before trusting the weight of his body upon it, but his nature was too

unsuspicious to be attracted by anything trivial in its appearance, and he made his way out upon it, as he had done scores of times before.

Ensconcing himself in his seat, he gave his whole attention to his line and his pipe, not noticing the interested glances which the Shawnees along the bank bestowed upon his operations. After the space of a few minutes, he felt something pull at his line, and doing the same, he hauled a fine plump fish out of the water, casting it upon the land.

"Dat is purty goot," he mused, "and I will soon got a lot more, and my Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock will feel goot too, when I takes 'em home. She won't— Dunder and Blixen!"

The limb upon which he was seated suddenly broke short off, and Hans dropped into the river out of sight. But such a ponderous body as his could not sink, and upon coming to the surface, he paddled hurriedly to the shore.

"Dem little Dutchmen, Quanonshet and Madokawandock, will be de death of deir old fader afore long. Dat is deir work. I knows it, I knows it, and I will pound 'em all up when I gits home."

Looking about his person, he found that one of the hooks, catching in his clothes, had brought the line to shore; and, as his involuntary bath had not really been unpleasant, he was able to continue his labor. But, before going out upon the tree he examined the roots to satisfy himself that no further mischief had been perpetrated by his hopeful sons. Feeling assured upon this point, he again passed out on the tree, and was soon engaged in fishing as before, totally unmindful of the broad grins of the delighted Shawnees who had witnessed his discomfiture.

The fish bit readily. In a short time he had taken enough to insure him a welcome reception in his own wigwam. He was debating with himself whether it would not be better to return, especially as his pipe had been extinguished by his immersion, when a piece of bark floated down toward him and caught against his line.

There certainly was nothing remarkable in this. After freeing it of the obstruction, he continued fishing. But, scarcely a minute had elapsed before a second and a third piece of bark, precisely like the first, lodged against his line, and remained there with such persistency that it required considerable effort upon his part to remove them.

"Where in dunderation did dey come from?" he asked, looking inquiringly about him. His first impression was that the Shawnees along the banks were throwing these pieces out into the river for the purpose of annoying him; but, on looking toward them, he could discover nothing in their appearance to warrant such a supposition. He turned elsewhere for the cause. Resuming his attention to his line, he found several other pieces passing beneath him, and he began now to feel really provoked at this repeated annoyance. He was about to break out into some exclamation, when the appearance of these floating objects arrested his attention. A glance showed him there was something meant more than mere mischief. The pieces of bark were of a peculiar construction, roughly cut into the shape of an Indian canoe, showing unmistakably that they were sent down the stream for the purpose of arresting his notice.

"Dat means something," exclaimed Hans, decidedly, "and I must find out what it is."

By simply looking up-stream, he could discern this fleet of miniature boats coming down toward him in a straight line. In the clear sunlight they were visible for a great distance, and it was no difficult matter to determine their starting point. Some two hundred yards above, another tree projected out over the water very much the same as that upon which Hans was seated, so similar in fact that he had often used it for the same purpose. As the line of the pieces of bark pointed directly toward these, there was but little doubt that here they were launched upon the water.

"It can't be dat Quanonshet and Madokawandock is dere," mused Hans Vanderbum, "for to try to worry deir poor old fader. Dey're too big Dutchmen to build such boats, and dey wouldn't know how to make 'em float under me if dey did. No; dere's somebody out on dat tree, and he's doing it to make me look up at him. I'm looking but I can't see notting."

He shaded his eyes as he spoke, and looked long and searchingly at the tree, but for a considerable time could discover nothing unusual about it. At length, however, he fancied that he saw one of the limbs sway gently backward and forward in a manner that could hardly be caused by the wind. Gradually it began to dawn upon him that if there was any person upon the tree, he meant that his presence should not be suspected by the Shawnees along the bank. Accordingly Hans Vanderbum was more circumspect in his observations.

Still watching the tree, he soon discovered something else that he thought was meant to attract his eye. The water directly beneath it flashed and sparkled as if it was disturbed by some object. Straining his gaze, he finally discerned what appeared to be a human hand swaying backward and forward.

"Dat is enough!" thought Hans Vanderbum. "Dere's somebody dere dat wants to see me, and is afeard of dese oder chaps about, so I goes to him."

Working his way cautiously backward, he reached the land and started apparently to return to his wigwam. As he did so, he looked at the Shawnees and was gratified to see that their suspicions had not been aroused by his movements. Proceeding some distance, he hid his fish and line and made his way up the river, escaping the Shawnees by means of a long *détour*.

Reaching the stream and tree, he was somewhat taken aback by not finding any one at all. Considerably perplexed, he looked about him.

"Can't be dat Quanonshet and Madokawandock have been fooling deir poor old fader again," said he. "I'm purty sure I seen some one on the tree, when dem pieces of bark come swimming downstream."

A subdued whistle reached his ear. Looking behind him, he saw a Huron Indian standing a few yards away. The eyes of both lit up as they encountered the gaze of each other, for they were both friends and old acquaintances.

"Ish dat you, Oonomoo?" inquired Hans Vanderbum.

"Yeh—me—Oonomoo," replied the Indian, pronouncing his name somewhat differently from the Dutchman, (and from that by which we have before referred to him).

"Was dat you on de tree out dere?"

"Yeh, me—Oonomoo out dere on log."

"And did you make dem pieces of bark to come swimming down by me?"

"Yeh, me made 'em."

"And shtirred de water wid yer hand and moved de limb?"

"Yeh, Oonomoo do all dat."

"I shpose you wanted to see me?"

"Yeh, wanted to see you—want talk wid you," said the Huron, motioning for Hans to follow him. The latter did not hesitate to do so, as he had perfect faith in his honesty, knowing much of his history. The savage led the way some distance into the woods, where they were not likely to be seen or overheard, and then stopped and confronted his companion.

"Where'd you come from, Oonomoo?" asked the latter.

"From fightin' de Shawnees," replied the savage, proudly.

"Yaw, I sees yer am in de war-paint. Did you get many?"

"The lodge of Oonomoo is full of the scalps of the cowardly Shawnees, taken many moons ago," answered the Huron, his eyes flashing fire and his breast heaving at the remembrance of his exploits. This reply was made in the Shawnee language, as he spoke it as well as one of their warriors; and, as Hans also understood it, the conversation was now carried on in that tongue.

"When did you see Annie Stanton last?" inquired the Dutchman, showing considerable interest.

"Several moons ago, when the sun was in the woods and the waters were asleep."

"Is her husband, that rascally Ferrington, living?"

Oonomoo replied that he was.

"And is their baby, too?"

"Yes, they have two papposes."

"Dunder and blixen!" exclaimed Hans Vanderbum, and then resuming the English language, or rather his version of it, he added:

"Dat gal wanted to marry mit me once."

"Why no marry den?" inquired Oonomoo, also coming back to the more difficult language.

"She wan't te right kind of a gal—she wan't like my Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, dat is de same shape all de way down from her head to her heels. So I let dat Ferrington have her."

The Huron, who understood all about that matter, indulged in a broad smile at this remark. Whatever his business was, it was manifest he was in no hurry, else he would not have indulged in this by-play of words with his friend.

"You doesn't t'ink de baby will dies, does you?"

"No—in de settlement—Shawnee can't git her now—don't live off in de woods like as dey did afore."

"Dat's lucky for her; don't t'ink dey will get her there, 'cause dey tried it once—dat time, you remember, when we was all in de HUNTER'S CABIN in de woods, and you came down de chimney, and I watched and kept de Shawnee off."

The Huron signified that he remembered the circumstance well.

"Dem was great times," added Hans Vanderbum, calling up the recollection of them. "I left de village one hot afternoon, and walked all de way t'rough de woods to get to de cabin to help dem poor folks. We had mighty hard times. I caught a cold and couldn't shtop my dunderin' nose one night when it wanted to shneeze, and dat's de way de Shawnee caught me. Twan't so bad arter all," added Hans Vanderbum, musingly, "'cause if it wasn't for dat I wouldn't got my Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock."

"How soon go back?" asked Oonomoo.

"To de village, do you mean?"

"Yeh."

"Any time afore noon will does, so Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock gits de fish for our dinner."

"One, two hours," said the Huron, looking up at the sky, "den sun git dere," pointing to the zenith. "Shawnees know here?"

"Know me here? Guesses not; don't care if dey does, nor dey doesn't care neider."

"Shawnees won't come here?"

"No, no, Oonomoo, you needn't be afraid—"

"Afraid who?" demanded the Huron, with quick fierceness. "Oonomoo never run afore one—two—t'ree—dozen Shawnees. He only runs when dey comes like de leaves in de woods."

"Dey won't come like de leaves. If dey does, why you can leave too, and I t'inks you know how to use dem legs

dat you've got tacked onto you. I t'inks you run as fast as me."

"So I t'inks," replied the Indian, with a grin.

"Dere's no mistake but dem Shawnees would like to get your scalp, Oonomoo."

"Two—t'ree—hundreds—all Shawnees like to git Oonomoo's scalp—nebber git him—Oonomee die in his lodge—scalp on his head," said the Huron, proudly.

"I hopes so; hopes I will, too."

The expression of the Indian's face was changed. It assumed a dark, earnest appearance. He was done trifling, and wished to commence business.

"See her dis mornin'?" he asked, in short, quick tones.

"See who?" asked Hans Vanderbum, in turn, completely at a loss to understand him.

"De gal."

"De gal? Who you talking about—Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock?"

"De gal Shawnees got in de village."

The Dutchman's blank expression showed that he did not comprehend what the Huron was referring to; so he added, by way of explanation:

"Shawnees kill women and children—deir warriors squaws—don't fight men—burn houses toder day—run off wid gal—got her now in de village—she gal of Oonomoo's friend—Oonomoo want to get her."

From these rather disconnected expressions, Hans Vanderbum understood that a war-party of Shawnees had brought in a prisoner who was a friend of the Huron's. It was for the purpose of learning something regarding her that he had signaled the fisherman to leave his hook and line and come to him. The captive having reached the village quite recently, he had failed to be apprised of it, so that Oonomoo learned no more than he already knew regarding her.

"When did dey took her?" asked Hans Vanderbum.

"When sun dere, yisterday," replied the Indian, pointing off in the western horizon.

"Do you want to know 'bout her?"

"Yeh."

"Den I goes find out."

So saying, Hans Vanderbum strode away through the forest in the direction of the Shawnee village.

CHAPTER II.

OTHER CHARACTERS.

"He joys to scour the prairies wide,
Upon the bison's trail;
To pierce his dark and shaggy hide
With darts that never fail.

"His is the lion's strength in war,
In peace, the lion's rest;
And the eagle hath not flown so far
As his fame throughout the West."

Upon leaving the Huron, Hans Vanderbum hurried toward the village, as rapidly as the peculiar structure of his body would allow. As has been remarked, he was well acquainted with Oonomoo, knowing him to be a faithful ally of his race. He was anxious, therefore, to show his friendship to the savage. Down, too, somewhere in the huge heart of the plethoric Dutchman, was a kindly feeling for the distress of a human being, and he felt willing and anxious to befriend any hapless captive that had fallen into the hands of the relentless Shawnees.

So absorbed was he in meditating, that he took no heed of his footsteps until he was suddenly confronted by his spouse, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, who, flourishing a sort of hoe over his head, demanded, or rather screeched:

"Where's your fish?"

Hans Vanderbum winked very rapidly, and putting his hands up over his head, as if to protect it, "I forgots all about dem. I goes right back and gots dem."

He wheeled around as he spoke, receiving a resounding whack from the hoe, by way of a reminder, and went lumbering through the woods in search of his basket of fish. He experienced little difficulty in finding it, and in a few moments was back again to his affectionate partner.

"How did you get wet?" she asked, looking at his flapping garments.

"Dem little Dutchmen done it; dey fixed de limb and made it proke and let me down in de water and almost drowned. Quanonshet and Madokawandock will be de death of deir poor dad."

The wife vouchsafed no reply, but jerking the fish from his hand, entered the wigwam for the purpose of cooking them, while Hans Vanderbum himself went lounging on through the village, it being his purpose not to seem too anxious and hurried in his effort to gain his news regarding the captive. He was, despite his stupidity, not devoid of sagacity at times.

He had not long to search. In the very center of the town, his eyes fell upon a promiscuous crowd collected around a wigwam, gazing at something within.

"Vot you got dere?" he demanded, in a tone of great indignation, as he shoved his way through the bystanders. Those addressed made no reply, waiting for him to satisfy his curiosity by seeing the object for himself. In the interior, he descried a young woman, or rather a girl, for she could scarcely have been more than fifteen or sixteen years of age, seated upon the ground, beside a squaw, with whom it was apparent she had been endeavoring to hold a conversation; but, finding it impossible in the ignorance of each other's language, they had ceased their efforts by common consent and were now sitting motionless.



[Illustration: A girl, fifteen or sixteen years of age, seated upon the ground, beside a squaw.]

As Hans Vanderbum gazed curiously at her, his big heart filled with pity. She was attired in the plain, homespun dress common among the settlers at that period, her head totally uncovered, and her long, dark hair falling in luxuriant masses around her shoulders. Her hands were clasped and her head bowed with a meek, resigned air that reached more than one Shawnee heart. Her complexion was rather light, her features not dazzlingly beautiful, but prepossessing, the expression which instantly struck the beholder being that of refinement; speaking a nature elevated and holy, as much above that of the beings who surrounded her, as would have been that of an angel had he alighted amid a group of mortals.

The great exertion made by Hans Vanderbum in reaching the wigwam, caused him to breathe so heavily as to attract the attention of the captive. Catching sight of a white man, she arose quickly, and approaching him, said, eagerly:

"Oh! I'm so glad to meet one of my own color and race, for I am sure you must be a friend."

"Yaw, I's your friend," replied Hans Vanderbum, hardly knowing what he said; "and I's sorry as nobody to see you here. How did you got here?"

"They brought me, the Shawnee warriors did. They attacked the house in the night, when I was alone with the servants. They murdered them all except me. They have brought myself here to perish in captivity."

"Yaw, de Shawnees ish great on *dat* business. 'Cause I shneezed dey cotched me once and brought me here to perish in captivity mit yourself," said Hans Vanderbum, in a feeling voice.

"Are you a prisoner, also?" asked the captive, in considerable surprise.

"Yaw, but I *likes* it! I's got a wife, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, dat is de same shape all de way down, and a little Dutchman, Madokawandock; so dey hasn't to watch, like I shpose dey will have to you."

"Can any of these around me understand English?" asked the girl, in a low tone.

"No; de women don't know notting about it, except my wife, and she ain't here; and de men know notink. You needn't be afraid to say anything you pleases to me."

"You could not betray me," added the girl, turning her dark, soulful eyes anxiously full upon him.

"No, no," he replied, energetically. "Voot's your name?"

"Mary Prescott."

"How fur does you live from here—dat is, how fur did you live?"

"It must be over thirty miles, in an eastern direction, I think."

"Does you know Oonomoo?"

Hans Vanderbum asked the question in a lower tone, for the name was well known to all present.

"A Huron Indian? Oh, yes; I know him well," replied the captive; her countenance lighting up. "He was well remembered in our neighborhood, and was a true friend to us all. Do you know him too? Though I suppose of course you do, from your asking me the question."

"Yaw, I knows him, and he knows me too, and we both knows each oder, so dat we are acquainted. Well, dat shentleman is hid off in de woods near here, and he has sent me in to l'arn what I cans about you."

The prisoner kept back the joyful exclamation that came to her lips, and said:

"Tell him that I am unharmed and hopeful, and trust that while he interests himself in me, he will not run into danger."

"Not run into danger!" repeated Hans Vanderbum; "dat is what Oonomoo lives on. He'd die in a week if he wan't into danger, out of grief. He don't do notting else; it's what he was made for," he added, growing enthusiastic in speaking of the Huron.

"I know he is a brave and true-hearted Indian, and is greatly esteemed by the Moravian missionaries. He hesitates at no risk when his friends are in danger."

"Ef he does run risk dey don't catch him, 'cause he knows how to run and fight, and ish shmarker dan de Shawnees. Where ish your parents?"

"My mother and sister happened to be absent on a visit to Falsington, which is fifteen or twenty miles distant from our place, while father, who is a Captain, is doing service somewhere on the frontier, in the American army. How thankful indeed I am that dear mother and Helen were away, for they have escaped this terrible captivity."

"You washn't left all alone?"

"Oh, no; there were several servants, and I saw them tomahawked, and heard their piercing cries."

The captive covered her face, and her frame shook like an aspen at the remembrance of the dreadful scenes through which she had so recently passed. It was several minutes before she recovered her self-command. When she did, Hans Vanderbum proceeded with his questions.

"Dey burnt de place, I shpose?"

"Yes, yes; they destroyed everything."

"I shpose your folks will feel bad when dey finds dese Shawnees have got you, won't dey?"

"Oh, yes, yes; do not speak of it."

At this point Hans Vanderbum began to get a sort of dim, vague idea that his style of conversation was not exactly calculated to soothe the feelings of the unfortunate prisoner; so he determined, if possible, to make amends for it. Patting her on the head, he said, gently:

"Don't feel bad, my darling; I ish shorry for you, but I wants to ax you anoder question."

"What is it?" queried the maid, with a wondering look.

"Will you answer it?" asked Hans Vanderbum, endeavoring to put on an arch, quizzical expression.

"If it is in my power I instantly will. Pray, do not hesitate to ask me anything you choose."

"Well, den, gits ready for it. I would shust like to know if dere ishn't some feller dat is in love mit you, and you is in love mit, and dat both ish in love mit each oder, eh?"

The crimson that suffused the cheeks and mounted to the very forehead of the captive, answered the question of Hans Vanderbum more plainly than words. Still, he insisted upon a verbal reply.

"There is no need of concealing the truth from you," she answered. "I have a dear young friend—"

"Who ish he?"

"Lieutenant Canfield, who is in service with my father," she replied.

"Oh, den he don't know notting about it?"

"I am not sure of that. Oonomoo has acted as a runner or bearer of messages between many of the men in the American army and their families, upon the frontier, and the last time I saw him he brought me word that Lieutenant Canfield intended shortly to visit me on furlough. He may have arrived immediately after the Indians burnt our place."

"A good t'ing; a good t'ing if he only has."

"Why would it be a good thing?"

"Does he know Oonomoo?"

"Certainly; he has known him for several years."

"Well, den, dey will come together, and dey'll fix up fings so dat dey will got you out of dis place afore long."

"I hope so; I hope so. Death would not be more terrible than the suffering I undergo here, especially at night. Oh! will you not stay by me?" asked the prisoner, the tears starting to her eyes.

Hans Vanderbum gouged his fists into his own visual organs, and muttered something about "de dunderin' shmoke," before he could reply.

"Yesh, yesh, I 'tends to you. You needn't be 'fraid. Dey won't hurt you, I doesn't t'ink. Dey jist keeps you. May be dey burns you, but dat ain't sartain. I must go to Oonomoo now, for I've been away from him a good long while."

"Tell him I am hopeful."

"Ain't dere notting else to tell him?" asked Hans Vanderbum, still lingering.

"I know of nothing else. He certainly needs no advice from me."

"Notting to send to Lieutenant Canfield, eh?" again queried Hans.

"Tell Oonomoo," said the girl, looking down to the earth, "that if he meets Lieutenant Canfield to say the same

thing to him for me, that I am waiting and hopeful, and have a good friend constantly by me, which lightens, in a great measure, the gloom of my captivity."

"Who ish dat friend?"

"You."

"Yaw, I tells him. Good-by; be a good gal till I comes back. I bees back burty soon."

So saying, Hans passed out of the wigwam on his way to return to Oonomoo. His prolonged conversation with Miss Prescott had attracted the attention of the Indians who were lingering outside, and several asked him its purport. To these he invariably replied, "she didn't know wheder it was going for to rain or not, but she fought it would do one or toder."

From his long residence among the Shawnees and his family connection with them, Hans Vanderbum was not suspected of disaffection. Indeed, it could not properly be said that he felt thus toward them. He would not willingly do anything to injure them any more than he would have fought against his own race. Had he been dwelling among the whites, he would have befriended any hapless prisoner that might be in their power as he intended to befriend the poor girl with whom he had just been conversing.

It was about noon when he reached his own wigwam. He looked in, and seeing that the fish had been cooked and was ready, told his wife that he didn't feel very hungry and he guessed he would take a short walk for his health. She, however, ordered him at once to take his place inside and eat his dinner. The henpecked husband dared not refuse, and he was accordingly compelled to take part in the meal, while constantly occupied in thinking that the Huron was waiting for him; but, as patience is one of the cardinal virtues of the North American Indian, Hans was sure of finding him at the rendezvous upon his return.

Some twenty minutes later, Hans Vanderbum was at the tree, where he had first caught sight of Oonomoo. It was not long before the latter came from his concealment, and, after exchanging words upon unimportant subjects, for the purpose of concealing his curiosity, he inquired in regard to Miss Prescott.

"She tells me to tell you dat she's dere, and is hopeful, and ain't hurt, and hopes you won't hurt yourself to git her away."

"Oonomoo won't hurt his self—Shawnee won't hurt Oonomoo—he git gal away too."

"Oh, I like for to forgot. She tells me 'bout Lieutenant Canfield de same as she tells you. Will you see him?"

"See him dis mornin'—waitin' in woods fur me—see him 'gin—tell what gal said."

"I'm glad for to hear it, Oonomoo. I shpose you'll be back this way ag'in one dese days."

"Be back soon—have somebody with me—tell gal so—look out fur whistle—keep ears open—hear *dis* time."

"Yaw, I will. I heerd you dis oder time, too; but didn't t'ink 'twas you. I'll know de next time. You going now?"

The Huron signified that he was, and took his departure as quietly as he had come. Hans watched as the dusky figure flitted in and out among the trees and finally disappeared in the distance. Then, muttering to himself, he returned to the village.

The day was unusually warm for the season; there was little activity in the Indian town. Hans noticed that many of the Shawnees were still lingering along the Miami, although what object other than that of mere languor could induce them to remain, he could not possibly conceive. Reaching his own wigwam, he was confounded with joy to learn that the captive, Miss Prescott, was to be domiciled in it. He could scarce believe it until Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock told him that she was to be strictly guarded, used as her slave and never to be out of her sight for one minute. In case of her escape, Hans Vanderbum was to be held responsible for it, his life paying the forfeit.

"Dat is quare," he muttered. "I guess Oonomoo can fix it, if dey *does* do it."

It perhaps is well to remark here, by way of explanation, that the time in which the incidents occurred, which we intend to relate, was a few years subsequent to the great victory of Anthony Wayne over the combined forces of the various Indian tribes in the West. As a consequence of this splendid achievement and the no less splendid victory gained in the renowned treaty of Greenville, a long and almost undisturbed peace along the frontier was inaugurated, where, for years before, all had been strife of the most revolting kind. But, profound peace and security never existed on the border until the final removal of the Indians beyond the Mississippi. Isolated families, small bodies of men, and the lonely traveler through the forest, never were secure from the stealthy attacks of the red-men. Deep in the gloom of the solemn wilderness, many a deadly conflict occurred between the hunter and the Indian. Often the victim sunk noiselessly to the turf, and his bones bleached for years in these wilds, while none but his slayer knew of his fate.

Captain Prescott, placing great faith in the treaty of Greenville, had erected a fine mansion upon a tract of land received from Government. His residence was upon the extreme frontier. He had misgivings when he removed his wife and two daughters to that wilderness home. He provided a number of trusty servants for their protection in his absence with the army. Circumstances transpired which prevented his fulfilling his promise to return home to remain, and he continued absent nearly three years, occasionally making a short visit, and returning to his duties again before he had fairly greeted his family.

On one of these visits, Captain Prescott took, as his companion, a young Lieutenant named Canfield. It so happened that this visit lasted several days, and a period of greater happiness to the young Lieutenant probably never occurred. Mary Prescott, at that time, could not properly be called a woman, except in the grace and dignity of her character. She inherited the rich fancy, the nervous sensibility, and stern will of her father, and what may seem like a contradiction, the gentleness and modesty of her mother. She was the youngest child, and, naturally enough, the pet of the others; but, the parents were too sensible to spoil her by flattery or foolish indulgence. She was of that age when the female mind is most susceptible to the great passion of our nature in its most romantic phase, when Lieutenant Canfield visited their house. His frank bearing, his gentlemanly deportment, and, above all, the favorable reports which her father gave of his gallant conduct, conspired to enlist young Mary in his favor.



[Illustration: Mary Prescott.]

They were scarcely thrown into each other's society before the natural, though sometimes tardy, results of the virtues we have mentioned were seen. The tell-tale blush—the voice unconsciously lowered to the most thrilling softness—the timid glance—the deep-drawn sigh—the absent, vacant appearance when separated for a short time from each other—the supreme happiness when together—all were signs which escaped not the eyes of the sister and mother, although the matter-of-fact father failed to notice such trifles. His days of courtship had become a fable, if they were not forgotten.

If there were any displeasure at this state of affairs upon the part of her mother, it was only because she believed her daughter too young to entertain thoughts of marriage. Like a wise and prudent parent, however, she did not seek to accomplish an impossibility—that of preventing what no parent yet succeeded in preventing. Having great confidence in the young Lieutenant, from the representations of her husband, she merely resolved to be discreet with him. Accordingly, when, on the day of his departure, he found courage to mention his love of Mary to her parents, the mother took it upon her to reply that she entertained no objection to his suit, but, from the youth of her daughter, he must not expect their consent to a union for several years. At the same time she gracefully hinted that the suddenness of his passion might well excite suspicion that it was hardly genuine. Delighted beyond measure at this answer, Lieutenant Canfield added that he would not claim her hand until both father and mother were fully satisfied, and until he had proven to them that he was worthy of their daughter. Thus matters stood when Captain Prescott and the Lieutenant took their departure.

Matters were somehow or other so arranged that the Lieutenant found opportunity to visit the family of Captain Prescott oftener than the Captain himself. On these occasions, the mother was pleased to observe that while the attachment between him and her daughter became more and more marked, the Lieutenant always manifested the most scrupulous respect for the wishes of her parents, and never breathed a word to her that he believed could occasion the slightest objection upon their part.

Besides these visits, the lovers found ready means for exchanging their expressions of affection through the faithful Huron, Oonomoo, who made stated journeys from Captain Prescott's mansion to his post. On these occasions, he went loaded with missives from one party to another, carrying back as many as he brought. He was a great favorite with the whites, who appreciated his chivalrous faithfulness and fidelity, and loaded him with many expressions of their esteem. He had the reputation of being the fleetest runner, the most successful scout and best hunter in the West. Volumes would be required to record all the exploits told of him—of the marvelous number of scalps which hung in his lodge, and of the many hair-breadth escapes he had had. It was said he had a wife and child hid somewhere in the recesses of the forest, to whom he made stated visits, and whom his deadly enemies, the Shawnees, had sought in vain for years. He was now about thirty-five years of age, and had been known as a scout and friend of the whites for full a dozen years.

Somewhat less than two years after the first meeting of Lieutenant Canfield with the daughter of Captain Prescott, the wife and eldest daughter of the latter made a journey of pleasure to a neighboring settlement. Mary would have accompanied them, had she not received an intimation from Oonomoo that her lover proposed to make her a visit about that time. She accordingly remained at home with the servants.

Two nights afterwards, when the darkness was almost impenetrable, a large war-party of Shawnees suddenly attacked the place. The negroes had no time for defense, and only sought their own safety in flight. But one, however, escaped, the rest falling beneath the merciless tomahawk. Mary Prescott was carried off a prisoner.

CHAPTER III.

OONOMOO AND THE SHAWNEES.

Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely reached the forest-glade.—SCOTT.

After parting from Hans Vanderbum, the Huron sped noiselessly through the woods, taking a direction that would lead him to a point on the river fully three hundred yards below where he had signaled the German. The stream making a bend there, he would thus escape the observation of the Shawnees along the bank, at the point where the fisherman had been engaged in his labors.

So silent, yet rapid, was the motion of Oonomoo, that his figure flitted through the rifts in the wood like a shadow. His head projected slightly forward, in the attitude of acute attention, and his black, restless eyes constantly flitted from one point to the other, scarcely resting for a second upon any single object. In his left hand he trailed his long rifle, while his right rested upon the buckhorn handle of the knife in his belt.

He had progressed a considerable distance thus, when the Huron's gait decreased very rapidly. He was now in the vicinity of the river, where he had left his canoe drawn up on the bank. It was necessary to reconnoiter thoroughly before venturing to approach it. Accordingly, he halted. The movement of the panther in approaching his foe was not more stealthy and cautious than was his.

At length, reaching the shelter of a tree, and cautiously peering around, the Huron caught sight of the stern of his canoe. One glance and his dark eyes flashed fire! The Shawnees had been there!

What sign caught the notice of Oonomoo? What kindled the fire in his dark eye? What caused one hand to close over his knife, and the other to grasp his rifle? It was a sign of his enemy. Too well the sagacious Huron knew that the Shawnee was lying in wait for him.

The canoe, which Oonomoo left behind him, during his interview with Hans Vanderbum, lay precisely as it was first deposited. Not a surrounding limb, shrub or leaf had, so far as he could see, been disturbed since he left the spot. And yet the evidence which presented itself to the eyes of the Indian was as palpable and unmistakable as would have been the appearance of enemies themselves.

Oonomoo had carefully drawn his bark canoe up the river-bank and concealed it as well as the circumstances would admit. He had then deposited his long Indian paddle in it, leaving the blade projecting over the stern. The paddle *was now several inches further to one side than it had been left by him!*

This was the entire evidence. It was abundantly sufficient to satisfy the Huron. He did not doubt for an instant. His only uncertainty was in regard to the precise location of his foes. A few minutes' observation satisfied him that they were not between the canoe and the river. His course of action was accordingly determined. It would have been the easiest matter in the world for him to have escaped by swimming the river; but as an opportunity for a contest of skill with his enemies was offered, he was too proud not to embrace it at once. Retreating several rods, he continued his way upstream in his usual cautious manner, until he had gone perhaps a furlong above his canoe, when he approached and entered the stream.

The Miami, at this point, was so heavily wooded, that it was impossible to pass close under its shore without entering the water. Once within this and in a stooping position, a person would be invisible to any one on the same bank, although he could be plainly seen from the opposite shore. Oonomoo now commenced his descent of the river with the intention of recovering his canoe. This was necessarily a tedious and prolonged operation, as a single misstep, a slip or splash of the water might betray him to his enemies. But, he was equal to the task, and never hesitated for a moment except to listen for some sign of his enemies.

The Shawnees, by the merest accident, had discovered the Huron's canoe and examined it. Satisfied that it belonged to none of their tribe, and most probably had been left there by some hostile scout, they carefully allowed it to remain as they had found it, and endeavored to restore everything around to its natural position, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the owner upon his return. This done, they withdrew and awaited with loaded rifles for his reappearance. We have shown how a most trifling error in regard to the paddle placed the Huron on his guard.

It was perhaps a half-hour after Oonomoo had commenced his descent of the river, that the canoe, without any perceptible jar, slid an inch or two down the bank. So quietly and cautiously was this effected, that, had the Shawnees been looking directly at it, their suspicion would not have been aroused.

Some ten or fifteen minutes later, the boat moved about the same distance further. The expectant Shawnees, clutching their rifles, were listening anxiously for some sound that might indicate the approach of their foe, and paid little heed to the canoe itself. Ever and anon, it retreated an inch or two down the bank in the same mysterious manner—going short distances and so very slowly that no one but a thoroughly suspicious Indian would have believed there was any human agency connected with it.

The canoe was fully an hour and a half in moving a single foot, during which time the Huron managed, by the most consummate skill, to sustain it in such a manner that the shrubbery and undergrowth around appeared to occupy relatively the same position that they did before it had been disturbed. The river shore was only some twenty or thirty feet distant, and from where Oonomoo lay, the way was almost entirely clear to it, so that when he chose to make any sudden dash or movement, no hindering cause could possibly offer itself.

One of the Shawnees chanced to glance at the canoe. At the same instant, his keen eye detected its changed position, imperceptible almost as it was. With a guttural exclamation he arose and moved toward it, followed by his two companions. They had taken scarcely a step, when they saw the boat slide swiftly forward several feet, and then suddenly rising to the perpendicular position, whisk off through the bush at a still more rapid rate. Two twinkling moccasins, that looked as if they were its support, as they doubled over each other, fully explained to the Shawnees the cause of this singular scene.

With a loud yell, the three dashed forward, while the Huron ran at the top of his speed over the slight distance that lay between him and the river. Reaching the shore, he changed the canoe from his rear to his front, and holding it like a shield above and before him. With one foot in the edge of the water, he concentrated all his strength for the effort and leaped far out in the stream—the canoe falling with a loud splash perfectly flat upon the surface. The impetus thus given caused it to shoot like an arrow for a long distance, when the Huron, inclining his body to the left, careened it so much, that his own person was concealed from any who might be upon the shore, while, by reaching his hand over into the current, he was enabled to use it as a paddle, and continue his onward motion.

Oonomoo was fully aware that the delicate structure of the canoe was no obstruction at all against a rifle-shot. Accordingly, while descending the river, he had taken precaution to insure his safety, in case of such an occurrence as had now transpired. A large, rotten limb, hardly the length of his own body, was carried with him. At the moment of lifting the canoe from the ground, the limb was placed within it, and thus was carried back to the edge of the river. Lying flat upon his face, this limb was about the thickness of the Huron's waist, and by skillfully balancing the boat, it was interposed directly between him and his foes. The only parts of his person which possibly could be struck were his feet and the arm stretched over the side of the canoe. The former necessarily being in the stern, it was hardly probable that they would be wounded. There was such risk of the arm that Oonomoo drew it within the boat for a few moments. He had scarcely done so, when the reports of two rifles, and the peculiar zip of the bullets as they cut through the side of the canoe and buried themselves in the rotten wood, proved how wise was the precaution he had taken.

Quick as thought, the hand of the Huron was in the water again, where, as he vigorously used it, it flashed like some fish at play. The Shawnees, who plainly discerned the two holes their bullets had made, could scarcely believe their daring foe had escaped injury. But they were forced to believe he was still living from the fact that the canoe steadily progressed across and was not carried down-stream by the current. The whoop of the Shawnees had been heard by their comrades further down the bank. As the canoe reached the middle of the river, they caught a sight of it, and readily conjectured the true state of the case. In a twinkling, two of their own were launched in pursuit. Discovering this, Oonomoo arose to the upright position, and dipping his paddle deep in the water, sent his boat forward with astonishing swiftness. As it lightly touched the bank, he leaped ashore and pulled it up after him. Then

uttering a defiant yell, he turned, and to show the scorn in which he held the Shawnees, walked slowly and deliberately into the forest. Once fairly beyond their sight, however, his pace quickened, and when the sun sunk low in the western horizon, he was many a mile from the Miami.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT AND CATO.

Suddenly rose from the South a light, as in autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the horizon,
Titan-like, stretches its hundred hands upon mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers and piling huge shadows together.—LONGFELLOW.

From a long distance the conflagration had been visible, its light throwing a red glare far up in the sky, and revealing the huge clouds that swept forward like crimson avalanches, while the surrounding trees glowed as if their branches were burning hot. Those nearest had their bark blistered and their leaves curled and scorched from the intense heat. A conflagration at night, when viewed from a distance, always seems awful in its sublimity. There is something calculated to inspire terror in the illuminated dome of the heavens and the onward sweep of this fearful element, when viewed in a civilized country; but it is only in the wilderness, away from the abode of man, that such an exhibition partakes of all the elements of grandeur and terror.

The solitary hunter, as he stood upon the banks of some lonely stream, leaned on his rifle and gazed with a beating heart at the brilliant redness that lit up so much of the sky. The beasts in their lair turned their glowing eyeballs toward the dreadful illumination, and stood transfixed with fear until its light died away; while the dark face of the vengeful Shawnee grew darker and more terrible as he gazed upon this work of his own hands. A silence, deep and profound, rested like a pall upon the wilderness and remained there until darkness again held undisputed reign.

Lieutenant Canfield had seen the glowing light from a great distance, when its appearance was much like that of the moon as it comes up in the horizon. Little did he suspect its true nature. It was not until the next morning that he encountered Oonomoo, the Huron, who related the particulars of the attack of the Shawnee party upon the house of Captain Prescott and the capture of his daughter. Had not the impulsive Lieutenant thus learned of his beloved's safety from massacre, had he not received the assurance of an immediate attempt for her recapture, there is no telling to what imprudent lengths he might have gone in his blind devotion to the young captive. Oonomoo remained with him but a short time, when he departed on his mission to the Shawnee village, and the lover continued on toward the estate of Captain Prescott.

It was nearly noon when Lieutenant Canfield reached the place—now nothing but a mass of charred and blackened ruins. Leaving his horse in the woods, he dismounted and examined the remains of the mansion and smaller buildings. The ghastly corpses of the negroes still lay upon the ground, having been undisturbed, and with a feeling of heart-sickness the young soldier passed them by. In his profession, he had witnessed many revolting sights, but none that affected him more than this. He shuddered, as he reflected that the very barbarians who had wantonly inflicted his woe were the captors of the adored daughter of Captain Prescott, and that they had inflicted as shocking outrages even upon such defenseless captives as she.

Walking thus moodily forward, he was suddenly brought to a standstill by coming in front of an awkward, odd-looking structure, which excited his wonder in no small degree. The charred remains of the logs of one of the buildings had been collected together and piled one above the other, so that they bore some resemblance to a rudely-fashioned oven. From the circumstances of the case, these must have been arranged in this manner subsequently to the visit of the Shawnees, and it was this fact which awakened the curiosity of the Lieutenant. His first supposition was that it was the doings of the Huron. But what reason could he have had for rearing such a structure? What possible purpose could it serve him?

All at once it flashed upon the Lieutenant that it was the work of the Shawnees themselves, and he began to view the contrivance with some apprehension. This feeling was considerably strengthened when he either heard or fancied he heard the movement of some one within it. Prudence dictated that he should place a little more distance between it and himself. Accordingly he began to retreat, walking backward and keeping his gaze fixed upon it, ready

for any demonstration from his concealed enemies.

Suddenly something within the hollow of the structure fell with a dull thump that nearly lifted the Lieutenant from his feet. At the same moment he heard a suppressed growl, as if made by a caged bear. He now began to feel more wonder than fear.

"What in the name of creation is the meaning of that concern, and what sort of animal is caged in it?" he muttered, staying his retreat.

The Lieutenant debated whether or not to approach and examine the interior of the odd-looking hut. It seemed hardly possible that any human being could be within, although it was certain there was some living object there.

"At any rate I'll stir him up," he concluded, resolutely approaching. The growls were now redoubled, and he really believed some four-footed animal was the cause of all the uproar.

"It may be the Shawnees have attempted a little pleasantry after their bloody work, and caged up some poor creature within those logs," thought he. "I'll let him loose if such be the case."

He placed his hand upon the stump of a log nearest to him, when a thunderbolt appeared to have exploded before him. He started back as though he had received an electric shock. A perfect battery of howls was leveled against him, and for a moment his ears were stunned with the deafening uproar. He determined, however, to solve the mystery. Giving the structure a push that brought it tumbling to the ground, he sprung back and held his rifle prepared for any foe, were he a four-footed or a two-footed one. Instead of either, what was his amazement to see a negro, as black as midnight, emerge from the ruins, and cringe at his feet.

"Oh, Mr. Injine, please don't shoot! please don't kill me! Nice, good Mr. Injine, don't hurt me! Please don't tomahawk poor Cato! He never hurt an Injine in all his life. Please don't! Oh, don't! don't! don't! boo-hoo! oo!-oo-oo!"

"Get up, get up, Cato, and don't make a fool of yourself," said the Lieutenant, recognizing in the frightened negro the favorite servant of Captain Prescott's family.

"Oh, please don't hurt me! Please don't kill poor Cato! He never hurt good Injine in all his life! Please, good, nice Mr. Injine, let me go, and I'll do anyt'ing you wants me to, and lubs you as long as I lib. Please, don't hurt poor nigger Cato," repeated the servant, fairly beside himself with terror.

"If you don't want to be killed, get up," said the young officer, sternly enough to bring Cato to his senses; but only after he had been assisted by what he supposed to be a ferocious Indian, ready to brain him, was he enabled to rise and to keep his feet.



[Illustration: "If you don't want to be killed, get up," said the young officer.]

"Don't you know me, Cato?" asked the Lieutenant, laughing heartily at the woe-begone appearance of the negro.

"Hebens, golly! ain't you an Injine, Massa Canfield?" he asked, his knees still shaking with terror.

"Do I look like one?"

"Guess you isn't, arter all," added the negro, with more assurance. "Hebens, golly! *I ain't afeard!*" he suddenly exclaimed, straightening up proudly. "Didn't t'ink Cato was afeard, Massa Canfield?"

"I must say that the circumstantial evidence of your cowardice is hard to resist."

The negro's eyes enlarged as he heard the large words of the soldier, and his looks showed that he had no idea of their meaning.

"Doesn't t'ink I's *afeard*?"

"Why did you build such a looking concern as that?"

"Why I build dat? To keep de rain off of me."

"It hasn't rained at all for several days."

"Know dat, but, den, expect maybe 'twill. Bes' to be ready for it when *does* come."

"But, as there were no evidences of a storm coming very soon, why should you get in there just now?"

"Storms out in dese parts bust berry suddent sometimes. Oughter know dat, Massa Canfield."

"Yes, I do; but, why in the name of common sense did you set up such a growling when I came near your old

cabin?"

"Did I growl at you?"

"Yes: made as much noise as a grizzly bear could have done."

"Done it jist for fun, Massa. Hebens, golly! wanted to see if you was afeard, too."

"But," said the soldier, assuming a more serious air, "let the jesting cease. When did you put those logs together, Cato?"

"Dis morning, arter *dey* went away," he replied, with a shudder, casting a look of terror around him.

"And when did they—the Shawnees—go away?"

"Didn't stay long, Massa; come in de night, berry late—bust on de house all at once."

Lieutenant Canfield felt a painful interest in all that related to Mary Prescott. Although the Huron had given him the principal incidents of the attack and massacre, he could not restrain himself from questioning the negro still further.

"Had you no warning of their approach?"

"Nothing; didn't know dey war about till dey war among us."

"What was the first thing you heard, Cato? Give me the particulars so far as you can remember."

"Hebens, golly! I'll neber forgit *dat* night if I lib a fousand years. Wal, you see I and Big Mose had just gwane to bed and blowed de candle out——"

"Had Miss Mary retired?"

"Yes—she'd been gone a good while. You see, me and Big Mose am generally de last niggers dat am up, specially myself. I goes around for to see if de t'ings am all right about de house. Wal, me and Mose had been around to see if ebery't'ing was right, and was coming back from de barn and got purty near de house, when Mose whispers, 'Cato, I see'd a man crawling on de ground back dar. I didn't say nuffin' for fear ob scaring ob *you*.' 'Oh! git out,' says I, 'you's *skeart*.' But I felt a little oneasy myself, 'cause I kind ob fought I heern somefin' when we was a little funder off. I commenced for to walk fast, and Big Mose commenced for to walk fast, and afore we knowed it, we bofe was a canterin', and when we come aginst de door, we'd like to 've busted it in, we was tearing along so fast. We tumbled in ober each oder, and fastened dat door in a hurry you'd better beliebe."

"Wal, we went to our room, and blowed out de candle and said our prayers and went to bed. We hadn't been laying dar long, when Big Mose turned ober toward me, and whispers, 'I tell you, Cato, dar am Inj'ines about de house. 'Cause why I see'd one, and I had a dream last night dat a whole lot ob dem comes here in de night and killed all of us niggers and burnt Missis Mary!' Hebens, golly! Massa Canfield, I begun to turn white about de gills when I heerd him say *dat*. I'd been shivering and shaking, and now I shook like de ager. I told Big Mose to be still and go to sleep, 'cause it seemed to me if I went to sleep when t'ings looked bad, dey would be all right agin in de mornin'. But, he wouldn't be still and says, 'I tell you, Cato, dar *am* Injines crawlin' around ob dis house dis very minute, 'cause I can hear dar knees and hands on de ground.' I couldn't make Big Mose keep quiet. Bimeby, he says, 'Cato, let's git up and be ready for 'em, for dey're comin'. I *knows* it, I *ken feel* it in my bones. Let's wake up Missis Mary and de niggers and fight 'em, for dey'll be here afore morning, sure.' Wal, dat nigger worrid me awful. I told him I wouldn't git up, but was going to sleep, and turned ober in bed, but I couldn't keep my eyes shet.

"Bimeby, I heard Big Mose crawling soft-like out de bed. He was trying to make no noise, so he wouldn't wake me, finking I was asleep. He stepped like a cat on de floor, and I listened to see what he was going to do. I heerd him move around and den all was still. 'What you doing, Mose?' I axed. 'I'm going to say my prayers,' he said, 'and it's de last time too, 'cause de Injines will soon be here.' I didn't try to stop him, for I felt so bad, I commenced saying mine in de bed.

"Big Mose kept mumbling and crying for a long time, and I shaking more and more, when all at once, hebens, golly! I see'd somefin' bright-like shine trough de winder, and I looked out and de barn was all afire. Den dar come a yell dat nearly blowed de roof off de house. Big Mose gib a screech and run, and *bang-bang* went a lot ob guns all around us. De Injines was dar, burnin', tomahawkin', screechin', shoutin', and killin' de poor niggers as fast as dey showed demselves. I see'd Miss Mary——"

"Did they harm her?"

"No! She didn't 'pear *skeart* a bit. She tried to keep de Injines from killing de poor niggers, not t'inking anyt'ing about herself."

"How was it that *you* escaped?"

"I stayed where I was till I was nearly burnt up, when I sneaked out and none of 'em didn't 'pear to notice me. I hid in de woods and stayed dar till mornin'."

"Did you see anything more of Miss Mary?"

"Yes, I see'd de Injines go away purty soon, and take her along. Dey didn't take any ob de niggers, 'cause dey had killed 'em all but me, and I was already dead, but I comed to agin."

"None of Captain Prescott's family were in the house besides Mary, were they?" asked the Lieutenant, asking a question of which he well knew the answer.

"Nobody else wan't dar—bress de Lord! Missis Prescott and Helen went off on a visit to de settlement, t'ree, four days ago."

"How was it Miss Mary remained behind?"

"Ki-yi! you doesn't know, eh?" said Cato, grinning vastly, in total forgetfulness, for the moment, of his dreadful surroundings.

"How should I know? Of course, I do not."

"Wal, den, Oonymoo, dat red Injine, told her as how maybe you'd be 'long dese parts 'bout dis time, and *she* 'cluded she'd be't home when *you* called. *Dat's* how she was heah!"

A thrill went through the gallant Lieutenant at this evidence of the affection of the fair maiden he had journeyed so far to see. Despite the heart-sickness which had come over him at sight of the revolting scenes around, he experienced a sort of pleasure from the words of the negro, and felt anxious for him to say more.

"How do you know, Cato, that this was the reason she remained behind?"

"Hebens, golly! didn't I hear her tell Missis so?"

"Her mother? And what did she say?"

"Oh! she and Missis Helen kinder laughed, and showed all dar white teef, and dey didn't try to persuade her to go, 'cause dey *knowed* dar wan't no use ob tryin' to do nuffin' like *dat*. She lubs the Leftenant altogeder too much. Yah! yah!" and Cato kicked up his heels, hugely delighted.

"Have you told me when you built this house of yours?"

"T'ought I hahd. Done dat ar workmanship dis mornin', arter all de Injines had gone. T'ought dar'd be somebody 'long dis way afore long."

"There has been nothing saved," said the Lieutenant, looking around and speaking apparently to himself.

"Noffin' but dis poor nigger, and I don't know what will become of him now dat he's all alone," said Cato, with

a woe-begone demeanor.

"Have no anxiety upon that account. You shall be attended to. Captain Prescott and all his family are living, and, depend upon it, you will not suffer if he can prevent it."

"But de house am gone—de horses—de corns—eberyt'ing but me."

The young soldier continued musing for a moment and then asked:

"How far from here is the settlement to which Mrs. Prescott has gone?"

"Ten, fifteen or forty miles."

"Can't you tell me more precisely than that?"

"Somewhere atween ten and forty or fifty—dat's all I can tell."

"Have you ever been there yourself?"

"Offin—horseback."

"You know the way?"

"Jes' as well as did from de house to de barn."

"How would you like to go there?"

"What! alone?" asked Cato, the old look of terror coming back to his countenance.

"Certainly—you have been there and back you said, didn't you?"

"Yes, but bress your soul! de Injines wan't about den."

"I guess there were as many as there are this minute."

"Oh! gracious! I don't want to go alone. What made ye ax me dat queshun?"

"Why, I thought this, Cato. You see I expect Oonomoo to return to this place by nightfall, when I intend to accompany him to the Shawnee village where Miss Mary is held captive——"

"Goin' to git her?"

"We hope to. I was going to propose that you should make your way to the settlement and carry the news of this sad affair to Mrs. Prescott and her daughter, assuring her that the Huron and myself will do all we can to rescue Mary. They must have seen the light, last night, and no doubt are dreadfully anxious to learn whether it was their mansion or not. Besides, I doubt whether the Huron will be willing that you should accompany us."

"Why won't he? I guess Cato knows enough to take care of his self. Allus has done it. Done it last night."

"We will let the matter rest until his return. It shall be as he says."

"What time 'spect him?"

"In the course of a few hours. In the meantime, there is another matter that must be attended to. Do you know whether there is a spade or shovel lying about?"

"Dunno; guess dar is dough. I'll see in a minute."

Cato ran some distance to where the charred remains of another building were heaped together, and searching

among the ruins, brought forth a spade with a portion of the handle still left.

"What ye want to do dat ar?" he asked, as he brought it to the Lieutenant.

"We must bury those bodies, Cato. It would be wrong to deny them a decent burial when we possess the time and means."

Cato had a mortal horror of touching any creature that was dead, but more than once he had wished that the corpses were placed in the ground, although he had not the courage to put them there. He showed no reluctance now to the performance of his portion of the task.

"You know how to dig, I presume?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Yis, I offen dug wid dis berry same spade. Whar'd you want thar graves?"

"One grave will answer for the four, and this spot will do as well as any other."

The soldier gave the proper directions, and the negro commenced his labor at once. In an hour or two, he had hollowed out a grave, ready for the reception of the dead bodies. He could not conceal his repugnance to touching them, although he did not refuse to do so.

"Dat ar is poor Big Mose," said he, as they took hold of a Herculean negro, who had been brained by the keen tomahawk. "And he knowed the Injines war a-comin' a long time afore dey did. Poor Mose," he added, as the big tears trickled down his cheek, "he neber will eat any more big suppers or come de double-shuffle or de back-action-spring by moonlight. Poor feller! he had a big heel and knowed how to handle it."

The body was carefully lowered into the grave, and the others, one by one, were placed beside it. It was a sight which haunted Lieutenant Canfield for many a night—those black, upturned corpses—awful evidences of the terrible passions of the Shawnees. The earth was carefully deposited over them and the last sad rites performed.

The sun was now past the meridian, and the young soldier began to look momentarily for the appearance of the Huron. An hour or two had passed, when Cato spoke:

"Massa Canfield, 'tain't no ways likely dat ar Injine will be along afore dark. *Dat's* de time dem critters likes to travel, so what's de use ob our waitin' here so long. Oder Injines *mought* be around dese parts and wouldn't it be a good idee to git in de woods whar dey wouldn't be so apt to see us?"

It struck the Lieutenant that there was some sense in the advice of the negro; so he concluded to act upon it. Moving away toward the wood, his foot struck and scattered a pile of black cinders lying near the ruins of the house. Looking down, he saw something glitter. What was his surprise to discover in the ashes a gold watch and chain which he had often seen upon the neck of Mary Prescott. A portion of the chain had been melted by the intense heat, but by some singular means, the watch had been so well preserved that there was scarcely a blemish upon it. As he picked it up, Cato exclaimed, with rolling eyes:

"Dat is Miss Mary's! dat is Miss Mary's!"

"It couldn't have been around her neck, certainly, when it was lost."

"No, she allers laid it on de stand aside her bed, and dat's de way it got dar. See, dar's de legs ob de stand."

It was as the negro said, and in the hope of finding some more of the valuables of the family, the soldier kicked the ashes and cinders hither and thither and searched among them for a considerable time. Nothing further rewarded him, however. Placing the watch upon his own person, he went on, across the edge of the clearing, into the woods beyond. He led his horse further into their protection, and then beckoned the negro to his side.

"Do you feel sleepy, Cato?"

"No! what'd you ax that fur?"

"Well I do, and I am going to try to get a little sleep. I wish you to keep watch of the clearing while I do."

"Don't 'spect none of dem Injines will be back here?"

"No, but Oonomoo will probably soon be. I want you to see him the minute he comes, and awaken me so that there shall be no unnecessary delay."

Cato promised to obey, and took his station nearer the clearing, while the fatigued soldier stretched himself upon the ground and was soon wrapped in a dreamless slumber.

Lieutenant Canfield slept until nearly sunset, and would have slept even longer had he not been aroused by Cato roughly shaking his shoulder.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked, looking up in the terror-stricken countenance of the negro.

"Hebens, golly! *dey've come!*"

"Who has come? what are you talking about?"

"De Injines. Dar's forty fousand of 'em out dar in de clearing!"

Considerably flurried by the husky words of his sable friend, Lieutenant Canfield arose and walked stealthily toward the clearing to satisfy himself in regard to the cause of the negro's excessive fear.

"Be keerful, or dey'll see you," admonished the latter, following several yards behind.

Approaching as near the edge of the wood as he deemed prudent, he was rewarded by the sight of some six or eight Indians—undoubtedly Shawnees—who were examining the ruins that lay around them with considerable curiosity. They were ugly-looking customers in their revolting war-paint and fantastic costumes, and the Lieutenant felt that the wisest plan he could adopt was to give them a wide berth. Withdrawing further into the wood, he asked the negro when he had first seen them.

"Massa Canfield, I stood and watched out dar for two, free hours till I fell asleep myself and come down kerwollup on de ground. I laid dar a good while afore I woke, and de fust t'ing I see'd when I looked out dar, war dem Injines walking round, kickin' up t'ings and makin' darselves at home ginerally. You'd better beliebe I trabeled fast to tell you ob it."

"From which direction do you think they come?"

"Dunno, but I finks de way dey looks dat dey come purty near from dis way, mighty clus to whar we's standin'; and I t'inks dey'll take de same route to git back agin."

Somehow or other, the Lieutenant had the same impression as the negro. It was so strong upon him that he resolved to change their position at once. Accordingly, he proceeded to where his horse was tied, and unfastening, led him into the wood. Making a *détour*, he came back nearly upon the opposite side of the clearing, where, if possible, the wood was still thicker. Here they carefully screened themselves from observation and watched the Shawnees.

Hither and thither they passed, searching among the ruins for plunder, occasionally turning up some trifle upon which they pounced with the avidity of children, and examining the half-burnt remnants of chairs, tables and stands, etc. Here and there they pulled the black, twisted nails forth, that looked like worms burnt to a cinder, and carefully preserved them for future use. Every metallic substance was seized as a prize, and some of the wooden portions of instruments were also appropriated. Thin twists of smoke still ascended from different spots in the clearing, and the ashes when stirred showed the red live coals beneath them.

"Yah! yah! dat feller's got sumkin' nice," said Cato, laughing heartily and silently at one of the Indians, who had pulled forth a long board with evident delight. Turning it over, he balanced it on his shoulder and was walking rapidly away, when suddenly he sprung several feet in the air with a yell of agony, and jumped from beneath it,

rubbing his shoulder very violently as if suffering acute pain.

"Yah! yah! knowed 'twould do dat. Lower part all afire, and reckoned it burnt him a little."

The Indian continued dancing around for several moments, not ashamed to show to his companions how much he suffered. He by no means was the only one who was caught in this manner. Very often, a savage would spring from the ground, with a sharp exclamation, as some coal pierced through his moccasin, and now and then another could be seen, slapping his fingers against his person, after he had hastily dropped some object. One eager Shawnee attempted to draw a red-hot nail from a slab with his thumb and finger, and roasted the ends of both by the operation, while a second seated himself upon a board which set fire to the fringe of his hunting-shirt. He did not become aware of it until a few minutes later, when, in walking around, the fire reached his hide. Placing his hand behind him, he received unmistakable evidence of its presence, when he set up a loud whoop and started at full speed for the spring, reaching which, he seated himself in it, before he felt entirely safe.

These, and many other incidents, amused the Lieutenant for the time being, while the delight of Cato was almost uncontrollable. He seemed in danger of apoplexy several times from the efforts he made to subdue his laughter. But, all at once there was a sudden cessation in his mirth, and a visible lengthening of his visage. Grasping the shoulder of the soldier, he exclaimed:

"Look dar! Look dar! See dem!"

"I see nothing to alarm us."

"Look dar whar we went into the clearin'. Don't you see dem Injines dar?"

Lieutenant Canfield did see something that alarmed him. The whole eight Indians had followed the track of himself and the negro to the edge of the wood, where they had halted and were consulting together. They certainly must have noticed it before, but had probably been too busy to examine it particularly. It had never once occurred to the white man that this evidence of his presence would tell against him, but he now saw the imminent peril in which he and the negro were placed.

"We must flee, Cato," said he. "Fortunately it will soon be dark, when they cannot follow us."

"Will we bofe git on de hoss?" asked the frightened negro.

"No; it will do no good. Let us take to the woods. Hush! What's that?"

Just as they were about moving, the sharp report of a rifle came upon their ears, and with a loud whoop the Shawnees rushed off in a body, taking an easterly direction, which was different from that followed by the soldier and negro. Now that all immediate danger was gone, the two remained behind, to learn, if possible, the cause of the mysterious shot and subsequent action of the Shawnees.

It was not until night, when Oonomoo, the Huron, returned, that the cause was made known. He had approached several hours before, and seen the savages in consultation, and divined the cause of it. To divert them from pursuing his two friends, whom they would most certainly have captured, he discharged his piece among them, and then purposely showed himself to draw them after him. The stratagem succeeded as well as he could have wished. He easily eluded them, until they had followed him some distance in the woods, when he made his way back again to the clearing, where he rejoined the Lieutenant and the negro.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOME OF THE HURON.

Tis nature's worship—felt—confessed,
Far as the life which warms the breast!
The sturdy savage midst his clan,
The rudest portraiture of man,
In trackless woods and boundless plains,
Where everlasting wildness reigns,
Owns the still throb—the secret start—
The hidden impulse of the heart.—BYRON.

The Huron, after his escape from the Shawnees, quickened his pace, as we have stated, and went many a mile before he changed his long, sidling trot into the less rapid walk. When he did this, it was upon the shore of a large creek, which ran through one of the wildest and most desolate regions of Ohio. In some portions the banks were nothing more than a continuous swamp, the creek spreading out like a lake among the reeds and undergrowth, through which glided the enormous water-snake, frightened at the apparition of a man in this lonely spot. The bright fish darted hither and thither, their sides flashing up in the sunlight like burnished silver.

The agile Indian sprung lightly from one turf of earth to another, now balancing himself on a rotten stump or root, now walking the length of some fallen tree, so decayed and water-eaten that it mashed to a pulp beneath his feet, and then leaping to some other precarious foothold, progressing rapidly all the time and with such skill that he hardly wetted his moccasin.

While treading a log thus, which gave back a hollow sound, the head of an immense rattlesnake protruded from a hole in the tree, its tail giving the deadly alarm, as it continued issuing forth, as if determined to dispute the passage of man in this desolate place. The fearless Huron scarcely halted. While picking his way through the swamp he had carried his rifle lightly balanced in his left hand, and he now simply changed it to his right, grasping it by the muzzle, so that the stock was before him. He saw the cavernous mouth of the snake opened to an amazing width; the thin tongue, that resembled a tiny stream of blood; the small, glittering eyes; the horn-like fangs, at the roots of which he well knew were the sacks filled almost to bursting with the most deadly of all poisons; the thin neck, swelling out until the scaly belly of the loathsome reptile was visible.

The Huron continued steadily approaching the revolting thing. He was scarcely a yard distant when the neck of the snake arched like a swan's, and the head was drawn far back to strike. In an instant the stock of his rifle swept over the top of the log with the quickness of lightning. There followed a sharp, cracking noise, like the explosion of a percussion-cap, and the head of the rattlesnake spun twenty feet or more out over the swamp. It struck the branch of a tree, and, dropping to the water, sunk out of sight. The headless body of the reptile now writhed and doubled over itself, and smote the tree in the most horrible agony. Oonomoo walked quietly forward, and with his feet shoved it from the log. Still twisting and interlocking, it sunk down, down, down into the clear spring-like waters until it could be seen on the gravelly bottom, where its struggles continued as he passed on.

Not affected by this occurrence, the Huron walked on as quietly as before, his dark, restless eye seemingly flitting over every object within his range of vision. The character of the swamp continued much the same. A broad sheet of water, from nearly every portion of which rose numerous trees, like thin, dark columns, here and there twisted round and round, and, seemingly, smothered by some luxuriant vine; others prostrate, the roots sunk out of sight, and the trunk protruding upward, as if a giant had used them for spears and hurled them into the swamp; shallow portions, where the water was but a few inches deep, and then others, where you could gaze down for twenty feet, as if you were looking through liquid air. These were the peculiarities of this singular spot in the wilderness, through which the Huron was journeying.

He must have proceeded fully a half-mile into this water wilderness, when he reached what might properly be termed the edge of the swamp; that is, the one through which he had been making his way, for there was still another

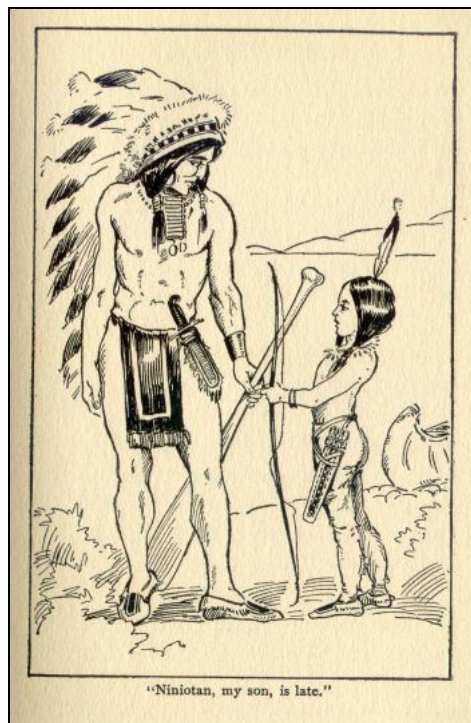
a short distance from him. The growth of trees terminated almost in a mathematical line, and a lake of water, something less than a quarter of a mile in width, stretched out before him, perfectly clear of every obstruction. The Indian stood a long time, looking about in every direction. What was unusual, there was an expression of the most intense anxiety upon his countenance. Well might there be; for, sooner than to have a human eye (whether it was that of the white or red man) to witness the movements he was now about to make, he would have suffered death at the stake a thousand times!

Apparently satisfied, he laid his rifle on the tree upon which he had been standing, and then sprung out into the deeper water, sinking like a stone from sight. When he came to the surface, he brought something with him, which proved to be a canoe. With this he swam to the tree, where he righted and turned the water from it. A paddle was secured in it. Taking his seat, the canoe went skimming like a swallow over the water toward the opposite swamp.

Reaching this, he shot in among the trees, avoiding them with as much ease and dexterity as would a bird on the wing. Going a hundred yards in this manner, he arose in his canoe and looked around. A shade of displeasure crossed his face, apparently of disappointment at not discovering some person or object for whom he was looking. Waiting a moment, he placed his thumb on his mouth, and gave utterance to a low, tremulous whistle, an exact imitation of a bird often found in the American swamps. A moment later, there came a response exactly the same, except that it sounded fainter and a considerable distance away. The moment it caught the ear of the Huron, he reseated himself and folded his arms in the attitude of patient waiting.

Scarce five minutes had elapsed, when the plash of another paddle was heard, and a second canoe made its appearance, carefully approaching that of the Huron. In it was seated an Indian boy, not more than twelve years of age, who handled it with a skill scarcely second to that of his father, Oonomoo.

"Niniotan, my son, is late," said the latter, sternly, as the boy came alongside.



[Illustration: "Niniotan, my son, is late."]

"I was chasing a deer this morning, and was carried further in the woods than I thought," meekly replied the boy.

"Has the Moravian missionary given Niniotan two tongues that he should think Oonomoo speaks idle words?"

"Niniotan does not think so," said the son, in a humble voice of thrilling sweetness.

"Oonomoo said when the sun was over yonder tree-top he would be waiting for his boy Niniotan. He waited, but Niniotan was not here."

The son of the Huron warrior bowed his head as if he had nothing to say to the merited rebuke. The father took his seat in the canoe of his son, who carried him rapidly forward through the swamp, for perhaps a quarter of a mile further, when the ground became so solid that they landed and walked upon it. The grass was green and luxuriant, the trees stood close together, and in some places the shrubbery seemed almost impenetrable. But Niniotan never hesitated. The way was perfectly familiar. A rabbit could scarcely have glided through the wood with more dexterity than did he and his father.

Finally the two reached what appeared to be a large mound of earth, covered over with rank grass and brilliant flowers. On one side was a perfect bank of bushes, so that the mound could not be seen until it was closely approached. A Shawnee Indian might have encamped beside it, without once having his suspicion awakened in regard to its nature. This was the retreat and home of Oonomoo, the friendly Huron, where his wife, Fluellina, and son, Niniotan, dwelt, which was regularly visited by him, and where he frequently spent days, enjoying the sweets of home. No living person besides these three knew of its existence. It stood upon this vast island in the midst of this swamp, almost inaccessible to approach, and where no one would have dreamed of looking for the dwelling place of a human being. The surrounding waters were as cold and clear as crystal, and were swarming with the choicest fish. Abundance of game was upon the land, and, what might seem curious, considering the location of the island, its air possessed an extraordinary degree of salubrity.

The mound was but a mere shell, the interior of which was lined with luxurious furs and skins, and furnished with every convenience and comfort that the fancy of a warrior's wife might covet. Within, too, were numerous presents, such as rifles, knives, pistols, beads and picture-books which had been given Oonomoo by his numerous white friends. In addition there was a magnificent gold watch—a gift from a wealthy lady, whose life the Huron had saved several years before. Hearing that he had a young wife, she sent the present to her, and it had hung within their "wigwam" ever since. Its use was understood, and it was regularly wound and attended to with great care.

Fluellina, the wife of Oonomoo, was also a Huron, who had been educated at one of the Moravian missionary stations in the West, and was a professing Christian. She was a mild, dove-eyed creature, a number of years younger than her husband, whom she loved almost to adoration, and for whom she would not have hesitated to lay down her life at any moment. She had had another child—a boy, born two years before Niniotan, but he had died when but six years of age, and was buried in the clear depths of the water which surrounded his home.

Regularly every month, Fluellina, accompanied by her son, visited a Moravian missionary who dwelt with his family on the site of the once flourishing station of Gnadenhutten, where, in 1782, was enacted one of the darkest episodes in American history. It was here the infamous monster, Colonel Williamson, murdered the one hundred Moravian Indians—a crime for which it seems a just God would have smitten him and his followers to the earth. Here this faithful Huron woman and her son received instruction in holy things from the aged missionary—a white man who alone knew the relation which she bore to the famous Huron, Oonomoo, and who never betrayed it to his dying day. By this means, her regular visits were rendered safe and free from the annoyance of being watched—an exemption she never could have had, had any one else suspected the truth.

Fluellina succeeded in inducing her husband to visit this missionary on several occasions, when he proved an attentive listener to the aged disciple of God. He took in every doctrine and subscribed to every truth except one—that of loving his enemies. He believed he never could love the Shawnees—they who had first caused his father to be broken of his chiefdom, and then had murdered his mother. He had sworn eternal hatred against them, and in the interior of his lodge hung such an incredible number of their scalps that we decline to name it—knowing that we should be suspected of trifling with the credulity of our readers. He had never taken the scalp of a white man, and would promise never to harm any being except the Shawnees; but, toward them his feelings must be those of the deadliest enmity.

The sublime truths of the great Book of books, its glorious promises, and its awful mysteries, thrilled the soul of the Huron to its center, and many a time when wandering alone through the great, solemn forests, he felt his spirit expanding within him, until his eyes overflowed, and he, the mighty, scarred warrior, wept like a child. The sweet

instruction, too, of the gentle Fluellina had not been lost entirely upon him. It was owing to these that for a year he had not taken the scalp of a Shawnee, though he had been sorely tempted and had slain more than one. He could not yet bring himself to the point of letting them go free altogether.

With this somewhat lengthy parenthesis, we will now return to the present visit of the Huron to his island home.

Oonomoo was about to pass into the interior of the lodge, when a light exclamation caught his ear. As he turned his head, Fluellina came bounding to his arms. However stoical and indifferent the North American Indian may appear in the presence of his companions or of white men, it is a mistake to suppose that he is wanting either in the ordinary affections of humanity, or in those little demonstrations of love so peculiar to our own race. Deep in the woods, when alone with their families, they throw off restraint and are warriors no more—but *men*. The little child is dandled on the knee, or sported with upon the grass, and the proud mother receives her share of her husband's caresses. Great as may be the glory of the savage in the hunt and chase, his happiness in the bosom of his own family is unsurpassed by any other enjoyment which ever falls to his lot.

Fluellina received the embrace of her husband with a radiant countenance, and she seemed overflowing with joy as she looked up in his own glowing face. Taking her fondly by the hand, he led her a few yards away, where he seated her upon a half-imbedded rock and placed himself beside her. A glance at the two would have shown that there was no considerable difference in their ages. The wife could not have been over thirty at the most, and she looked much younger, while the husband was perhaps thirty-five. His square, massive chest was covered with scars—eloquent evidences of his bravery, for he had never received a wound in the back. His face, usually so stern and dignified, was now softened, and the bright, metallic glitter of eye was changed to the sparkle of gladness.

The handsome, symmetrical arms of Fluellina were bare to the shoulder, and Oonomoo held one in his broad palm, closing and opening upon the plump flesh and delicate muscle, with as much admiration as though he were still her young and ardent lover. They sat thus, gazing into each other's face for several moments without speaking, so full seemed their hearts. Finally Oonomoo seated himself upon the ground at the feet of Fluellina and leaned his head over upon her lap. This was what she wished, and she had maneuvered in that delicate manner peculiar to her sex, by which the desire of the lover is awakened without his suspecting the true cause.

Unfastening the bindings of his hair, she parted it carefully and drew her fingers slowly through and through it until it glistened like satin. She did not speak, for she had no desire to disturb the languor which she knew it cast over her husband. As his head drooped, she sustained it and gradually ceased, until he slept.

Oonomoo awoke in a short time, and resealed himself by the side of his wife.

"Where is Niniotan?" he asked, looking around him.

"He is dressing the meat of the deer which he slew this morning. Shall I call him?"

"No, I am not yet tired of my Fluellina."

The happy wife replied by placing her warm cheek against his, and holding it there a moment.

"Oonomoo has no wounds upon him," said she, raising her head and looking at his breast and shoulders.

"But he has been in danger."

"No scalps hang at his girdle."

"And none shall ever hang there again."

"Not the scalp of the Shawnee?"

"No," replied the Huron, in a voice as deep and solemn as a distant peal of thunder.

Fluellina looked at her husband a moment, with her face lit up by a strange expression. Then, as she read the determination impressed upon his countenance, and knew the sacredness with which he regarded his pledged word,

she sunk down on her knees, and clasping her hands, turned her dark, soulful eyes to heaven and uttered the one exclamation:

"Great Spirit, I thank thee!"

The kneeling Indian woman, her face radiant with a holy happiness, the stern warrior, his dark countenance lighted up as he gazed down upon her as if the long obscured sun had once more struggled from behind the clouds—these two silent figures in the green wood of their island home formed a picture touchingly beautiful and sublime.

Who can picture the glory that illuminated the soul of the Huron warrior, the divine bliss that went thrilling through his very being, as he uttered this vow, and felt within him the consciousness that never, never again would he be overcome by the temptation to tear the scalp from the head of his enemy, the vengeful Shawnee.

"When has Fluellina seen the Moravian missionary?" he asked, as she reseated herself beside him.

"But a short time since. He inquired of Oonomoo."

"Oonomoo will visit him soon."

"Can he not go with Fluellina to-day?"

"When the sun is yonder," replied the Huron, pointing to a place which it would reach in about half an hour, "he must go, and when the sun sinks in the west, he must be many miles from here."

"When will he return again?"

"He cannot tell. He goes to befriend the white man and maid who is in the hands of the Shawnees."

"Fluellina will wait and will pray for Oonomoo and for them."

"Oonomoo will pray for himself, and his arm will be strong, for he fights none but warriors."

"And Niniotan will grow up like him; he will be a brave warrior who, I pray, will take no scalp from the head of his foe."

"What think the missionary of Niniotan?"

"He finds that the blood of Oonomoo flows strong in his veins. His eye burns, and his breast pants when he hears of the great deeds his father has performed, and he prays that he may go with him upon the war-path."

"He shall accompany him shortly. He can aim the rifle, and his feet are like those of the deer. He shall be a man whose name shall make the Shawnee warriors tremble in their lodges."

"Shall he be a merciful warrior?" asked Fluellina, looking up in the face of the Huron.

"Like his father, shall he be. He shall slay none but men in rightful combat, and no scalp shall ever adorn his lodge. He must drink in the words of the Moravian missionary."

"He does, but his heart is young. He will be valiant and merciful, but he longs to emulate the deeds of Oonomoo—his father."

"I will teach him to emulate what Oonomoo will do, not what he has done."

"He counts the scalps that hang in our lodge, and wonders why they do not increase. He gazes long and often upon those which you tore years ago from the heads of the two chiefs, and I know he burns to gain a trophy for himself."

"Has Fluellina the choicest food these forests can afford?"

"The eye of Niniotan is sure, and his mother never wants."

"He must not wander from the island, else his young arm may be overpowered by the Shawnees or Miamis. They would know he was the son of Oonomoo, and through the son murder the father and mother."

"Fluellina loves but three—Oonomoo, Niniotan, and," she added, reverentially raising her eyes to heaven, "the Great Spirit who is so kind to her."

"And Oonomoo loves him," added the Huron, in his deep, bass voice. "In the hunting-grounds beyond the sun, he and Fluellina and Niniotan will again live together on some green island in the forest, where the buffalo and deer wander in bands of thousands."

"And where Delaware, Mingo, Chippewa, Miami, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Shawnee, Huron, and the white man shall be brothers, and war against each other no more."

The Huron made no reply, for the words of his wife had awakened a train of reflection to which he had been a stranger. The thought that all the Indians, every tribe that had lived since the foundation of the world—those who were now the most implacable enemies to each other, the French, English and Americans—the thought of these living together in the Spirit Land in perfect brotherhood and good-will, was too startling for him to accept until Fluellina again spoke:

"It is only the *good* Delaware, Mingo, Chippewa, Miami, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Shawnee, Huron, and white man that shall live there."

It was all plain now to the simple-minded Indian, and he understood and believed. He sat a few moments, as if ruminating upon this new theme, and then said gently to his wife:

"Read out of Good Book to Oonomoo."

Fluellina drew a small Bible from her bosom, one that she always carried with her, and opening at the Revelations, commenced to read in a clear, sweet and distinct voice. The inspired grandeur, sublime truths and glorious descriptions of that most wonderful of all books thrilled her soul to its center with emotions unutterable; and she knew that the same effect, though perhaps in a lesser degree, was produced upon her husband. The particular portion was the twenty-first chapter, whose meaning the Moravian missionary had frequently explained to her, and it was these verses in particular upon which she frequently dwelt with such awed rapture:

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

"Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

"And had a wall, great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

"The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

"And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there."

The dim, vague glimpses afforded him from this and other portions of the book of the awful mysteries of the Last Day, the New Jerusalem, and the great white Throne, threw a spell over him which remained long after the words of the reader had ceased. Full ten minutes, he sat, after the volume had been closed; then raising his head, said:

"The sun is getting in the western sky, and Oonomoo must depart."

The wife did not seek to detain her husband. The wife of an Indian warrior never does. She merely walked beside him, while he signaled for his son to approach. He had scarce uttered the call, when Niniotan came bounding from the wood eager to obey the slightest wish of his father. Seeing from his actions that he was about to depart, he lingered behind until his mother had bidden him good-by, and paused; then he leaped ahead, leading the way as before.

The canoe reached, Oonomoo stepped within it, and Niniotan paddled him out among the trees until he came to where his own canoe was moored, into which the Huron stepped. As he was about to dip the paddle, he said: "Let Niniotan wait until Oonomoo returns, and he shall go with him upon the next war-path."

No pen can picture the glowing happiness that lit up the features of the boy at hearing these words. His dark eyes fairly danced, and he seemed unable to control his joy. His whole frame quivered, and he dipped his own paddle into the water, he bent it almost to breaking. Without noticing him further, Oonomoo sent his canoe spinning among the trees, and was soon in the broad sheet of water, crossing which, he reached the spot where he had brought up his boat. Stepping out upon the log, he secured the paddle to it, and then turning it over, filled it with water. It slowly sunk until it could be seen resting upon the bottom, when he sprung from the tree and commenced his departure from the swamp in the same manner that he had entered it.

Once again in the grand old forest, with the mossy carpet beneath his feet, and the magnificent arches over his head, through which the breezes came like the cool breath of the ocean, the Huron struck into his peculiar rapid trot, which was continued until sunset, by which time he reached the clearing. Approaching it in his usual cautious manner, he saw the Shawnees consulting together, and at the first glance understood the peril of his friends. We have related the measures which he took to save them, and shown how successful they were.

CHAPTER VI.

ADVENTURES ON THE WAY.

The paths which wound 'mid gorgeous trees,
The streams whose bright lips kissed the flowers,
The winds that swelled their harmonies,
Through these sun-hiding bowers,
The temple vast, the green arcade,
The nestling vale, the grassy glade,
Dark cave and swampy lair;
These scenes and sounds majestic, made
His world, his pleasures, there.—A. B. STREET.

"You have saved our lives," exclaimed Lieutenant Canfield, as the dusky form of the Huron appeared beside him.

"Ain't hurt, eh? den we go," said he, not noticing the remark.

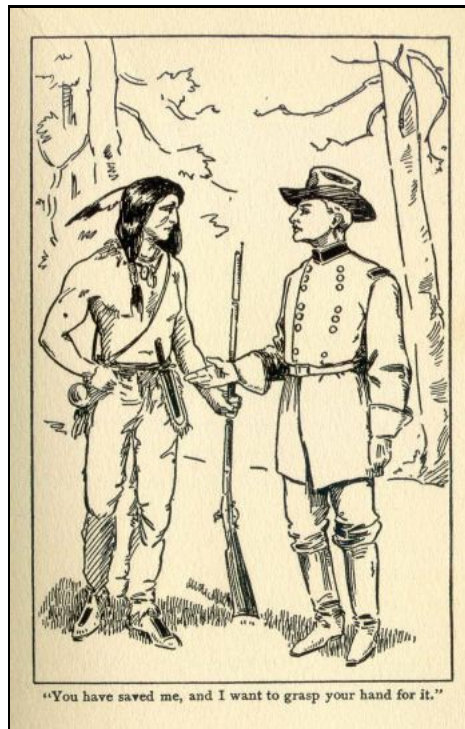
"No, neither of us is hurt."

"I beliebes a bullet struck me aside de head," said Cato, removing his cap, and scratching his black poll.

"A bullet struck you?" repeated the Lieutenant, in astonishment. "Where did it hit you?"

"When dat gun went off, sunkin' struck me slap right above my ear, and I fought I felt it flatten dar."

"Fudge! you are not hurt. But I say, Oonomoo," resumed the soldier, with a more determined air, "you have saved me, and I want to grasp your hand for it."



[Illustration: "You have saved me, and I want to grasp your hand for it."]

The Huron extended his hand, but it hung limp in that of the ardent young man. It was easy to see that the iterated thanks were distasteful to him. He said nothing until the jubilant Cato also made a spring at it as soon as it was released.

"Nebber mind—nottin'—Oonomoo do nottin'."

"Hebens, golly! yes, you did. If you hadn't come jes' as you did, I'd had to fout de Injines all alone, single-handed, widout any feller to help me, and, like as not, would've got hurt."

"Can't hurt Cato's head—hard," said the Huron, dropping his hand upon the superabundant wool of the negro, and allowing it to bound up as if an elastic cushion were beneath it. "Make nice scalp—Shawnee like it," added the Indian, still toying with it.

"De Lord bless me! I hopes he nebber will get it, and he nebber will if I can hender dem."

It was now quite dark, and, to the surprise of the Lieutenant, a round, full, bright moon appeared above the forest. The preceding night had been without a moon to light up the cloudy heavens; but there was scarcely a cloud visible now in the sky. Here and there a small fleck floated overhead, like a handful of snow cast there by some giant, while not a breath of wind disturbed the tree-tops. All was silent and gloomy as the tomb.

"When are we to go to the Shawnee village?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Now!" replied the Huron.

"Then why do you linger?"

"Cato go with us?"

"That is just as you say, Oonomoo. If you think it imprudent to take him along, he must remain behind."

"You ain't agoin' to leab me here, be you?"

"Know de way to settlement?" asked the Huron.

"No, no; I (recollecting what he had told the Lieutenant) did know de way once, but, I's afraid I've forgot it. My mem'ry is gittin' poor."

"You find de way—must go—can't stay wid us."

"Oh, gorry! don't leab me among de Injines; dey will eat me up alive!" replied the negro, bellowing like a bull.

Canfield saw the glitter of the Huron's eyes, and taking Cato by the arm, said:

"Let us hear no more of this, Cato, or you will arouse the anger of Oonomoo, and there is no telling what he may do."

"But, I's afraid to go t'rough de dark woods, dat am full of de Shawnees," said the negro, in pitiful accents.

"It will be no more dangerous than to go with us. We shall probably find ourselves right among them before long; while, if you are cautious, there is little probability of your encountering them. Go, Cato, and tell Mrs. Prescott and Helen what has happened, but do not exaggerate it. Tell them, for me, that they can hope for the best, and that they shall soon hear from Oonomoo and myself."

The words of the Lieutenant had the desired effect upon the negro. When he saw that he had but a choice between two dangers, he prudently took that which seemed to be the least, replying that, "all t'ings 'sidered, 'twould be 'bout as well to tote off to de settlement, and guv de news to de folks dar." He added that he was not influenced

by "pussonal fear, but was simply actin' on de advice ob de Leftenant."

Accordingly, Cato took his departure. Our two friends watched him as he shuffled across the clearing, and finally disappeared in the shadowy wood beyond.

Then the Huron turned to the duty before him. Taking a northerly direction, he proceeded at such a rapid walk that the young soldier was compelled every now and then to run a few steps to maintain his place beside him. He kept up his pace for a half-hour or so, when he suddenly halted.

"Fast walk—make breathe fast," said he, his black eye sparkling.

"It is rather rapid walking, Oonomoo, but I can stand it. Don't stop on my account."

"Plenty time—git dar mornin'—soon enough."

"How far are we from the Shawnee village?"

"Two—eight—dozen miles—go in canoe part way."

"When will we rescue her from the dogs—the Shawnees?" asked the young Lieutenant, scarcely able to restrain his curiosity.

"Dunno—may be can't get her 't all."

"Won't get her?" he repeated, his heart throbbing painfully. "My God, Oonomoo, why do you say that?"

"'Cause true—hain't got her yit—may be won't—Shawnee watch close—t'ink Oonomoo 'bout."

"But you *expect* to rescue her, do you not?"

"Yeh, 'spect to—do all can—ain't sartin—mustn't t'ink I am—be ready for her dead."

"I will try to be prepared for the worst, Oonomoo, but I place great hopes on you."

"Place hopes on Him—He do it, may be."

Never, to his dying day, did Lieutenant Canfield forget the rebuke of that Huron Indian. As he uttered these words he pointed upward—a flood of moonlight, streaming down through the trees upon his upturned face, rested like a halo of glory upon his bronzed brow. Years afterward, when Oonomoo had been gathered to his fathers, and Lieutenant Canfield was an old man, he asserted that he could hear those words as distinctly, and see that reverential expression as plainly as upon that memorable night.

"You are right, Oonomoo," said the Lieutenant, "and I feel the reproof you have given me. The merciful God is the only one upon whom we can rely, and under Him it is upon your sagacity and skill that I depend."

"Dat so—we go purty soon."

After resting a half-hour, the two moved forward at a much slower rate than before. As the moon ascended, its light was so clear and unobstructed that in the open spots in the woods he could easily have read a printed page. For a night of reconnoitering and action it possessed all the advantages and disadvantages of a clear day. The Huron almost invariably held his peace when walking, and the young soldier did not attempt to disturb him upon the present occasion. From his remarks, he gathered that it was his wish to reach the neighborhood of the Shawnee village in a few hours, and wait until daylight before attempting to accomplish anything. To carry out his intentions, it was necessary, in the first place, to see Hans Vanderbum, and secure his cooperation. Fully aware of his astonishing sleeping qualities, the Huron knew he might as well try to wake a dead man as to secure an interview with him during the night.

An hour later the bank of the Miami was reached. As they stood on the shore and looked down-stream, its clear

surface, glistening brightly in the moonlight, could be seen as plainly as at noonday, until it disappeared from sight in a sweeping bend. From their stand-point it resembled a lake more than a river, the woods, apparently, shutting down in such a manner as to hide it entirely. Not a ripple was heard along the shore, and only once a zephyr hurried over its bosom, crinkling the surface as it passed, and rustling the tops of a few trees along the bank as it went on and was lost in the wood beyond. The great wilderness, on every hand, stretched miles and miles away, until it was lost afar, like a sea of gloom, in the sky. Once a night-bird rushed whirring past, so startlingly close, that the Lieutenant felt a cold chill run over him as its wings fanned his face. It shot off like a bullet directly across the river, and could be distinguished for several minutes, its body resembling a black ball, until it faded out from view. Nothing else disturbed the solemn stillness that held reign. Everything wore the spirit of quietness and repose.

The soldier was the first to speak.

"Isn't this an impressive sight, Oonomoo?"

"Yeh—make think of Great Spirit."

"That is true. You seem to be more than usually solemn in your reflections, my good friend, and I am glad to see it. This calm moonlight night, the clear sky and the deep, silent wood, is enough to make any person thoughtful; but it must have required something more than ordinary to impress you thus."

"Saw Fluellina to-day, Oonomoo's wife."

Lieutenant Canfield was considerably puzzled to understand how this could account for the peculiar frame of the Huron's mind, but he had too much consideration to question him further. It was not until he spoke again, that he gained a clear idea of his meaning.

"Fluellina Christian—got Bible—tell 'bout God—Great Spirit up dere—read out of it—tell Oonomoo 'bout t'ings in it—Oonomoo nebber take anodder scalp."

"A wise determination; such a brave man as you needs no *proof* of your bravery, and that good Being which your Fluellina has told you about will smile upon your noble conduct."

"Know dat—*feel* it," added the Huron, eagerly. He stood a moment longer, and then added, "Time dat we go."

"You spoke of going part way in a canoe, but I do not see any for us."

"Down yonder, by dat rock."

The Indian pointed down the river as he spoke, and, following the direction of his finger, Lieutenant Canfield distinguished a large rock projecting some distance from the shore, but could distinguish nothing of the canoe of which he spoke. Knowing, however, that it must be concealed somewhere in the vicinity, he remarked, as they withdrew again into the wood:

"How is it, Oonomoo, that you have your canoe in every part of the country? You must be the owner of quite a fleet."

"Got two—free—twenty—more'n dat—all ober—in Big Miami—Little Miami—all 'long Ohio—Soty (Sciota)—Hocking—Mussygum (Muskingum)—'way out 'long de Wabash—hid all ober—got 'em eberywhere."

"And I suppose you find occasion to use them all?"

"Use 'em all. Out on Wabash last winter—snow deep—two days in de snow—paddlin' on de ribber—hab 'em hid 'long de shore—sometime lose 'em."

"How did you get them in these different places? Carry them there yourself?"

"Made 'em—knowed want use 'em—made 'em and hid 'em."

The young soldier was about to speak, when the Huron motioned for him to maintain his peace. The conversation had been carried on in so low tones that a third party, a rod distant, could not have overheard their words. Before the Indian spoke, he had glanced around to satisfy himself that it was impossible for a human being to be concealed within that area.

Now, however, he was about to change his position, and the strictest silence was necessary.

The two passed down through the woods, and were just emerging again upon the bank, when the Huron, who was in front, suddenly started back, so quickly and lightly that the Lieutenant did not understand his movement till he saw their relative change of position.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Sh! Shawnees dere."

"Where? on the rock?"

The Huron pointed across the river.

"Dere! on dat shore—may be come over."

The soldier, was much puzzled to know how his companion had made such a sudden discovery, when they were so far away. As there could be no danger of their words being overheard, he made the inquiry.

"See'd water splash," replied Oonomoo. "Got canoe."

"Not yours?"

"No—deir own—come ober here, putty soon."

His words were true. He had hardly spoken, when a noise, as of the dipping of a paddle, was heard, and the next moment a canoe shot out from the bank and headed directly toward them. This being the case, it was impossible to determine the number of savages in it, although there must have been several.

"Would it not be best to move to prevent discovery?" asked the Lieutenant, as he watched the approaching Shawnees with considerable anxiety.

"Won't land here—go 'low us."

A moment later the head of the canoe turned down-stream. It was then seen to be of considerable size. Five savages were seated within it. Oonomoo bent his head, took one earnest glance at them, and then said:

"Ain't Shawnees—Miamis."

"Friends or foes?"

"Jes' as bad—take scalp—kill white people—take your scalp—see you."

Lieutenant Canfield by no means felt at ease at the indifference with which his friend uttered these words. It certainly was no pleasant prospect—that of having these bloodthirsty Miamis for such near neighbors, and he expressed as much to Oonomoo.

"Won't come here—keep quiet—won't git hurt," replied the imperturbable Huron.

Considerably relieved at this assurance, he said no more, but watched the canoe. To his astonishment and dismay it again changed its course, and headed directly toward the rock in front of them. He looked at his companion, but his face was as immovable as a statue's and, determined not to show any childish fear, he maintained his place and said no more.

Reaching the outer end of the rock, the Miamis halted for a moment or two, when they turned down the river again, and landed about a hundred yards below where our two friends were standing. The latter waited for full half an hour, when, seeing and hearing nothing more of them, the Huron resolved to obtain his canoe, and continue their journey down the river.

"But where is it?" asked the soldier, when he announced his intention.

"Fastened out end of rock."

"May be the Miamis discovered it and have destroyed it."

"Dunno—meb' so—didn't take him 'way, dough."

"Is the water very deep?"

"Two—t'ree—twenty feet—swim dere."

As it seemed impossible to run even the most ordinary risk, the Lieutenant felt no apprehension at all when he saw him walk down to the water without his rifle, and wade out and commence swimming. The moon, as we have said, was unusually bright, and not only the dark, ball-like head of the Huron could be seen, floating on the surface, but, when his face was turned in the right direction, his black eyes and aquiline nose and high cheek-bones were plainly distinguishable, while his long, black hair, simply closed in one clasp (years before it was always gathered in the defiant scalp-lock), floated like a veil behind him. The soldier watched him until he disappeared around the corner of the rock, and then patiently awaited his return.

The Huron was a most consummate swimmer, and moved, while in the water, as silently as a fish. More from habit than anything else, as he found himself in the eddy made by the twisting of the river around the upper edge of the stone, he "backed water," and, for a moment, remained perfectly motionless. The moon was in such a quarter of the sky that a long line of shadow was thrown out from the rock, far enough to envelop both Oonomoo and his canoe, lying several yards below him. As he caught sight of the latter, he saw a Miami Indian seated in it, apparently waiting and watching for some one. As quick as lightning the meaning of the singular action of the other canoe flashed upon his mind. By some means which he could only conjecture, the Miamis had gained a knowledge of his movements. Perhaps the discovery of his boat was what first awakened their suspicions. At any rate, they had learned enough to satisfy themselves that a rich prize was within their grasp. Leaving one of their number in the strange canoe, they had passed on down-stream, concealing the absence of their comrade with such skill, that the watchful eye of the Huron failed to detect it. Beyond a doubt they were lingering in the vicinity, ready to come to his assistance at the first signal.

The instructions of the warrior who remained behind were to shoot the savage at the moment of his appearance, and, in case he had a companion, to put out in the stream at once and call to his friends, who would immediately come to him. A brief glance at the situation of the Miami will show that his task was one of no ordinary peril, especially if the returning Indian should have any apprehension of danger. If he chose, the latter could swim out to the rock, and walk over its surface to its outer edge, when he would be directly above the Miami, and could brain him with his tomahawk in an instant. As the physical exertion thus incurred would be greater than the simple act of swimming out to the canoe, it was not likely such a thing would take place, unless, as we have said, the suspicions of the approaching savage be aroused. The probability was that the latter would take precisely the same course that we have seen the Huron take, that is, if he believed the coast clear; but as there was no certainty of this, the Miami was compelled to keep watch both up-stream and down-stream, and it was thus it happened that his back was turned to Oonomoo at the very moment he came around the edge of the rock.

The different methods by which the Miami could be disposed of occurred to the Huron with electric quickness. To the first—that of passing over the rock and tomahawking him, there was one objection so important as to make it a fatal one. In the bright moonlight, he would offer too fine a target to the other Miamis concealed along the bank. Without the responsibility of his white friend's safety, Oonomoo felt it would be hardly short of suicide, for it would be affording his deadliest enemies the opportunity of capturing or killing him as they preferred. He had but the choice of two plans: that of pressing forward and engaging the Miami, or of instantly returning to the shore, and proceeding to the Shawnee village by land. He chose the former.

Everything depended now upon the quickness of the Huron's movements. The Miami being compelled to watch both directions, it was certain he would turn his head in a moment, when, if Oonomoo was still in the water, his fate would be pretty certain. Accordingly he shot rapidly forward, and was so close when he halted, that, do his utmost, he could not prevent his head from striking the prow of the canoe. Slight as was the shock, it did not escape the notice of the Miami, who instantly turned his head, and approaching the prow, leaned over and looked in the water.

The Huron had been expecting this movement, and to guard against its consequences, sunk quietly beneath the surface, and allowed the current to carry him just the length of the canoe, when he again rose, with his head beneath its stem. Resting here a moment, with his nose and eyes just in sight, he commenced drifting down-stream, inch by inch, until he caught a glimpse of the Miami's head over the edge of the canoe when he returned to his former position under the stern and gathered his energies for the struggle.

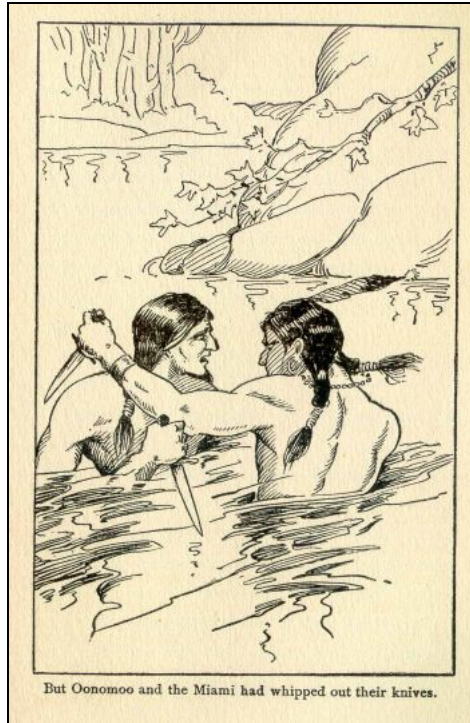
Sustaining himself by his feet alone, he reached his hands upward, grasped the canoe in such a manner that it was firmly held on each side. Holding it thus only long enough to make his hold sure, he pressed the stern quickly downward, and then by a sudden wrench threw the Miami upon his back in the water. Letting go his hold, the Huron made a dash at him, and closing in the deadly embrace, the two went down—down—down—till their feet struck the soft bottom, when they shot up again like two corks.

Imminent as was the peril of Oonomoo, his greatest fear was that their struggles would carry them below the rock, where the moonlight would discover them to the Miamis on the bank. With a skill as wonderful as it was rare even among his own people, he *regulated* his movements while submerged, in such a manner that they operated to carry both combatants *up*-stream, had there been no current, so that when they came to the surface, it was very nearly in the same spot that they had gone down.

But Oonomoo and the Miami had whipped out their knives, and they raised them aloft at the same instant. But neither descended. They were still in the air, when the one spoke the simple word. "Heigon!" and the other simultaneously with him uttered the name of "Oonomoo," and the hands of both dropped beside them. Without speaking, the Miami grasped the edge of the rock and clambered to the surface, and beckoned for the Huron to follow; but the latter held back, and whispered, in the tongue of his companion:

"Miamis on shore wait to make Oonomoo a prisoner."

"Oonomoo is the friend of Heigon, and the Miamis will not injure him."



[Illustration: But Oonomoo and the Miami had whipped out their knives.]

The Huron hesitated no longer, but the next moment stood beside the Miami on the broad mass of stone. Heigon gave a short peculiar whoop, which was instantly followed by the appearance of the other canoe with its four inmates, who impelled it forward with great rapidity, and in almost a twinkling were also upon the rock. Each held a glittering knife in hand, and they gazed upon their victim with exulting eyes, who stood firm, unmoved, and returned their glances with as proud and defiant an air as a king would have looked upon the vassals beneath him. They were about to proceed to violence, when Heigon simply said: "He is my friend." Instantly every knife was sheathed, and the gloating expression of the Miamis changed to one of interest and pleasure. They gathered more closely around the Huron, and looked to their companion for some further explanation.

"When the snow was upon the ground," said he, "Heigon was hunting, and he became weak and feeble, like an old man, or the child that cannot walk.[1] The snow came down till it covered the rocks like this, and Heigon grew weaker and feebler until he could walk no further, and lay down in the snow to die. When he was covered over, and the Great Spirit was about to take him to himself, another Indian came that way. He was Heigon's enemy, but he lifted him to his feet and brushed the snow from his face and limbs and poured his fire-water down his throat. He dug the snow away until he came to the dry leaves, and then he kindled a fire to warm Heigon by. He stayed by him all night, and in the morning Heigon was strong and a man again. When he went away, he asked the Indian his name. It was Oonomoo, the Huron. He stands by us, and is now in our power."

The eyes of the Miamis fairly sparkled as they listened to this narration of their comrade, and they looked upon the far-famed Huron with feelings only of friendship and admiration. He had been considered for years as one of the deadliest enemies of the Miamis, and his capture or death by them would have been an exploit that would have descended through tradition to the last remnant of their people. Fully sensible of this, this same Huron had come upon one of their most distinguished warriors when he was as helpless as an infant, and could have been scalped by a mere child. But the magnanimous savage had acted the part of a good Samaritan, feeding and warming him and sending him on his way in the morning, refreshed and strengthened. Such a deed as this could never be forgotten, either by the recipient or those of his tribe to whom it became known.

During the narrative the Huron stood with arms folded, and as insensible to the praises of Heigon as if he had not uttered a syllable since the advent of his companions. He who appeared to be the leading warrior now asked:

"Whither does my brother Huron wish to go?"

"To the Shawnee village on the shore of the Miami."

"We journey thither, and will take our brother with us."

Oonomoo goes as the enemy of the Shawnees. He goes to save a pale-faced maiden who has fallen into their hands. My Miami brothers go as the friends of the Shawnees."

"They go as the friends of Oonomoo, who saved one of their warriors, and they will carry him in their canoe."

"The feet of Oonomoo are like the deer's, and his eyes are as the eagle's. He can see his path at night in the wood, and can journey from the rising until the setting sun without becoming weary."

"We know our brother is brave and fleet of foot. His Miami friends will carry him far upon his journey, and when he wishes to go through the woods, they will leave him upon the shore."

Oonomoo could not decline this kind offer. Simply to show in a small degree their friendship for him, the Miamis insisted upon carrying him in their canoe as far as he wished, landing him upon the bank whenever it was his desire that they should do so. The Miamis being allies of the Shawnees, and on their way to join one of their war-parties, they could not (even on account of their peculiar relations with the Huron) act as their enemies in any way; consequently the Huron did not expect or ask their assistance. But while they were prevented from aiding him in the least, in his attempt to rescue the captive, the claims which he had upon their gratitude were such, that he well knew they would carefully avoid throwing any obstacle in his way, and would act as neutrals throughout the affair, believing, however, that it was not inconsistent with such a profession to carry him even in sight of the Shawnee village itself. Beyond that it would be as if these five Miamis were a thousand miles distant.

All this time, it may well be supposed, that Lieutenant Canfield was no uninterested spectator of the interview between his Huron friend and the Miamis. When they made their appearance upon the rock, he believed that Oonomoo had been captured. He was about to seek his own safety in flight, but he was struck by the apparently good feeling of the conference. Their words being in the Miami tongue, he could not distinguish their meaning, but from their sound, judged them to be friendly in their nature. Still, there could be no certainty, and he was in a torment of doubt, when he was startled by hearing the Huron call his name. At first he determined not to answer, thinking his friend had been compelled to betray him by his captors. A moment's reflection, however, convinced him that such could not be the case.

"Canfiel! Canfiel!"

"What do you want, Oonomoo?"

"Go down bank—wait for us—Miami won't hurt."

The young soldier did as he requested, and the next moment saw the two canoes put out from the rock. In the first were the four Miamis, and in the second Oonomoo and Heigon, the latter using the paddle. They touched a point on the shore about a hundred yards down-stream, almost at the same moment that it was reached by the Lieutenant.

"How-de-do, brudder?" asked the foremost, extending his hand. The soldier exchanged similar greetings with the others, when at a signal the five seated themselves upon the ground, and he followed suit. A pipe, the "calumet of peace," was produced and passed from mouth to mouth, each one smoking slowly and solemnly a few whiffs.

This tedious ceremony occupied fully a half-hour, during which it was nearly impossible for the young Lieutenant to conceal his impatience. It seemed to him nothing but a sheer waste of time, and he wondered how Oonomoo could take it so composedly. At length the last smoker had taken what he evidently believed the proper number of whiffs, and they arose and embarked again in their canoes.

In the boat, which really belonged to the Huron, were seated himself, Lieutenant Canfield, and Heigon, who insisted upon using the paddle himself. For a moment they glided along under the shadow of the wooded bank, and

then, coming out on the clear, moonlit surface of the river, they shot downstream like swallows upon the wing.

It was not quite ten miles to the Shawnee town, and, as it was now in the neighborhood of midnight, their destination would be easily reached in time.

All went well for some four or five miles, when an exclamation from the canoe in advance attracted the attention of Oonomoo and the soldier.

"What is it?" inquired the latter.

"Ugh! nudder canoe comin'—Shawnees."

Such proved to be the case. A large war-canoe, containing over a score of painted warriors, was coming up the river, nearly in the center of the stream, while the Miamis were nearer the right bank. When nearly opposite each other, the war-canoe paused while that which contained the four Miamis went over to it, somewhat after the manner that two friendly ships come to anchor in the midst of the ocean, and exchange congratulations and news.

During the interview, Heigon prudently kept at a safe distance, but from the gesticulations and words of the Shawnees it was evident they were making inquiries in regard to the inmates of his boat. The replies proved satisfactory, for a moment later, the canoes separated, and each party proceeded on his way. Little did the Shawnees dream that the very foe for whom they were searching—he whose scalp was worth that of a hundred warriors, whose death they would have nearly given their own life to secure—little did they dream, we say, that this very man was within a few rods of them—so close that he recognized the features of every one of their number!

Several miles further, and Oonomoo spoke to Heigon. They were now in the vicinity of the Shawnee village, and he wished to land. Heigon instantly turned the prow of his canoe toward shore, and the others, understanding the cause, followed. A moment later, Lieutenant Canfield and the Huron stood upon *terra firma*. They were compelled again to shake hands all around with their curiously-made friends, when they separated—the latter to go down the river as brothers to the warlike Shawnees, and the former to go to the same destination as their deadly enemies!

[1] Meaning he became sick from some cause or other.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAN FOR THE RESCUE.

Oft did he stoop a listening ear,
Sweep round an anxious eye,
No bark or ax-blow could he hear,
No human trace descry.
His sinuous path, by blazes, wound
Among trunks grouped in myriads round;
Through naked boughs, between
Whose tangled architecture fraught
With many a shape grotesquely wrought,
The hemlock's spire was seen.—A. B. STREET.

By this time, daylight was at hand. A thin mist, rising from the river, was passing off through the woods; for the half-hour preceding the appearance of the sun, the darkness was more palpable than it had been at any time through the night. The air, too, had a disagreeable chilliness in it, which, however little it affected the Huron, made the soldier, for the time being, exceedingly uncomfortable and impatient for the full light of day.

The Shawnee village was about a mile distant, on the same bank of the stream with that upon which our friends found themselves. As there was not the least probability of Hans Vanderbum being astir for several hours yet, they proceeded at a moderate walk through the wood. One of the peculiar effects of this chilly morning air was to keep Lieutenant Canfield constantly gaping; his movements were so languid and his mind listless even to antipathy for conversation. He maintained his place in silence beside Oonomoo. The Indian was as watchful and keen as ever.

As the young Lieutenant was yawning, and gazing around listlessly, he caught a glimpse of some body, as it threw itself prostrate behind a clump of bushes. He looked at the Huron and was startled to observe upon his countenance no indication of having noticed this singular occurrence.

"Oonomoo," he whispered, placing his hand upon his arm, "there's a person behind the bush, and we are in danger. I saw him this very minute."

"Me see'd 'em," said the Indian, walking straight toward the spot where he was concealed.

This was too much for the young man. When he reflected that, in all probability a rifle-barrel was leveled through those bushes, ready to do its deadly work, he was not ashamed to halt and allow the Huron to proceed alone. But, no fear seemed to enter the head of the Indian. He strode straight forward, as if he had discovered something which he was about to pick, and, reaching the bushes, he parted and stepped among them. The astonished soldier saw him stoop and lift some dark object, and then throw it down upon the ground again.

Lieutenant Canfield now came forward. Great was his amazement to recognize, in this dark object, the negro, Cato! He lay upon his face, as lax and motionless as a piece of inanimate matter.

"What is the matter with him?" asked the soldier. "Is he dead?"

"Scart near to def—make b'lieve dead."

Such undoubtedly was the case. The negro, frightened at the appearance of two strangers, the foremost of whom he recognized as an Indian, had prostrated himself behind the bushes and feigned death in the hope that they would pass him by unnoticed. The Lieutenant, now that they were so close to the Shawnees, where so much caution and skill were required, felt provoked to see the negro, and had little patience with his fooleries.

"Get up, Cato," said he, rolling him over with his foot. "You are not hurt, and we don't want to see any of your nonsense."

One of the negro's eyes partially opened, and then he commenced yawning, stretching and shoving his feet over the leaves, as though he was just awaking.

"Hebens, golly! but dis nigger is sleepy," said he. "Hello! dat you, Oonomoo? And bress my soul, if dar ain't Massa Canfield," he added, rising to his feet.

"How came you here?" asked Canfield.

"Come here my pussonal self—walked and runn'd most ob de way."

"But, we sent you to the settlement. Why did you not go?"

"Bress your soul, Massa Canfield, I'll bet dar's ten fousand million Injines in de wood, atween us and de settlement. I tried to butt my way trough dem, but dar was a few too many, and I had to gub it up."

"How came you to wander so far out of your way as to get here?"

"Dunno; t'ought I'd take a near cut home, and s'pose I got here widout knowing anyt'ing about it."

"Well, Oonomoo, what's to be done with him?"

"Take him 'long—kill him if don't do what want to."

"You understand, Cato? We don't want you with us, but, there seems no help for it now; so we shall have to take you. You must follow in our steps, and in no case make any outcry."

The negro promised obedience, and, taking his position behind, they continued their journey, the Huron leading the way. He proceeded some distance until he reached a dense portion of the wood, when he halted and turned around.

"Plenty time—sleep some."

These were pleasant words to the Lieutenant, who, in spite of his impatience, felt the need of sleep and rest before proceeding further. All stretched themselves upon the ground, where, in a few minutes, they were wrapped in slumber. The negro, Cato, lay some distance from the other two, and was the first to awake. Carefully raising his head and discovering that the dreaded Huron was still unconscious, he silently arose to his feet, and, retreating some distance with great care and caution, he suddenly turned and ran at the top of his speed. His motive for so doing will soon appear.

While our two friends are thus preparing themselves for the perilous duty before them, we will return to our old acquaintance, Hans Vanderbum, and his fair charge, in whom the reader, doubtless, feels a lively interest.

* * * * *

It will be remembered that Miss Prescott was consigned to the care of the amiable Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, wife of Hans Vanderbum. The reasons for this were several. In the first place, the Shawnees were actuated in a small degree by their desire to lessen the sufferings of their captive. This squaw had learned enough of the English language from her husband to hold almost an intelligible conversation in it; and; as quite an acquaintance had already been established between him and the maiden, she would certainly feel more at home in their company than among the others, who could not speak a word of her tongue. What might be done with Miss Prescott in case she remained among the Shawnees for several years, of course it would be impossible to say; but it was certain they meditated no violence for the present, only wishing to hold her simply as a prisoner. Was there danger of her escape they would not have hesitated to kill her, it being considered one of the greatest reproaches that can be cast in a Shawnee face to accuse him of having lost a prisoner.

Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock was too thoroughly loyal for her to be suspected of any disposition to aid the prisoner in escape; and whatever might be the wishes of Hans Vanderbum, he was too stupid and lazy to be taken into account.

Miss Prescott, accordingly, was installed in their lodge, where the first day was passed without anything of note occurring, save the discovery, on her part, of the total hopelessness of escape, without the assistance of friends. There was but one entrance to the lodge, of barely sufficient width to afford the passage of Hans Vanderbum's body, and the sides of the wigwam were too strong and firm for her to think either of piercing or breaking them. Added to this, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock at night laid herself directly before this entrance, compelling Hans Vanderbum to lie down beside her, so that their united width was some four or five feet—rather too long a step to be taken by the girl without danger of awaking her jailers. When we add that Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock's slumbers were so light that the least noise awakened her, and that Miss Prescott never lay down to sleep without having her ankles bound together, no more need be said to convince the reader that the ingenuity of her captors could not have made her situation more secure. Nevertheless, Hans Vanderbum managed to convey enough to her to keep hope alive in her breast, and to convince her that it would not be long before some enterprise for her freedom would be attempted by her friends.

On the second morning of her captivity, Hans Vanderbum awoke at an unusually early hour, and the first thought that entered his mind was that he had an appointment with Oonomoo, the Huron; for it is a fact, to which all will bear witness, that, by fixing our thoughts upon any particular time in the night, with a determined intensity, we are sure to awaken at that moment. Thus it was that he arose before his spouse; but his step awakened her.

"What's the matter, Hans? Are you sick?" she asked, with considerable solicitude.

"No, my dear, good Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, I feels so goot as, ever, but I t'inks te mornin' air does me goot, so I goes out to got a little."

No objection being interposed, he sauntered carelessly forth, taking a direction that would lead him to the spot where he had held the interview with the Huron upon the previous day. He walked slowly, for it lacked considerable of the hour which had been fixed upon for the meeting, and, knowing the mathematical exactitude with which his friend kept his appointments, he had no desire to reach the spot in advance.

"I doeshn't wish to hurry, so I t'inks I will rest myself here, and den when——"

Hans was prevented any further utterance, by some heavy body striking his shoulders with such force that he was thrown forward upon his face, and his hat smashed over his eyes.

"Mine Gott! vot made tat tree fall on me?" he exclaimed, endeavoring to crawl from beneath what he supposed to be the trunk of an immense oak which he had noticed towering above him. This belief was further strengthened by a glimpse which he caught of a heavy branch upon the ground.

"Hebens, golly! dat you, ole swill-barrel?" greeted his ears; and he picked his hat and himself up at the same time, to see the negro, Cato, lying on the ground, with his heels high up in the air.

"Dunder and blixen! who are you?" inquired Hans, more astonished than ever. "Did you drop down out te clouds?"

"Yah! yah! yah! what makes you fink so, old hogsit, eh? No, sir-ee! I's Mr. Cato, a nigger gentleman of Mr. Capting Prescott."

The large eyes of the Dutchman grew larger as he proceeded. "Vot makes you falls on mine head, eh?"

"I's up in de tree a-takin' ob obserwashuns, when jis' as you got down hyar, de limb broke, and down I comes. Much obleege fur yer bein' so kind fur to stand under and breaks my fall."

"And breaks mine own neck, too, eh?"

"Who might be you wid your big bread-basket?" inquired Cato, still lying upon his back and kicking up his heels.

"Me? I's Hans Vanderbum, dat pelongs to Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock."

Cato grew sober in an instant. He had heard Lieutenant Canfield mention this man's name in conversation with the Huron, and suspected at once that he was to perform a part in the day's work.

"You're Hans Vanderbum, eh? I've heerd Massa Canfield and Mister Oonymoo speak of you."

"Yaw, I'm him. Where am dey?"

"Ain't fur off. I lef'em sleepin'; and come out for to see whedder dar war any Injines crawlin' round in de woods, and I didn't see none but you, and you ain't an Injine."

The appointed hour for the meeting between Hans Vanderbum and Oonomoo having arrived, the Dutchman added:

"He ish to meet me 'bout dis time or leetles sooner, and, so we both goes togedder mit each oder, so dat we won't bees alone."

"All right; go ahead, Mr. Hansderbumvan; I'm behind you," said Cato, taking his favorite position in the rear.

Several hundred yards further and Hans recognized the wished-for spot. He had hardly reached it, when a light step was heard, and the next moment Lieutenant Canfield and the Huron stood in his presence.

"Brudder comes in good time," said the latter, extending his hand.

"Yaw; Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock showed me de way to do dat," replied Hans, shaking hands with the young Lieutenant also. The latter expressed some surprise at seeing Cato present, saying that he had congratulated himself upon being well rid of him. The negro explained his departure upon the grounds of his extreme solicitude for the safety of his friends. The conversation between Hans and the Huron was now carried on in the Shawnee tongue.

"How does matters progress with my brother?"

"Very good; the gal is in my wigwam."

"What does she there?"

"Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock has charge of her."

"That is good."

"I don't know about that, Oonomoo; I think it couldn't be much worse; for Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock has got a bad temper, if she is the same shape all the way down."

"It is good, my brother. We will have the captive when the sun comes up again in the sky."

"How are you going to get her?"

"Give Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock this drug," said the Huron, handing him a dark, waxy substance.

"Dunder! ish it pizen?" asked Hans, in English. "Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock will kill me deat if I pizen her."

"It will not kill her; it will only put her in a sleep from which she will awake after a few hours."

"Quanonshet and Madokawandock will have to take it too, for they don't sleep any more than she does."

"There is enough for all. To-day mix this with that which the squaw and Quanonshet and Madokawandock shall eat, and when it grows dark they will sleep and not awaken till the morrow's sun."

"And what of the gal?"

"When the moon rises above that tree-top yonder, cut the bonds that bind her, and lead her through the woods to this place. Here Oonomoo will take her and conduct her to her friends in the settlement."

From this point the Indian dialect was dropped for intelligible English.

"And vot will become of me?" asked Hans Vanderbum, in considerable alarm. "When Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock wakes up and finds te gal gone, she will t'inks I done it, and den—den—den—" The awful expression of his countenance spoke more eloquently than any words, of the consequences of such a discovery and suspicion upon the part of his spouse.

"Take some self when git back—go to sleep—squaw wake up first."

Hans' eyes sparkled as he took in the beauty of the scheme prepared by the Huron. The arrangement was now explained to Lieutenant Canfield, who could but admire the sagacity and foresight of his Indian friend, that seemed to understand and provide against every emergency. It was further explained to Hans that he was to manage to give the drug to his wife and children several hours before sunset, as its effects would not be perceptible for fully four hours, and that he was to take a small quantity himself about dusk, to avert the consequences of his philanthropy. Lieutenant Canfield admonished him to be cautious in his movements, and to take especial pains with his charge after leaving his lodge, in order to avoid discovery from the sleepless Shawnees. The situation of Hans' wigwam was fortunate indeed, as he ran little risk of discovery if he used ordinary discretion after leaving it.

Everything being arranged, Hans Vanderbum took his departure, and Oonomoo, the soldier and negro commenced the long, weary hours of waiting.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPLOIT OF HANS VANDERBUM.

God forgive me,
(Marry and amen!) how sound is she asleep!—ROMEO AND JULIET.

Hans Vanderbum loitered on his way back to the village, to avoid giving the impression to any who might chance to see him that there was anything unusual upon his mind. The precious substance handed to him by the Huron—a sort of gum—he wrapped in a leaf and stowed away in his bosom, guarding it with the most jealous care. Upon it depended his hopes for the success of his cherished scheme.

After several hours' intense thought, he decided upon his programme of action. He would go fishing about the middle of the forenoon, giving his wife to understand that he would be back with what he had caught in time for dinner, so that she would rely upon him for that meal; but, instead of doing so, he would keep out of sight until toward night, by which time he rightly concluded his spouse and children would be so ravenously hungry that they would devour the fish without noticing any peculiar taste about them.

It was also necessary to place Miss Prescott on her guard against eating them, as it would seriously inconvenience him if she should fall into a deadly stupor at the very time when she would most need her senses. All this was not definitively provided for until a long time after his return to his wigwam.

The more fully to carry out his plans, Hans feigned sickness shortly after his return, so that Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, who really had a sort of affection for him, allowed him to remain inside, while she busied herself with the corn-planting. This was the very opportunity for which Hans longed, and he lost no time in improving it.

"I've see'd Oonomoo," said he, by way of introduction.

"Have you, indeed?" and the countenance of Miss Prescott became radiant with hope.

"Yaw; see'd somebody else, too."

The deep crimson that suffused the beautiful captive's face, even to the very temples, showed the stolid Dutchman that it was not necessary for him to mention the other person's name.

"Yaw; see'd him, too."

"And what did he say?"

"Didn't say much, only grin and laughed. De dunderin' nigger liked to kill me."

Miss Prescott was dumbfounded to hear her lover spoken of in this manner.

"Why, what do you mean, my friend? Why do you speak of him in that manner?"

"He jumped down out of a tree on top of mine head, and nearly mashed it down lower dan my shoulders. Den he rolled round, kicked up his heels and laughed at me."

"Of whom are you speaking? Lieutenant Can—"

"A big nigger dat called himself Cato."

"Oh, I thought—" and the embarrassed girl covered her face to hide her confusion and disappointment.

"See'd him too," said Hans, pleasantly.

"Who?"

"Lieutenant Canfield," he whispered.

"Where is he? what did he say? when shall I see him? Oh! do not keep me in suspense."

"De Huron Injin, him and anoder nigger am out in de woods waitin' for de night to come, when I'm goin' for to take you out to dem."

"But Keeway—your wife?"

"Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock? Yaw, she mine frow; been married six—seven years. Nice name dat. Know what Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock means?"

"No, I have never heard," replied Miss Prescott, thinking it best to humor the whims of her friend.

"It means de 'Lily dat am de Same Shape all de Way Down,' which am her. What you ax?"

"But will your Lily allow me to depart?"

"Dat am what I'm going for to tell you. I'm going fishing purty soon, and won't be back till de arternoon. When I come back we'll have fish for supper. De Huron Injin give me something for to put in de fish, dat will put mine frow and de little ones to sleep, so dat dey won't wake up when we go out de wigwam."

"And I suppose you do not wish me to eat of them?"

"No, for you'd get to sleep too, den I shall have to carry you."

"There is no danger of my having much appetite after what you have told me."

"Den you won't forget. Remembers dat—I t'inks I feels better."

Hans Vanderbum caught a glimpse of his amiable wife in the door of his lodge at this moment, which was the cause of the sudden change in his conversation. Suiting his action to his words, he arose and said:

"I t'inks I feels better, Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, and guesses I go fishing."

"I guess you might as well."

"Mine dear frow, shust gits te line and bait, while I lights mine pipe."

His wife complied, and a few minutes later Hans Vanderbum sallied forth fully equipped for duty. He did not forget to tell his partner several times not to prepare dinner until his return, and she also promised this, from some cause or other, she being in a far better humor than usual.

The demon of mischief seemed to possess Quanonshet and Madokawandock that day. In making his way to the "fishing-grounds," he was tripped so often that he began to wonder what could possibly be the reason for it. He stooped down to examine his path.

"Dat ish funny de way dat grass grows. Dat bunch on dat side has growed over and met dat bunch on de oder side, and den dey've growed togedder in one big knot, and den I catches mine foot under and tumbles down. Dat ish funny for te grass to grow dat way."

The innocent man did not once suspect that his boys had anything to do with this peculiar growth of the grass, although, had he looked behind him, he would have seen their dirty, grinning faces as they rolled upon the grass in ecstasies at his perplexity.

After several more tumbles, Hans Vanderbum reached his favorite log, and crawled out like a huge turtle to the further extremity. The exciting adventure which was before him occupied his thoughts so constantly that the mischievous propensities of his children never once entered his head, until the log suddenly snapped off at its trunk, and left him struggling in the water. Reaching the land with considerable difficulty after this second mishap, he concluded that Quanonshet and Madokawandock were still living, and had lately visited that neighborhood.

By noon, he had collected a goodly quantity of fish, and fearful that if he delayed his return much longer, his wife would come in search of him, he proceeded some distance down the bank, and concealed himself beneath a large clump of bushes, continuing his piscatorial labors as heretofore. His precaution proved timely and prudent, for he had hardly ensconced himself in his new position, when he caught a glimpse of Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock through the branches, and shrunk further out of sight. From his secure hiding-place, the valorous husband watched her proceedings. He saw her brow "throned with thunder," as she strode hastily forward, the blank, dismayed expression, as she witnessed the destruction of his favorite perch, the anxious haste with which she examined the shore to discover whether he had emerged or not, the relief that lit up her countenance as she learned the truth, and, at length, the first expression, so boding and potent in its meaning, that he lay down on the ground and dare not look at her again. When he cautiously raised his head, she had disappeared, and with a sigh of relief, he resumed his line.

The slow, weary hours wore on, and finally the sun was half-way down the horizon. Hans Vanderbum's heart gave a big throb as he started on his return to the village. In spite of the exciting drama that was now commencing, and in which he was to play such a prominent part, the most vivid picture that presented itself to him was his irate wife, waiting at the wigwam to pounce upon him, and he could not force the dire consequences of his temerity from his mind.

Slowly and tremblingly he approached the lodge, but saw none of its inmates. The profound silence filled him with an ominous misgiving. He paused and listened. Not a breath was audible. He stepped softly forward and cautiously peered in. He saw Miss Prescott apparently asleep in one corner, and his wife trimming the fire. Hans hesitated a moment, and no pen can describe or artist depict the shivering horror with which he stepped within the lodge. His heart beat like a trip-hammer, and when his wife lifted her dark eyes upon him, he nearly fainted from excess of terror. Great was his amazement, therefore, when, instead of rebukes and blows, she came smilingly forward and asked:

"Has my husband been sick?"

That question explained everything. Believing him to be sick, her feelings were not of wrath, but of solicitude. Hans wiped the perspiration from his forehead and, hardly conscious of what he was doing, replied:

"B'lieves I didn't feel very much well—kinder empty in de stomach as dough I'd like to have dinner."

"You shall have it at once."

Now, to insure the success of Hans Vanderbum's plans, it was necessary that he should cook the fish, in order that he might find opportunity to mix the gum with it; but the wife, out of pure kindness refused to allow this. He was taken all aback at this unfortunate slip in his programme. By resorting again to intense thought, he hit upon an ingenious plan to outwit her, even at this disadvantage. The children needed no commands to remain out doors.

The food was nicely cooking, when Hans started up as if alarmed.

"What's the matter?" inquired his wife.

"I t'tinks I hears some noise outside. Hadn't you better goes out, my dear, good, kind Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, and see vot it is?"

The obliging woman instantly darted forward, and Hans proceeded to his task with such trembling eagerness that there was danger of its failure. First flattening the gum between his thumb and finger, he dropped it upon one of the fish, where it instantly dissolved like butter. He was busy stirring this, when his partner entered.

"Good man," said she; "kind to Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock."

Hans Vanderbum felt as if he were the greatest monster upon earth thus to deceive his trusting wife, and there was a perceptible tremor in his voice, as he replied:

"I will tends to de fish."

He saw that the gum had united thoroughly with the food, and then with a flushed face, he resigned his place to his wife. The dinner, or more properly the supper, was soon completed, when Hans concluded that he was too unwell to eat anything. The squaw was somewhat surprised when Miss Prescott, after being awakened from a feigned sleep, turned her head away from the tempting food in disgust.

"You sick too?" she asked.

"No—no—no," shutting her eyes and turning her back upon her.

"I wouldn't coax her to eat, my good, dear frow," said Hans. "Let de little Dutchmen eat it; dey're hungry enough."

In answer to a shrill call, Quanonshet and Madokawandock came tumbling in, and fell upon the food like a couple of wolves. After two or three mouthfuls they stopped and smacked their lips as if there was something peculiar in the taste of their fish, and Hans' heart thumped as he saw the mother do the same. To forestall any inquiries, he remarked that he had caught the fish in another portion of the stream, and perhaps they might taste bitter, but he guessed "dey was all right." This satisfied them, and in a few minutes more there was nothing left but a few bones. Thus far all went well.

As the sun descended in the western sky, and the magnificent American twilight gathered upon the forest and river, the excited Hans Vanderbum could scarcely conceal his impatience and anxiety. Never before, since his marriage, had he been in such a predicament, and never again, he hoped, would he feel the misery that was now torturing him. Time always passes wearily to the watcher. It seemed an age to him ere the sun slipped down behind the wilderness out of sight. At length, however, the dusk of early evening enveloped the lodge, and shortly after Quanonshet and Madokawandock came in, and dropping down fell almost immediately asleep.

To expedite matters, Hans Vanderbum feigned slumber, but he kept one eye upon the movements of his wife. He marked her listless, absent air, and he could scarcely conceal his joy when she stretched herself in front of the door, without speaking or ordering him to lie beside her, as was her usual custom. Five minutes later, she was as unconscious as though she were never to wake again. To make "assurance doubly sure," he waited full half an hour without moving. Then he raised his head, and called in a whisper to Miss Prescott:

"I say dere."

"Well! what is it?" she responded, rising.

"You ishn't ashleep bees you?"

"No, I am ready."

"Well, I guesses it bees purty near times."

"Are they all sound asleep—your Lily and children?"

"Yaw, dey's won't wake if you pound 'em."

"Would it not be best to take a look outside and see whether there is any danger of our being discovered?"

"Yaw—I finks so."

In passing out, Hans trod upon the outstretched arm of his wife, but her sleep was so sound that she did not awaken. The situation of the lodge was such that all the Shawnees visible were upon one side of it, so that the chances of discovery were comparatively slight, if the least precaution was used. Appearing at the entrance of the

wigwam, without entering, he motioned for the captive to come out. She arose, stepping cautiously and carefully, and when she found herself in the open air once more, with the cool night-wind blowing upon her fevered cheek, she almost fainted from excessive emotion.

"Come, now, walks right behind me, and if you sees—dunder and blixen! dere comes an Injin!"

The girl had caught a glimpse of two shadowy figures, and without thought, she did the wisest possible thing for her to do under the circumstances. Springing back within the lodge, she reseated herself beyond the form of her prostrate sentinel, and waited for them to pass.

"How do you do, brother?" asked one of them, in the Shawnee tongue, as they halted. "How gets along our prisoner?"

"Pretty good; she is in de lodge."

"She is safe in the hands of Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, but I will look in." The savage stepped to the entrance and merely glanced inside. The darkness was so great that he saw nothing but the figure of the squaw before him, and he and his companion passed on. The captive waited until she was sure they were beyond sight and hearing, and then she stepped forth again.

"Let us hurry," said she, eagerly. "There may be others near."

"Yaw, but don't push me over on mine nose."

"Oh! if she awakes, or we are seen!"

"She won't do dat. She shleeps till morning, and bimeby I shleeps too, and won't wake up afore she does."

"Be careful, be careful, my good friend, and do not linger so," said the girl, nearly beside herself with excitement, "and let us stop talking."

"Yaw, I bees careful! I ain't talking. It bees you all de time dat is making de noise. I knows better dan for to make noise, when dey might hear. Doesn't you fink I does?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"I'm glad dat you t'inks so. I knowed a gal once; she was a good 'eal like you; Annie Stanton was her name; she had a feller dat was a good 'eal like de Lieutenant, and dey didn't t'ink I knowed much, but dey found dey was mistaken. Don't you b'lieve dey did?"

"Yes, yes—but you are talking all the while."

"Dat ish so—I doesn't talk no more."

Finally, the impression reached the brain of Hans Vanderbum that he was making rather more noise than was prudent, and he resolutely sealed his lips—so resolutely that, being compelled to breathe through his nostrils, Miss Prescott feared that the noise thus made was more dangerous than had been his indulgence in conversation. She endeavored to warn him, but he firmly refused to hear, waddling ahead, his huge form stumbling and lumbering forward like a young elephant just learning to walk. The moon being directly before them, his massive shoulders were clearly outlined against the sky, when the woods were open enough to permit an unobstructed entrance to its light. A dozen yards from the wigwam, and the two were clear of the Shawnee village, their only danger being from any wandering Indian whom they might chance to meet. They had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile, when the captive's heart nearly stopped beating as she saw the hand of a savage outlined against the sky. As she observed that he was steadily approaching, she halted and was debating whether or not to dart off in the woods, and depend upon herself for safety, when Hans spoke:

"Dat you, Oonomoo?"

"Yeh—'tis me." The quick eye of the Huron had caught a glimpse of the girl behind the Dutchman, and he now came up and addressed her:

"Is my friend 'fraid?"

"No, no; thank Heaven! is that you, my good, kind Oonomoo?" asked the girl, reeling forward, until sustained by the gentle grasp of the Indian.

"Yeh—me take care of you. Here somebody else—t'ink he know how better—guess like him, too." She caught a glimpse of another form as the savage spoke in his jesting manner. She needed nothing more to assure her of its identity. Lieutenant Canfield came forward, and placing one arm around her waist, and drawing her fervently to him, he said:

"Oh! my *dear* Mary, I am so glad to see you again. Are you unharmed?"

"Not a hair of my head has been injured. And how is my dear father and mother and sister Helen?"

"Your father was perfectly well and in good spirits when I left him a few days since, and as he knows nothing of this calamity, there is no reason for believing it is any different with him. Your mother and sister I think know nothing of this, although I fear their apprehensions must be excited."

"I trust I shall soon be with them, and oh! I pray——"

"I's gettin' shleepy," suddenly exclaimed Hans Vanderbum.

"Take gum?"

"Yaw; took much as Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock."

"Git sleep soon—go back—don't wake up."

"Yaw, I will." And before any one could speak, Hans was lumbering through the bushes and woods on his way back to his lodge, fearful that if he delayed he would fall asleep. It was the wish of Lieutenant Canfield to thank him for his kindness to his betrothed, and the latter, very grateful for his honest friendship, intended to assure him of it, but his hasty exit prevented.

The gum of which Hans Vanderbum had partaken, began soon to have a perceptible effect. He stumbled forward against the bushes and trees, blinking and careless of what he did, until he reached the door of his wigwam. Here he summoned all his energies, and, stepping carefully over his wife, lay down beside her, and almost immediately was asleep.

As might be expected, the wife was the first to awaken. So profound had been her sleep that the forenoon of the next day was fully half gone before she opened her eyes, and then it required a few minutes to regain entire possession of her faculties. Looking around, she saw the inanimate forms of her children, and close beside her the unconscious Hans Vanderbum, and, horror of horrors, the captive was gone! She was now thoroughly awakened. With a shrill scream she sprang to her feet. Giving her husband several violent kicks, and shouting his name, she ran outside to arouse the Shawnees, and set them upon the track, if it was not already too late. Hans opened one eye, and, seeing how matters stood, he shut it again, to ruminate upon the story he should tell to the pressing inquiries of his friends, and, in a few minutes, he had prepared everything to his satisfaction. Five minutes later he heard a dull thumping upon the ground, and the next minute the lodge was filled with Shawnees. Sharp yells—the signals of alarm—could be heard in every quarter, even as far distant as the river. All seemed centering toward one spot. In answer to repeated shoutings, and kicks, and twitches of the hair, Hans opened his big, blue eyes, and stared around him with an innocent, wondering look.

"Where's the girl? Where's the pale-faced captive?" demanded several, including his wife.

"Ober dere; (pointing to her usual resting-place; and then, discovering her absence) no, dunder and blixen, she isn't."

"You helped her away in the night. We saw you when the moon was up standing in the lodge." His accuser was the Indian who had peered into the lodge the night before.

"Mine Gott! dat Huron, Oonomoo, has got her!" The name of the famous scout was familiar to all, and called forth a general howl of fury. Understanding that it was expected he should give some explanation, he said: "I see'd de Injin last night, and he gived me something dat he said I musht eat and mix wid my fish. I done so, and it made me, and Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock, and Quanonshet and Madokawandock go to shleep, and shust now we wakes up and de gal ain't here!"

This brief, concise statement was generally believed, all knowing the trustful, verdant nature of the Dutchman, and there was a general clearing of the wigwam, for the purpose of ascertaining which direction the Huron had taken; but they met with no success, as the woods were so thoroughly trodden by numerous feet, that it was impossible to distinguish any particular trail. One or two Shawnees, however, were not satisfied with what Hans had said, and, after making several more inquiries, they remarked:

"Oonomoo, the Huron, is a brave Indian, but could not enter the Shawnee lodges unless the door was opened from within. Our white brother——"

Hans' wife sprung up like a catamount, whose young were attacked. "You say my brave Hans let her go, eh? My brave warriors, I will show you," she exclaimed, springing at them in such a perfect fury that they tore out of the wigwam and were seen no more.

"My *dear* Hans."

"My *dear, good* Keewaygooshturkumkankangewock! de same shape all de way down."

And the loving wife and husband embraced with all the fervor of youthful lovers. And locked thus together, trusting, contented and happy, we take our final leave of them.

CHAPTER IX.

A NEW DANGER.

Tis too late
To crush the hordes who have the power and will
To rob thee of thy hunting-grounds and fountains,
And drive thee backward to the Rocky Mountains.—EDWARD SANFORD.

The moon was now well up in the sky, although it was still comparatively early in the night. It was hardly possible that the escape of Miss Prescott could be discovered before morning, yet the Huron was too prudent not to guard against the most remote probability, by taking up their march at once in a direct line for the settlement. The eight or ten hours of unmolested travel that were before them, were amply sufficient to place all beyond danger, at least from the Shawnees who had just been left behind. Taking the lead, as usual, he proceeded at a moderate walk, timing his progress to the endurance of the maiden with him, still keeping the impatient Cato behind.

"I say, Oonomoo," called out Lieutenant Canfield, in a suppressed voice, "suppose Miss Prescott and myself should indulge in conversation, would you have any objection?"

"No—don't care—talk sweet—talk love—so no one hear but gal—gal talk low, sweet, so no one but him hear," returned the Indian, pleasantly.

Falling a rod or so in the rear, the Lieutenant took the willing hand of his betrothed, and said:

"Tell me, dear Mary, of your captivity—of all that happened to you since they took you from your home."

The girl proceeded to relate what is already known to the reader, adding that but for the friendship of Hans Vanderbum and Oonomoo, she never would have hoped to escape from her captivity.

"The Dutchman is a stupid, honest-hearted fellow, whose heart is in the right place, and the Huron has endeared himself to hundreds of hearts by his self-sacrificing devotion in their hour of affliction."

"What possible motive could influence him to risk his life in my rescue?"

"His own nature. He has been with those holy men, the Moravians, and he is, what is so rarely seen, a Christian Indian. But, he has been thus friendly to the whites for many years. The Shawnees inflicted some great injury upon him. What it was I do not know. I have heard that his father was a chief, and, while Oonomoo was still a boy, he was broken of his chieftom, and both he and his wife inhumanly massacred. This is the secret of his deadly hostility to that tribe, and, I am told, that among the *scores and scores* of scalps which grace his lodge, there is not one which has not been torn from the head of a Shawnee. But for a year or two, he has refrained from scalping his foes, and he has killed none except in honorable warfare."

"Has he a wife and family?"

"He has a wife and son, and his lodge is deep in the forest, no one knows where. Its location is so skillfully chosen that it has baffled all search for years. His wife, I have been told, has been a sincere Christian from childhood, and her piety and faithfulness have had a good influence on him."

"He is a noble man, and my dear father will reward him for this."

"No, he will not. Oonomoo has never accepted a reward for his services and never will. Presents and mementoes have been showered upon him, but his proud soul scorns anything like payment for his services. Do you suppose that *I* could ever remunerate him for the happiness he has brought *me*?" asked the Lieutenant, pressing the hand of his beloved.

"I am sure my joy is very great, too. Oh! how my dear mother and sister must have agonized over this calamity."

"They probably have known nothing of it."

"But you say you saw the light of the fire, and you were fully as far off as they."

"It is true, but I had not the remotest suspicion of its being your home. It seems unlikely that your mother should have suspected the truth, as she had every reason to believe the Indians were friendly to your family."

"They must have seen the illumination in the sky, and, knowing the location of our home so well, they could but have their worst apprehensions aroused."

"If such indeed be the case, let us congratulate ourselves that we are so soon to undeceive them."

"I am glad that father cannot possibly hear of this until he is assured of our safety."

"I am not so sure of that. When I left, the chances were that he might follow me almost immediately on a visit to the block-house at the settlement, and from what I heard I am pretty certain that if he has not already been, he soon will be appointed to the command of the garrison at that place. It is not at all impossible that he may be in charge of it this very minute."

"We will reach there to-morrow, when, as you said, their anxiety will be relieved, although it will be no trifling loss to father when he finds his house and all his possessions destroyed by the savages."

"But, as nothing when weighed in the balance with his loved child."

"And then the poor servants! Oh! what an awful sight to see them tomahawked when praying for mercy."

"And, I am told, by their only survivor, Cato there, that none implored so earnestly for them as did you yourself, never once asking for your own life, which was in such peril."

"I thought that I might accomplish something for them, but it was useless. Cato only escaped, and it was Providence, alone, that saved him."

"What ye 'scussin' ob my name for?" called out the negro, who had caught a word or two of the last remark.

"Stop noise," commanded Oonomoo, peremptorily.

"Hebens, golly! ain't dem two talkin', and can't I frow in an obserwashun once in a while, eh?"

"Dey love—talk sweet—you nigger and don't love!"

"Oh, dat's de difference, am it? Well, den, I forefwif proceeds all for to cease making remarks. But before ceasing altogether, I will obsarve that you are a pretty smart feller, Oonymoo, and I hain't see'd de Shawnee Injine yet dat knows as much as your big toe. Hencefofe I doesn't say noffin more;" and the negro held strict silence for a considerable time.

Lieutenant Canfield and Miss Prescott conversed an hour or so longer, in tones so low that they were but a mere murmur to the Huron, and then as the forest grew more tangled and gloomy, their words became fewer in number, until the conversation gradually ceased altogether.

The party were walking thus silently, when they reached a portion of the wood where, for a short distance, it was perfectly open, as if it had been totally swept over by a tornado. In this they were about entering, when, brought in relief against the moon-lit sky beyond, the form of an Indian was seen standing as motionless as a statue. At first sight, the form appeared gigantic in its proportions, but a second glance showed that instead of being a man it was a mere boy. He stood in the attitude of listening, as if he had just caught the sound of the approaching company.

The Huron, disdaining to draw his rifle upon such a foe, halted and looked steadily at him, while those in the rear, who had all discovered the savage, did the same, the negro's teeth chattering like a dice-box, as he fully believed him to be the advance-guard of an overwhelming force. The boy standing thus a moment, sprung with the quickness of lightning to the cover of the trees. As he did so, there was something about the movement which awakened the suspicion of Oonomoo, and without stirring, he gave utterance to a low, trilling whistle. Instantly there came a similar response, and the boy appeared again to view, bounding forward quickly toward Oonomoo.

"Niniotan."

"Oonomoo."

"What brings you thus far in the woods?"

"The Shawnees have discovered the home of Oonomoo!"

"And where is Fluellina?" demanded the Huron, starting as if stricken by a thunderbolt.

"She is hid in the woods, waiting for Oonomoo."

"Did she send Niniotan for him?"

"She sent him this morning, and he searched the woods until now, when he found him in this opening."

"When did Fluellina and my son leave their home on the island in the water?"

"Last night, shortly after the moon had come above the tree-tops, they left in the canoe, and they went far before the morning light had appeared, when they dared not return."

"And when saw you the Shawnees?"

"Yesterday, after you had gone, a canoe-full of their warriors passed by the island in their canoe. We saw them through the trees, and hid in the bushes until they had passed, and they searched until night for us."

"Where is Fluellina hid?"

"Close by the side of the stream which floats by the island, but many miles from it."

"How long will it take Niniotan to guide Oonomoo there?"

"Four or five hours. The wood is open and clear from briers."

"And are the Shawnees upon Fluellina's trail?"

"If the eye of the Shawnee can follow the trail of the canoe, he has tracked us to the hiding-place."

This conversation being carried on in the Huron tongue, of course the others failed to catch its meaning; but Lieutenant Canfield suspected, from the singularly hurried and excited manner of Oonomoo, that something unusual had occurred with him. Never before had he seen him give way to his feelings, or speak in such loud, almost fierce tones. The soldier remained at a respectful distance, until the Huron turned his head and told him to approach.

"Dis my son Niniotan," said he. "He go wid us."

"I am glad of his company I am sure. Did you expect to meet him in this place?"

"No—Fluellina, his mother, send him in big hurry to Oonomoo—been huntin' all day—jes' found us."

"No trouble, I trust?"

"Tell in de mornin'—mus' walk fas' now—don't talk much—git to settlement quick as can. Take gal's hand—

lead her fast."

The soldier knew there must be cause for this haste of his friend, and acting upon the hint which he had given him to ask no further questions, he took the hand of Miss Prescott, and the party moved forward at a rapid walk. Little did he suspect the true cause of the Huron's silence. Knowing the solicitations that would be made by the soldier and the girl for him to leave them at once and attend to the safety of his wife, the noble Indian refrained from imparting the truth. It was his intention to conduct his friends as far as possible during the night, that they might be beyond all danger, when, accompanied by his son, he would make all haste to his Fluellina, and carry her to some place beyond the reach of his inhuman foes.

For fully eight hours, the little party hurried through the woods. Miss Prescott bore the fatigue much better than she expected. Being strong, healthy, and accustomed to long rambles and sports in the open air, and having been so long inactive in the Shawnee village, the rapid walk for a long time was pleasant and exhilarating to her. It sent the blood bounding through her glowing frame, and there being withal the spice of an unseen and unknown danger to spur her on, she was fully able to go twice the distance, when the Huron gave the order to halt.

It was broad daylight and the sun was just rising. They were several miles beyond the ruins of Captain Prescott's mansion, so that the settlement could be easily reached in a few hours more. Oonomoo brought down a turkey with his rifle, dressed it, and had a fire burning with which to cook it. This was accomplished in a short time under his skillful manipulations, and a hearty meal afforded to every one of the little company. Lieutenant Canfield noticed that neither the Huron nor his son ate more than a mouthful or two, and he was now satisfied that the news brought by the latter was bad and disheartening. He refrained, however, from referring to the subject again, well knowing that the Indian would tell him all that he thought proper, when the time arrived.

They had just completed their meal, when Niniotan and Oonomoo started, raising their heads, as if something had caught their ears. Listening a moment, the latter said:

"Somebody comin'."

"Hebens, golly! am it Injines?" asked Cato, looking around for some good place to hide. The eyes of the soldier and Miss Prescott asked the same question, and the Huron replied:

"Ain't Injins—walk too heavy—white men."

"They must be friends then," exclaimed the girl, springing up and clapping her hands.

"Dey're comin'—hear 'em."

The dull tramp, tramp of men walking in regular file was distinctly audible to all, and while they listened, a clear, musical voice called out:

"This way, boys, we've a long tramp before we reach that infernal Indian town."

"Your father, as I live!" whispered the soldier to the girl beside him. The next moment, the blue uniform of an officer of the Federal army was distinguished through the trees, and the manly form of Captain Prescott, at the head of a file of a dozen men, came into full view.

"Hello! what have we here?" he asked, suddenly stopping and looking at the company before him. "Why there's Lieutenant Canfield as sure as I am alive, and if that ain't my dear little daughter yonder, I hope I may never lift my sword for Mad Anthony again. And there's Oonomoo, the best red-man that ever pulled the trigger of a rifle, with a little pocket edition of himself, and grinning Cato too! Why don't you come to the arms of your father, sis, and let him hug you?"

This unexpected meeting with his loved daughter, when his worst fears were aroused for her safety, caused the revulsion of feeling in Captain Prescott, and his pleasantry is perhaps excusable when all the circumstances are considered. The tears of joy coursed down the gray-headed soldier's cheeks as he pressed his cherished daughter to his bosom, and murmured, "God bless you! God bless you!" while the hardy soldiers ranged behind him smiled, and several rubbed their eyes as if dust had gotten in them.

"Is mother and sister well?" asked the daughter, looking up in her father's face.

"Yes, well, but anxious enough about you."

"Our house and place is destroyed forever."

"Who cares, sis? Who cares? Haven't I you left? Don't mention it."

"But the servants! All were killed except poor Cato there."

"Ah! that is bad! that is bad! I mourn them, poor fellows! poor fellows! But I have my own darling child left! my own darling child!" and the overjoyed father again pressed his daughter to him.

"But what am I about?" he suddenly asked, with a surprised look. "I haven't spoken to the others here. Lieutenant, allow me to congratulate you, sir, on this happy state of affairs. I congratulate you, sir."

Captain Prescott had a way of repeating his remarks, while his radiant face was all aglow with his hearty good-humor, that was irresistibly contagious in itself. His jovial kindness won every heart, and he was almost idolized by his men.

"A happy turn, indeed; but, Captain, I am somewhat surprised to see you here," said Lieutenant Canfield as he grasped the offered hand.

"Ah! yes, I haven't explained that yet; but the fact is, Lieutenant, you hadn't been gone two hours—not two hours—when the General told me I was to take charge of the garrison at the settlement, where my wife and daughter now are. I wasn't sorry to hear that—not sorry to hear that, and as you were to be Lieutenant, I didn't think it would be unpleasant to you either to be located so near our family—not unpleasant at all, eh, Lieutenant?"

"Nothing, certainly, could be more agreeable to me," replied the gallant young fellow, blushing deeply at the looks which were turned upon him.

"Glad to hear it! glad to hear it! Well, sir, I started right off—right straight off, and tried my best to overtake you, but, bless me, I might as well have tried to run away from my own shadow, as to catch up with a young chap when he is in love. I got to the settlement yesterday, toward night, and the first thing I heard was that my house had been burned, and my sweet little darling Mary there, either killed or carried off a prisoner. I felt bad about that," added the Captain, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief, but smiling all the while, "yes, I won't deny I felt a little bad about that. They had all seen the light from the settlement, and knowing the direction of my house, were pretty sure it was that. But, to be certain, one of the men came out here yesterday, and found there was no mistake about it. But the queerest part of the matter was, that all the people, the garrison especially, appeared to feel bad about it too—actually felt bad about it. And when I asked for volunteers, they all sprung forward and insisted that they would go—insisted that they would go. I picked out those twelve there—because they had all been in Indian fights and understood the country through which we would be compelled to go. They are all good fellows, and perfect phenomena, if you may believe all they say—perfect phenomena. You see that chap there, with the big mouth and crossed eyes. Well, sir, he informs me that he has dined off a live Indian every morning for the last seventeen years, and is certain that he should pine away and die, if he should be deprived of his usual meal. You see he is pretty nearly an Indian himself. His hair is black as a savage's, and if he goes a few months longer without washing, he will have the war-paint all over his face. That one standing beside him, with a nose like a hickory knot and with feet like flat-boats, calls himself 'half horse, half alligator, tipped with a wild-cat and touched with a painter.' The rest are about the same, so that I have a good mind to march right into the Indian country on a campaign against the whole set that have been in this business—the whole set that have been in this business."

The pleasant humor with which this sarcasm was uttered, made every man laugh and respect their commander the more. They saw that while he rather disliked the extravagant boasting in which several of them had indulged, he still had great confidence in their skill and courage, as was shown by his selection of them for this perilous enterprise.

"They are the right stuff," added the Captain. "They ain't used to the drill, but they will soon understand that. I had some trouble to keep them in line in the woods, as they couldn't exactly see the use, but they were doing first

rate, when we came upon you—doing first rate. But, I declare, I haven't spoken to Oonomoo, there, I dare say he is at the bottom of this rescue. He generally is—generally is."

Stepping forward in front of the Huron, who with his son had stood silent and gloomy, he said, as he grasped his hand:

"Oonomoo, receive the thanks of a delighted father for your kindness to his daughter. Your repeated services have won you the gratitude of hundreds——"

"Cap'n," said the Huron, speaking quickly and earnestly, "the Shawnees have found de lodge ob Oonomoo—his wife runnin' trough de woods—de Shawnees chasin' her—Oonomoo must go."

"God bless me! God bless me!" exclaimed Captain Prescott; "and here the noble-hearted fellow has been waiting a half-hour without saying a word, while my infernal tongue has been going all the time; that tongue will be the death of me yet. Your wife is in danger, eh? The —— Shawnees at their deviltry again here. See here, men," said he, turning around, "Oonomoo's wife is in danger, and are we going to help her out or not, eh? I want to know that. Are we going to stand by and let him do it alone, when for twenty years he has worked night and day for us?"

"NO!" responded every voice, in thunder tones.

"I say, Captain, if I ain't counted in this muss, I'll never smile agin. Freeze me to death on a stump, if I won't walk into their meat-houses in style, then my name ain't Tom Lannoch."

"Jes' place me whar tha'll be some heads to crack, with gougin' and punchin' thrown in, and then count me in."

"And hyer's Dick Smaddock, what——"

"Order!" roared the Captain; "I'll arrange matters without any gabbing from you. We are losing time. As we are pretty near the settlement, and as there can be no danger between us and that, we will let the Lieutenant take my daughter home, while we go with Oonomoo to shoot Shawnees."

"I must protest against that," said Lieutenant Canfield. "If I thought there could possibly be any danger to Miss Mary, I would not think of deserting her; but surely there cannot be. I, therefore, propose that Cato act as her guide, while all of us go to assist Oonomoo. I could never forgive myself if I failed to requite the faithful Huron, in such a small degree, when the opportunity is given."

The suggestion of the young soldier received the enthusiastic support of all; but, Captain Prescott, who could not bear the thought that his daughter should be placed in the least peril, selected one of his men, a bronzed border-ranger, who, accompanied by Cato, started at once for the settlement with her, which (we may as well remark here) was safely reached by them a few hours later.

"The matter is all arranged then," said Captain Prescott, when he had selected the man who was to take charge of his daughter. "We are now ready to follow you, Oonomoo."

"Come quick, den—Oonomoo can't wait—leave his trail—all see it."

As the Huron spoke, his son bounded off in the woods and dashed away like an arrow, while he followed him with such astonishing speed, that he almost instantly disappeared from sight.

"God bless me! that's an original way of guiding us!" exclaimed the Captain, taken aback by the unexpected disappearance of the Indian.

"The danger that threatens his wife is so imminent that he dare not wait for our tardy movements," said Lieutenant Canfield. "He will leave a trail that your men can follow without the least difficulty, and, I trust, we may come up in time to prevent anything serious occurring to him and her. His son joined him last night and brought the news of his misfortune to him, but the noble fellow, although his heart must have nearly burst within him, would not leave us until he was assured of your daughter's safety."

"Noble chap! noble chap! he must be paid for such devotion. Come, my boys, let us lose no time. As you all understand the woods better than I do, I must select one of you to walk beside me and keep the trail in sight, while the rest of you must remember and not fall out of line. If a tree should stand in the way, just step around it, but don't lose the step. There's nothing like discipline—nothing like discipline."

The guide was selected, who took his station beside Captain Prescott, and the word was given and away they started in the wake of the flying Huron.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

I leave the Huron shore
For emptier groves below!
Ye charming solitudes,
Ye tall ascending woods,
Ye glassy lakes and prattling streams.
Whose aspect still was sweet,
Whether the sun did greet,
Or the pale moon embrace you with her beams—
Adieu to all!
Adieu, the mountain's lofty swell,
Adieu, thou little verdant hill,
And seas, and stars, and skies, farewell!—P. FRENAU.

Away started Niniotan like a fawn, his father following at a rate that kept both within a few feet of each other. The densest portions of the wood seemed to offer them no impediments, as they glided like rabbits through them. The boy trailed a rifle in his right hand with as much ease and grace as a full-grown warrior, and the speed which he kept up, mile after mile, seemed to have as little effect upon him as upon the indurated frame of his father. The step of neither lagged, and their respiration was hardly quickened. The dark eyes of Niniotan appeared larger, as if expanded with terror, and looked as if they were fixed upon some point, many leagues away in the horizon. The habitual gloomy expression rested upon the face of Oonomoo, and it needed no skillful physiognomist to read the signs of an unusual emotion upon his swarthy countenance. It was seen in the dark scowl, the glittering eye, and the compressed lip, although he spoke not a word until they had penetrated far into the forest.

In something less than an hour, the swamp, in the interior of which was the Huron's lodge, was reached; but instead of taking the usual route to it, Niniotan diverged to the left, until they reached a portion of the creek that was less swampy in its character. Running along its bank a few moments, the boy came upon a canoe, which he shoved into the water, and, springing into it, took his seat in front. Oonomoo was scarce a second behind him. The son pointed down-stream, and, dipping deep the paddle, the Huron sent the frail vessel forward at a velocity that was truly wonderful. A half-mile at this rate, and a tributary of the creek—a brook, merely—was reached, up which the canoe shot with such speed, that a few minutes later it ran almost its entire length where the water was no more than an inch in depth. Springing ashore, Niniotan darted off, closely followed by his father, until they reached a portion of the wood so dense that they paused.

"Here was left Fluellina," said the boy, looking around at Oonomoo. The latter uttered his usual signal, a tremulous, thrilling whistle, similar to that by which he had made himself known to his child before, but he received no response. Three times it was repeated with a considerable rest, when, like the faint echo far in the distance, came back the response. The Huron was about to plunge into the thicket, when a sound caught his ear, and the next moment his wife was before him. Neither spoke a word, until they had stood a few seconds in a fervent embrace, when Fluellina stepped back, and looking up in her husband's face, said: "The Shawnees have found our home and are now following me."

The husband became the warrior on the instant. His woodcraft told him that if his foes were searching for him and his, they would be in such force that he could not hope to combat with them; and the only plan, therefore, that offered him any safety was to fall back and meet his white friends at the earliest possible moment. In reaching the creek, he had bent down the bushes, and broken the branches on the way so that his trail could be followed without difficulty.

He now sped back to his canoe, which, when reached, he shoved into deep water, and ran a considerable distance before he deemed it best to enter. Lifting Fluellina in his arms, he deposited her carefully in it. Niniotan leaped after her, and the next moment they were going down the stream at a speed that seemed would tear the boat asunder every moment. Debouching into the creek, the canoe rounded gracefully and went upward with

undiminished velocity, until, in almost an incredible space, the point of embarkation was reached, when Oonomoo ran in and sprung ashore, followed instantly by his wife and son.

The Huron had scarcely landed, when his quick ear detected a suspicious sound. He glanced furtively around. Nothing, however, was seen, although his apprehensions of the proximity of his foes had assumed a certainty. Without pausing in the least, he instantly took the back trail, Fluellina being close behind him, and Niniotan bringing up the rear. They had gone scarce a dozen steps when the Shawnee war-whoop was heard, and full a score of the red demons sprung up seemingly from the very ground, and plunged toward the fugitives. Simultaneously several rifles were discharged, and Oonomoo, who had thrown himself in the rear of Fluellina upon the appearance of danger, knew by the sharp, needle-like twinges in different parts of his body, that he was severely wounded. Flight was useless, and as he and his wife took shelter behind separate trees, he called to his son: "Niniotan, prove yourself a warrior, the son of Oonomoo, the Huron!"

As quick as lightning, the youth was also sheltered, and his gun discharged. A death-shriek from a howling Shawnee showed that the training of Oonomoo had not been thrown away. The boy reloaded and waited his opportunity.

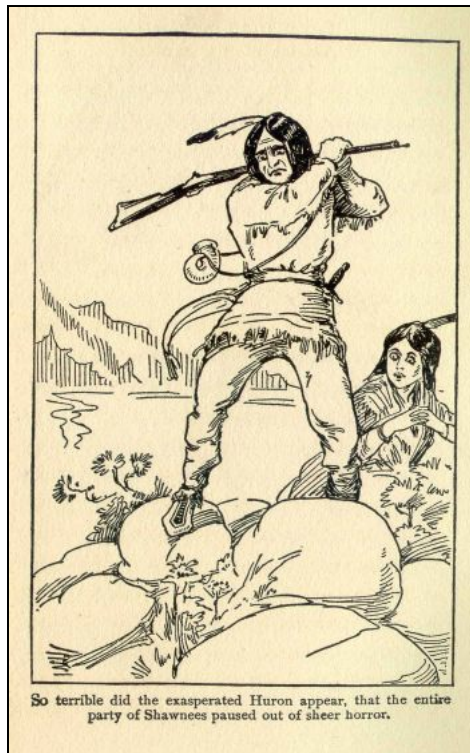
The Shawnees, seeing they had driven their foe to the wall at last, prudently halted, as they were in no hurry to engage such a terrible being in a hand-to-hand contest, overwhelming as were their own odds. The Huron wisely held his fire, believing he could keep his enemies at bay much better by such means than by discharging it. The great point with him was to defer the attack until the arrival of assistance, and he had strong hopes that he could succeed in doing it.

Not Oonomoo's personal fear, but his excessive anxiety for the safety of Fluellina, induced him now to adopt a resort that was fatal in its consequences. Knowing that Captain Prescott and his men could be at no great distance, he gave utterance to a loud, prolonged whoop, which he knew some of the rangers would recognize as a call for assistance, and consequently hasten to his aid. Unfortunately, the Shawnees also understood the meaning of the signal, and satisfied that not a moment was to be lost, they boldly left their cover and advanced to the attack.

The foremost of the approaching savages fell, shot through the heart by the rifle of young Niniotan, and almost at the same instant the one by his side had the ball of Oonomoo's rifle sent crashing through his brain. The Huron now sprung to the side of his wife, and drawing his knife in his left, and his tomahawk in his right hand, he stood at bay!

It was a scene worthy the inspired pencil of the artist. The malignant, scowling Shawnees, steadily advancing upon the dauntless Huron, who, though his moccasins were soaked with the blood from his own wounds, stood as firm and immovable as the adamant rock. His left leg was thrown somewhat in advance of his right, as if he were about to spring, but in such a manner that his weight was perfectly balanced. The knife was held firmly, but not as it would have been were he about to strike. The tomahawk, however, was drawn back, as if he were only holding it a second, while he selected his victim. His eyes! no imagination can conceive their fierce electric glitter as their burning gaze was fixed upon his merciless enemies. Black as midnight, they seemed to emit palpable rays, that shot through the air with an irresistibly penetrating power, and not once was their awful power eclipsed for an instant by the closing of the eyelid.

Onward came the exultant Shawnees. There was no checking them, and throwing all his mighty strength in his right arm, Oonomoo hurled his tomahawk like a thunderbolt among them. Striking an Indian fair between the eyes, it clove his skull as if it had been wax; and striking another on the shoulder, cut through the flesh and bone as if they were but the green leaves of the trees above, Fluellina sunk down by the feet of her husband in prayer, while he, changing his knife to his right hand, waited the shock of the coming avalanche! So terrible did the exasperated Huron appear, that the entire party of Shawnees paused out of sheer horror of closing in with him. Wounded and bleeding as he was, they knew that he would carry many of their number to the earth, before his defiant spirit could be driven out of him. And at scarcely a dozen feet distant, the craven, cowardly wretches poured a volley from their rifles upon both him and the kneeling woman beside him.



[Illustration: So terrible did the exasperated Huron appear, that the entire party of Shawnees paused out of sheer horror.]

Oonomoo did not leap or yell; but with his eyes still fixed upon his enemies, and his knife still firmly clutched in his hand, commenced slowly sinking backward to the earth. The Shawnees saw it, and one of them sprung forward, as if to claim his scalp, but he fell howling to the ground, prostrated by a ball from the undaunted Niniotan who still maintained his place behind his tree. His companions were in the act of moving forward, to avenge the deaths of hundreds of their comrades, when the tramp of approaching men was heard, and a clear voice rung out: "This way, boys! I see the infernal copper-heads through the trees. Make ready, take aim—God bless me! you fired before the orders were given."

At the first glimpse of the Shawnees, huddled together in a rushing body, every one of the border men discharged his piece, without waiting for the command, right in among them. The destruction was fearful and the panic complete. Numbers came to the ground, writhing, dying and dead, while the survivors scattered howling to the woods, and were seen no more.

Shortly after Captain Prescott and Lieutenant Canfield had started with their men on the trail of Oonomoo, they came upon an elderly man in the forest who was hunting. He proved to be Eckman, the Moravian missionary, who had brought up and educated Fluellina, the wife of Oonomoo, and to whom she made her stated visits for religious counsel and encouragement. Upon learning the object of the party, he at once joined them, as he felt a fatherly affection for the Huron warrior. Being a skillful backwoodsman, he acted as guide to the men, proceeding, in spite of his years, at a rate which cost them considerable effort to equal. They had not gone a great distance, when the shout of Oonomoo was heard, and the missionary understood its significance. Bounding forward, the men came upon the Shawnees at a full run, Captain Prescott panting and still at their head, vainly endeavoring to keep them in line and to make them aim and fire together. The missionary and Lieutenant Canfield took in the state of affairs at once. Niniotan was unhurt, and now came forward, his face as rigid as marble. Swelled to nearly bursting as was his heart, he endeavored to obey the instructions of his father, and show himself a warrior, by concealing his emotion to those around him. The man of God instantly ran to the prostrate Huron and his wife, the latter managing to maintain a sitting position with great difficulty. He saw both were mortally wounded and would soon die. Oonomoo lay flat upon his back, breathing heavily, while the copious pools of blood around him showed how numerous and severe

were his wounds. Lieutenant Canfield lifted his head, while the missionary supported Fluellina. The latter opened her languid eyes, which instantly brightened as she recognized her noble friend, and said in a low, sweet voice, speaking English perfectly: "I am glad you have come, father. Oonomoo and Fluellina are dying. We want you to smooth the way for us to the Bright Land."

"The way is already smoothed, my child, so that your feet can tread it. Can I do anything to relieve your pain?"

"No; my body suffers, but my heart is on fire with joy. Please attend to Oonomoo," said Fluellina, looking toward him.

The Huron was so close to his wife, that by taking a position between them, the missionary was enabled to support both. Raising their heads with the assistance of Lieutenant Canfield and Captain Prescott, he laid them upon his lap in close proximity to each other. The men stood silent and affected witnesses of the scene. Brushing the luxuriant hair from the face of the dying Indian, the preacher said:

"Oonomoo, is there anything I can do for you?"

"Where be Niniotan?"

"Here," responded the boy, approaching him.

"Stand where you be, and see a Christian warrior die," he commanded, in his native tongue. "Where is Fluellina's hand?"

The affectionate wife heard the inquiry, and instantly closed her hand in his. He held it, in loving embrace. The missionary spread a blanket over the body and limbs of the Huron, so as to hide his frightful wounds from sight. A single stream, tiny, crimson and glistening, wound down from the shoulder of Fluellina, over her bare arm, to her waist, where it fell in rapid drops to the leaves below. No one of her wounds were visible, although it was evident that dissolution was proceeding rapidly with her.

The minister, at this point, noticed that the lips of Oonomoo were moving. Thinking he had some request to make, he leaned forward and listened. His soul was thrilled with holy joy when he heard unmistakably the words of supplication. Oonomoo was addressing the Great Spirit of the world, not as a craven does, at the last moment, when overtaken by death, but as he had often done before, with the assurance that his prayer was heard. With a simplicity as touching as it was earnest, he spoke aloud his forgiveness of the Shawnees, saying that he wished not their scalps, and had not taken any for several years, not since the Great Spirit had sent a wonderful light in his soul. For a moment more he was silent, and then opening his eyes, uttered the name of Niniotan.

"I am here before you!" replied the boy.

"Niniotan, be a Huron warrior; be as Oonomoo has been; never take the scalp of a foe, and kill none except in honorable warfare; live and die a Christian."

As was his custom, when addressing his wife or boy, this exhortation was given in his own tongue, so that the missionary was the only one beside them who understood it. Languidly shutting his eyes again, Oonomoo said: "Read out of Good Book."

The good man was pained beyond description to find that the pocket-Bible, which he always carried with him, had been lost during his hurried approach to this spot. But Fluellina, who had caught the words, said: "It is in my bosom."

The missionary reached down and drew it forth, and, as he did so, all the men noticed the red stains upon it, while he himself felt the warm, fresh blood upon his hand. Instinctively he opened the volume at the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians, that beautiful letter of the Apostle's, in which the triumphant and glorious resurrection of the body at the last day is pictured in the sublime language of inspiration:

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

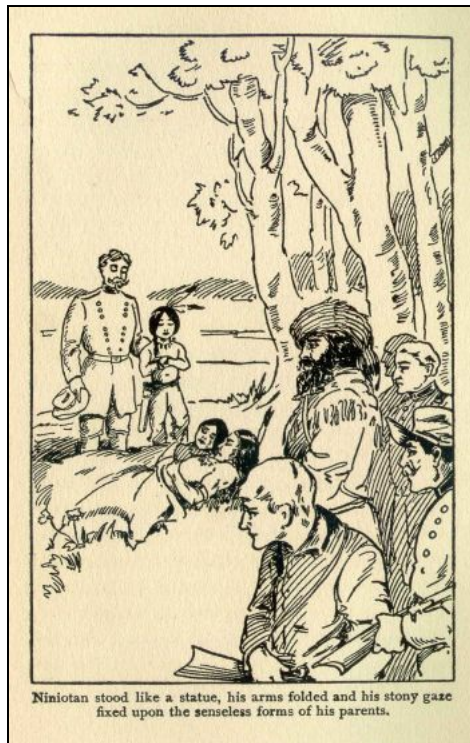
"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

"Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?—"

The hands of Oonomoo and Fluellina, which had still remained clasped upon the lap of the missionary, suddenly closed with incredible force, and rising to the sitting position, as if assisted by an invisible arm, they both opened their eyes to their widest extent, and fixing them for a moment upon the clear sky above, sunk slowly and quietly back, dead! A profound stillness reigned for several minutes after it was certain the spirits of Oonomoo and Fluellina had departed. Gently removing their heads from his lap to the ground, the missionary arose, and in so doing, broke the spell that was resting upon all. Niniotan stood like a statue, his arms folded and his stony gaze fixed upon the senseless forms of his parents. Placing his hand upon his head, the man of God addressed him in the tones of a father:

"Let Niniotan heed the words of Oonomoo; let him grow up a Christian warrior, and when his spirit leaves this world, it will join his and Fluellina's in the happy hunting-grounds in the sky. Niniotan, I offer you a home at our mission-house so long as you choose to remain. Your mother was brought to me when an infant, and I have educated her in the fear of God. Will you go with me?" The boy replied in his native dialect: "Niniotan will never forget the words of Oonomoo. His heart is warm toward the kind father of Fluellina, and he will never forget him. The woods are the home of Niniotan, the green earth is his bed and the blue sky is his blanket. Niniotan goes to them."



[Illustration: Niniotan stood like a statue, his arms folded and his stony gaze fixed upon the senseless forms of his parents.]

Turning his back upon his white friends, the young warrior walked away and soon disappeared from sight in the arches of the forest. [He kept his word, living a life of usefulness as had Oonomoo, being the unswerving friend of the whites all through Tecumseh's war, and dying less than ten years since in the Indian Territory beyond the Mississippi, loved and respected by the whites as well as by all of his own kindred.]

"Friends," said the missionary, "you have witnessed a scene which I trust will not be lost upon you. Live and die in the simple faith of this untutored Indian and all will be well."

"Captain," added the speaker, addressing Captain Prescott, "he has been a true friend to our race for years, and we must do him what kindness we can. If we leave these bodies here, the Shawnees will return and mutilate them—"

"God bless me! it shan't be done! it shan't be done! Form a litter, boys, form a litter, and place them on it. We'll bury them at the settlement, and build them a monument a thousand feet high—yes, sir—every inch of it."

A few minutes later, the party, bearing among them the bodies of Oonomoo and Fluellina, set out for the settlement, which was reached just as the sun was disappearing in the west. The lifeless forms were placed in the block-house for the night. The next morning a large and deep grave was dug in a cool grove just back of the village, into which the two bodies, suitably inclosed, were lowered. The last rites were performed by the good missionary, and as the sods fell upon the coffins, there was not a dry eye in the numerous assembly.

The avowal of Captain Prescott that the faithful Huron should have a monument erected to his memory, was something more than the impulse of the moment. Knowing the affection with which he was regarded by the settlers all along the frontier, he took pains to spread the particulars of his death, and to invite contributions for the purpose mentioned. The response was far more liberal than he had, dared to hope, and showed the vast services of Oonomoo during his life—services of which none but the recipients knew anything.

At this time, there was a band of border rangers in existence, known as the *Riflemen of the Miami*. Oonomoo had often acted as their guide, and these were the first that were heard from. Lewis Dernor, their leader, visited the

settlement on purpose to learn the facts regarding his death, and to bring the gifts of himself and companions. Then there was Stanton and Ferrington, and scores of others, who continued to pour in their contributions through the summer, until Captain Prescott possessed the means of erecting as magnificent a monument as his heart could wish.

In the autumn, affairs on the frontier became so quiet and settled that the Captain was able to visit the East, where he gave orders for the marble monument, which it was promised should be sent down the river the next spring. Upon the return of Captain Prescott, the wedding of his daughter and Lieutenant Canfield took place, and they settled down in the village. The Captain did not venture again to erect his house in so exposed a situation, until the advancing tide of civilization made it a matter of safety. A handsome edifice then rose from the ruins of his first residence. General peace dawning upon the border, he removed his family to it, and turned farmer. His possessions continually increased in value until a few years after the commencement of the present century, and when he died, there were few wealthier men in the West.

During the war of 1812, Lieutenant Canfield was promoted to a Captaincy, and served under General Harrison until all hostilities had ceased. He then retired with his family to private life, taking his abode upon the farm which had been left him by his father-in-law, where he resided until 1843, when he followed the partner of his joys and sorrows—the once captive of the Shawnees—to his last, long home.

As the traveler passes down the Ohio river on one of its many steamers, his attention perhaps is attracted to a beautiful grove of oaks, willows and sycamores a short distance from the shore, beneath whose arches a tall, white marble obelisk may be discerned with some inscription and design upon it. Approaching it more closely, there is seen engraved on the front, the figure of the Holy Bible, open, with a hand beneath pointing upward. Below this, are cut the simple words:

OONOMOO,
THE FRIEND OF THE WHITE MAN.

[The end of Oonomoo the Huron by Ellis, Edward S.]