







INDIAN SKETCHES:

TAKEN DURING A U. S. EXPEDITION TO MAKE
TREATIES WITH THE PAWNEE AND OTHER
TRIBES OF INDIANS IN 1833

BY

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" "
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PREFACE.

THESE Indian sketches were written more than fifty years ago.

The writer had just returned from a lengthened sojourn in that portion of our country, which was then a region of romance and mystery, inhabited by a hospitable but warlike people.

The great plains were teeming with game and gorgeous with flowers.

As yet civilization had not advanced thus far, and all that the settlers who were scattered along the line of frontier States knew of the vast regions beyond them, was gleaned from the trappers and fur-traders, who occasionally stopped at their log cabins on their way to and from the Rocky Mountains.

The "sketchy" form of this work arises from the fact that several portions of it, at first, appeared in one of the New York newspapers, and as they seemed to excite some interest,

and were copied in different journals throughout the country, the author collected them in a volume, adding enough of narrative to explain the object of the expedition.

They were not intended to form a continuous narrative, but to give an idea of the habits and customs of the Indian tribes whom the author visited, and who, at that time, lived in their pristine simplicity, uncontaminated by the vices of the lawless white men, who usually drift in advance of civilization; but who had not as yet reached the tribes inhabiting the borders of the Platte River.

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INTRODUCTION.

*Introductory Account of the Objects of the Expedition, and of the Persons Who Composed It.
Written in 1835.*

FOR several years past the Government of the United States, as is well known, has been engaged in removing the Indian tribes resident in the States, to tracts of wild but fertile land situated beyond the verge of white population.

Some of the tribes, thus removed, however, when they came to hunt over the lands assigned to them, encountered fierce opposition from the aboriginal tribes of the prairies, who claimed the country as their own, and denied the right of the United States to make the transfer.

The migratory tribes were thus placed in a disastrous predicament ; having sold their native lands to the United States, they had no place to which they might retreat, while they

could maintain a footing in their new homes only by incessant fighting.

The Government of the United States hastened to put an end to the bloody conflicts thus engendered, by purchasing the contested lands, and effecting treaties of peace between the jarring tribes.

In some instances, however, the aboriginals remained unappeased. This especially was the case with a fierce and numerous tribe of Pawnees inhabiting the banks of the Platte River, and who were backed in their hostilities by their allies the Otoes, who, though less numerous, were even more daring than themselves.

These two tribes laid claim to all the land lying between the Platte and Kansas rivers; a region comprising several hundred square miles.

It had long been their favorite hunting-ground, in which it was death for a strange hunter to intrude.

This forbidden tract, however, had been granted by the United States to the Delawares; and the latter had made it the scene of their hunting excursions.

A bitter feud was the consequence. The tract in question became a debatable ground, in which war parties were continually lurking.

The Delawares had been attacked, while hunting, by the Pawnees, and many of their tribe had fallen. The Delawares in revenge had burnt one of the Pawnee towns, while the warriors were absent on a buffalo hunt.

The hostile feelings thus awakened among these tribes had been manifested towards the white men.

Several trappers and traders had been massacred by the Pawnees, who looked upon them as intruders; and who were too far off from the settlements, too confident of their own prowess, and too ignorant of the power of the whites, to care much either for their friendship or enmity.

In this state of things, the Commissioners appointed by the Government to superintend the settlement of the migratory tribes were instructed to proceed to the region in question, to purchase the contested lands of the Pawnees, to induce them to remove to the north of the Platte River, and to effect a treaty of peace between them and their new neighbors.

For this purpose, in the summer of 1833, Mr. E., the same Commissioner who in the preceding year had explored a tract of the hunting-grounds between the Arkansas and the Grand Canadian, set out from Washington for Fort Leavenworth, a frontier post on the Missouri River, about forty miles beyond the boundary line of the State of Missouri, where he was to await the arrival of his fellow Commissioner, before proceeding to visit the hostile tribes.

In this expedition he was accompanied by the writer of the following pages, who was glad of the opportunity to visit strange people and strange scenes, of which he had heard only wild and exaggerated rumors.

There was another volunteer, Mr. D., a Scotch gentleman, travelling for information and amusement, and a son of the Commissioner, who acted as Secretary to the expedition.

On our way we stopped a few days at Washington, where Mr. E. expected to receive from the War Department full instructions as to the objects of his mission.

From Washington we continued our route

by stage-coach and steam-boat, stopping at several cities on our way until we reached St. Louis, which town had then about eight thousand inhabitants, who seemed to be a mixture of Americans and Frenchmen.

It was the head-quarters of the great fur trade of this country, and was the rendezvous of Indian traders, trappers, and other campaigners of the prairie.

A few Indians straggled through the streets; but they were all in one way or another connected with the Fur Company, whose ramifications extended across the prairies and over the mountains until they reached the Pacific Ocean.

We remained several days in St. Louis to get a proper outfit, and to obtain such information as might be useful to us in our intended expedition.

In this we were much aided by General William Clarke, the veteran pioneer, who, in company with General Lewis, had led the first exploring expedition across the continent to the mouth of the Columbia River in 1804.

He had much to tell of the wild regions into which we were to penetrate, and of the more wild people whom we were to encounter there.

He advised us to lay in a good stock of provisions, and by no means to rely on hunting for a supply of food.

The General was a fine soldierlike-looking man, tall and thin. His hair was white; but he seemed to be as hardy and vigorous as ever, and spoke of the exposures and hardships of his campaign with a zest which showed that the spirit of the old explorer was unquenched, and that he still hankered after fresh adventures in the saddle and on the prairie.

While at St. Louis we hired two servants to accompany us.

One was a half-breed, a cross between the Creek Indian and the negro. He was named Mordecai, and inherited the lazy propensities of both races, but entertained a high opinion of his own merits.

The other was a tall, awkward boy, with a low forehead and a dull, sleepy countenance, nearly hidden by elf locks. His name was Joseph. He spoke a mixture of French and English, and would fain have passed for a full-blooded white; but his mother was a thorough squaw, wife to a little creole Frenchman named

Antoine or Tonish, who had accompanied the Commissioner on the preceding year in his expedition to the Arkansas frontier.

Joseph inherited from his father a gasconading spirit and an inveterate habit of lying.

Like him, he was a first-rate horseman, but being a hard rider he knocked up every horse entrusted to him.

To add to his hereditary qualities, he inherited from his mother an inveterate habit of stealing.

Though a downright coward, he boasted much of his valor, and even told me in confidence that he "could lick his daddy."

Before leaving St. Louis we purchased two dearborn wagons, two mules and several horses, also tents, flour, sugar, hams, and various other articles necessary for the camp life which we expected to lead, as the whole country between St. Louis and Fort Leavenworth was very sparsely inhabited. One or two towns, containing a few hundred inhabitants,—log cabins scattered here and there, at long distances, either in the woods or on the edge of a prairie, were all the accommodations to be had by wayfarers.

We were all to travel on horseback except Joe and Mordecai, who were to drive the wagons.

With a wise forethought the Commissioner, being aware of the obstinate disposition of Joe, appointed him to drive the wagon drawn by two mules, and many a stubborn contest took place between him and his fellow brutes, in which he was sure to carry the day.

CHAPTER I.

Journey to Independence.

EARLY in an afternoon in July, 1833, we commenced our journey towards Fort Leavenworth, where we expected to get an outfit for our expedition; and troops for an escort and protection against any hostile Indians whom we might encounter.

Our first stopping-place after leaving St. Louis was to be at St. Charles, a small village at the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Mr. R., the Agent of the Osage Indians, accompanied us as far as Fort Leavenworth.

He had lived many years in the wilds of Arkansas, and was a thorough backwoodsman who knew every hole and corner of his own State, and looked upon every settler within a hundred miles of his own dwelling as a near neighbor.

He had much to tell of frontier life; and oc-

asionally varied his topics by singing Methodist hymns.

He rode a small pony, with a stiff mane and legs so short, that when the long legs of the rider dangled down on each side, they were so near the ground, that it was a matter of doubt which set of legs did the travelling.

Sometimes we found lodgings for the night in the cabin of a backwoodsman, sure of a welcome from its inmates, who were glad to hear news of the busy world of which they knew so little.

On these occasions, as the cabin often contained but a single room, we were somewhat cramped for space.

However, they always contrived to find a place for us; and we, being weary and travel-worn, packed in as well as we could—slept soundly and forgot discomfort.

Sometimes we encamped in the woods, selecting the borders of a brook so as to have water for cooking and for our horses.

On one of these occasions we broke up our camp early in the morning, intending to breakfast at the cabin of a friend of Mr. R., who resided a few miles farther on.

Our arrival there took the family by surprise, and the settler's wife apologized for the state of her larder.

She had nothing but venison and wild turkey to offer us.

We relieved her mind by saying that we wished for nothing better.

Our coffee was served without milk.

She again apologized.

“ She did not know what ailed her cow ; but the creature had come home that morning all dried up. Not a cupful of milk ! ”

With some twinges of conscience, we told her that we could do without milk.

But we omitted to mention that Joe and Mordecai had met the cow on her way home that morning, and had milked her.

The worthy Commissioner at parting bestowed, by way of conscience money, an unusually large gratuity, which was gratefully accepted.

Our last halting-place before entering the Indian Territory was at Independence, a small town on the Missouri River, containing about twenty or thirty houses, a court-house, and a nondescript population of trappers, Indian traders, and frontiersmen.

It seemed to be the starting-place for all kinds of adventurers, who intended to cut adrift from civilization, and to seek their fortunes upon the prairies and in the mountains beyond them.

While lingering here we fell in with an officer from Fort Leavenworth, who with a file of soldiers had brought in two rough-looking fellows captured in attempting to smuggle whiskey into the Indian territory.

The prisoners having been tried, and, in the face of clear evidence of their guilt, acquitted, by a jury of sympathizing frontiersmen, the officer, having nothing further to do, and learning that we were on our way to Fort Leavenworth, offered to accompany us and be our guide.

We accepted his offer, and afterwards found him to be a very pleasant, genial fellow, who, being a dead shot with the pistol, was much respected on the frontier.

On the following day our horses were saddled, the mules were harnessed to the wagons, Joe cracked his whip, and in full expectation of we knew not what we set out for the region of adventure and romance.

CHAPTER II.

*Rangers—Kansas River—Shawnees—Delawares
—Leavenworth.*

IT was late in the afternoon when we crossed the Indian border, and issued from the forest upon a beautiful prairie, spreading out as far as the eye could reach, an undulating carpet of green enamelled with flowers, and lighted up by the rays of the setting sun.

Occasionally a grouse, frightened at our approach, would bustle up from among the high grass and fly whirring over the tops of the low billow-like hills.

We were now on the look-out for Indians, but not for hostile ones, for we were on the "Reservation Lands" to which the United States Government had a few years before removed some of the tribes from the Eastern States.

These were friendly, and far different from the wild tribes whom we were afterwards to encounter, and who, claiming these lands as their own, looked upon the Indians who occu-

plied them, and the white men who had placed them there, as bitter enemies.

We had ridden, or rather waded, several miles through high green grass, when an exclamation from our guide attracted our attention to a mounted Indian, who was watching us from a distant hill.

He proved to be a Shawnee, one of that tribe who, under their great chief, Tecumseh, had made such a desperate attack upon the whites, near the banks of the Wabash, in 1811, when the Indians were defeated and their power broken.

This tribe was one of those which had been removed to a "Reservation" about ten miles beyond the western line of the State of Missouri.

This Indian was young, but hard drinking, that besetting sin of his race, had left its mark upon his features.

His hair was thick and matted, and hung down to his eyes. His deer-skin leggins were ornamented with yellow binding. Over a dirty calico shirt he wore a long surtout coat, with immense brass buttons, and upon his shoulder he carried a long rifle.

He saluted us with the usual guttural salutation of "Ugh," and turning round, rode ahead of our party, drumming his heels into the ribs of his horse, who wriggled through the grass with a rickety gait, which would have wearied any other than an Indian.

Shortly afterwards another of the same tribe came galloping up. He was a short, squat fellow, dressed in a dirty calico shirt and a ragged pair of pantaloons.

He wore an old battered hat, and carried a long rifle, the wiping-rod of which he occasionally applied to the sides of his horse.

He eyed us with some curiosity, but without speaking, and then joined the other Indian.

Together they rode off, and we lost sight of them behind one of the low hills of the prairie.

It was now late in the afternoon; the sun had set, and the creaking of the insects warned us of the approach of night, and that we must push on if we expected to reach our quarters before dark.

This we did, and half an hour's ride brought us to our place of destination, which was a log cabin built in the edge of the woods.

It was inhabited by a blacksmith, paid by

the United States to keep in repair the guns which formed part of the annuity paid by the Government to the Shawnee Indians.

The dwelling consisted of two cabins built of rough, unbarked logs and joined together by a covered shed.

One or two wagons stood near it, and at a short distance was a field of Indian corn.

Two horses, two cows, a litter of pigs, a dog, and a mule constituted the live stock of the establishment.

We were very cordially received by a frank, good-natured man, who proved to be the owner of the place, and who was particularly deferential to the officer who guided us, and to the Commissioner, whom he regarded as but little inferior to the President of the United States.

Early on the following morning we took leave of our host and continued our journey.

Our guide took the lead along a trail which ran through a dark and dreary forest. Now and then a raven would flap slowly among the trees over our heads, saluting us with his sepulchral croak, or a woodpecker would dart screaming from tree trunk to tree trunk.

There were no song birds to be seen or

heard; and the only sounds to break the silence were the snapping of twigs beneath our wagon-wheels, and the shouts of Joe, who cracked his whip and yelled at his mules loud enough to have been heard a mile.

In about half an hour we emerged from the woods upon another prairie.

A shout from our guide announced something unusual.

At the same time he struck spurs into his horse, and galloped off through the long grass.

At a short distance a troop of horsemen was trailing across the prairie.

They were a company of United States Rangers on their return from escorting a party of Santa Fé traders across a portion of the perilous route which they are obliged to take in carrying on their traffic with that inland mart.

They had been absent from the garrison a month, travelling through a territory full of lurking foes.

There was little to show that they were United States troops.

Hard service and exposure had made great

havoc with their clothing and head-gear, and old fur caps, blankets, and articles of Indian apparel had taken the place of the garments with which they had set out, and makeshifts of the most dilapidated and unusual character in the way of coverings cropped out in every direction.

Companionships are readily formed in the wilderness, and we were greeted by this tattered band as comrades, and were soon hand and glove with all of them.

We supplied them with news from the great world which we had left; and they in return gave us glimpses of the unknown regions to which we were going.

We spent half an hour with them, then pushing on, we reached the Kansas River.

This is one of the largest tributaries of the Missouri, being from a quarter to half a mile wide, and varying in depth from one to thirty feet.

At the shore we found a large scow, which was used as a ferry-boat. Its owner, a tall, thin Delaware Indian, was seated in the stern smoking a pipe and waiting for passengers.

We intimated to him by signs that we wished

to be ferried across, and in reply he nodded, rose from his seat, and stepping ashore, made signs for us to lead our horses on board, and quietly looked on until they were embarked.

He did not offer to assist us, nor did our guide appear to expect it.

When we were embarked he loosed the fastening, and thrusting a long pole into the sandy bottom of the river, whirled the ticklish vessel far out into the current.

The water was not deep, and the scow soon ran upon the sand of the opposite shore.

Having received his fare, the Indian strolled off, leaving the party to land or stay on board, as they might choose.

On the bank of the river was a log cabin inhabited by the blacksmith of the Delawares. Into this we made our way.

We had scarcely reached it when the woods on the opposite shore began to ring with the shouts of the Rangers, on their way to ford the river, which we had just crossed in a more comfortable manner.

The troop slowly wound its way among the tall trees until they reached the shore.

There was a pause. Then a heavy splash

announced that the foremost rider had taken to the water.

The rest paused to watch his progress as he struggled against the current, then one after another dashed in, until a long line of snorting horses and whooping riders extended from shore to shore.

Just then, a dark thunder cloud, which had been hanging over the woods, opened its flood-gates upon the band, thoroughly drenching all who had escaped a wetting in the river.

The rainfall lasted about an hour, then a few rays of sunshine shot from behind the cloud, playing upon the distant tree-tops, and finally the ragged masses rolling together floated off until they disappeared below the horizon.

An hour's ride brought us to a Shawnee village, which consisted of about a dozen cabins on the top of a hill overlooking the prairie.

The barking of dogs announced our approach, and brought out the inhabitants; two of whom came forward to meet us. The elder and apparently more important of the two wore a broad-brimmed black hat, ornamented with bands of tin.

His calico shirt and blue-cloth pantaloons were ornamented with yellow ribbons; and a huge pair of iron-rimmed spectacles, through which he glared at us, showed that he at least had taken some steps towards civilization.

His companion retained more of the Indian in his dress and appearance.

His head was shaved, with the exception of a long scalp lock, and his face was profusely smeared with vermilion. A calico shirt was the only article of civilized manufacture about him. His leggins and moccasins were of deer-skin.

We endeavored to learn from them the most direct route to Fort Leavenworth, but as we could not understand each other, we shook hands with them and resumed our journey.

A village of the Delawares was a few miles off, and to this we directed our course.

When we reached it a loud barking of dogs announced our arrival to the Indians, who flocked from their cabins to ascertain the cause of the canine uproar.

From them we learned the route which we were to take, and, following their instructions, we kept on through the woods, until we came

to a prairie on which was strongly marked the broad trail which led to Leavenworth.

The rain cloud of the morning had left nothing but beauty behind it. A cool freshness exhaled from the tall grass glittering with its water beads; the parched foliage seemed to have become fresh and green, and the drooping flowers again raised their heads.

In the spring of the year, these prairies were covered with a profusion of pale pink flowers, rearing their delicate stalks among the rough blades of the wild grass. Too fragile to withstand the scorching heat of summer, they had disappeared, and others had succeeded them.

There was a gorgeous richness in the summer apparel of the prairie. Flowers of red, yellow, purple, and crimson were scattered in profusion among the grass, sometimes growing singly, and at times spreading out in beds of several acres in extent.

There is a strange sensation of pleasure in traversing these vast and boundless wastes.

Sometimes we came upon the crest of a wave-like hill, which commanded a wide view of the green prairies beyond it. Here and

there small clumps of trees were resting, like islands upon the bosom of a sea. Far off, a long line of trees, winding across the country, marked the course of some hidden stream. But a few steps of our horses carried us from the point of look-out. Passing down the hill, we splashed through the water at the bottom, tore a path through the grass and weeds, which frequently rose, in these hollows, to the height of six or seven feet, and in a few minutes stood upon the crest of a hill similar to the first. This was again cut off as we descended into another trough which divided the long, surge-like swells of land.

Such is the prairie—hill follows hill, and hollow succeeds hollow, with the same regularity as the sweeping billows of the ocean. Occasionally a broken bluff rears its solitary head high up, overlooking the country. Upon the top of these we frequently saw an Indian, standing in bold relief against the sky, or seated upon some pleasant spot on its summit, and basking in the sunshine, with that air of lazy enjoyment which characterizes the race.

We had been travelling several hours through scenery like this, when a loud cry from our

guide announced that we had come in sight of the cantonment.

There was a snowy speck resting upon the distant green ; behind it rose a forest of lofty trees which shadowed the Missouri. This was Leavenworth. But still, many miles intervened ; for the prairie is like the ocean—the view is wide and boundless ; and it requires an eye trained by long residence in these regions, to measure accurately the distance of objects.

It was mid-day when we first caught sight of Leavenworth, but it was near sunset before we arrived there. About a dozen white-washed cottage-looking houses compose the barracks and the abodes of the officers. They are so arranged as to form the three sides of a hollow square ; the fourth is open, and looks out over a wide prairie. It is a rural-looking spot—a speck of civilization in the heart of a wilderness. There was nothing here to tell of war ; and but for the sentinels upon their posts, the lounging forms of the soldiers, or the occasional roll of the drum, as the signal for the performance of some military duty, we would not have known that we were in the heart of a military station.

The garrison at Fort Leavenworth consisted of about 120 men—sufficient to keep in check the wild tribes who claimed the ownership of the whole country from the Platte to the Arkansas River, and now and then made an onslaught on the whites who lived near the frontier line.

The fort was commanded by Major R., by whom and his young officers we were very cordially received.

The Rangers, whom we had passed on our way, had their head-quarters there ; and we were able to announce to their friends that they were but a few hours behind us.

The Rangers were made up principally of volunteers who had offered their services to the Government at the time of the Black Hawk war. They were hardy, weather-beaten fellows, accustomed to Western life, ready with the rifle, and first-rate Indian fighters.

We were quartered in the same building with the family of the officer who led the band which we had passed at the Kansas River, and we afterwards found him to be a genial, frank-hearted soldier, full of anecdotes of his adventures in Indian warfare and in the hunt.

CHAPTER III.

The Sac Indian.

ON the following day we strolled through the forest which skirted the fort and overhung the Missouri.

At times flocks of gaudy little paroquets darted swiftly through the trees, screaming as they went. There were plenty of bright-colored woodpeckers flitting from tree to tree; and here and there a sedate old bird of the same species busily engaged in examining the interior of a decayed trunk.

In another direction we spied a raven sitting upon the limb of a dead tree, apparently brooding over the mistakes of his past life, and wondering where he should get his next meal.

On our return, as we passed an opening between the houses, which gave us a view of the green in front, we caught sight of a single Indian, standing beneath a tree.

Just then a little red-nosed soldier came up.

He informed us that the Indian was a Sac, one of those who had fought against the whites under Black Hawk. As he mentioned this, he took the opportunity of uncorking his wrath, and letting off the superfluous foam, in a volley of oaths and anathemas against the whole Indian race in general, and this individual in particular. He threw out dark hints of what he had himself done in the war, and what he would *now* do, if the Major would only permit it.

At the time we looked upon him with considerable awe ; but we afterwards learned that there was little to be apprehended from him, and that he was a character notorious for boiling over in the excess of his wrath, especially in time of peace ; but beyond this was distinguished for nothing, except a strong attachment to liquors of all descriptions.

We soon left him, and crossed the green to where the Indian was standing.

I had formed but a poor opinion of the race from those whom I had already seen, but this was a princely fellow. He stood unmoved as we came up, viewing us with a calm, cold, but unwavering gaze. A large blanket, here and there streaked with vermilion, and ornamented

with hawks' bells, was so disposed around his folded arms that it left bare his finely-formed shoulder and half of his high, sinewy chest.

A bright steel-headed tomahawk peeped from beneath its folds, and a quiver of arrows hung at his back. His legs were cased in leggings of dressed deer-skin, with the edges cut into a rough fringe. He wore a pair of moccasins of dressed buffalo hide. The top of his head was closely shaven, and covered with vermilion, but his face was free from any coloring whatever, with the exception of a ring of black paint, which was carefully drawn around each eye.

As we approached, he drew himself up, and threw his head slightly backward with an air of haughtiness which well became his high, stern features.

We looked at him with some curiosity, for he was the first whom we had seen of that tribe of Indians which but a year before had carried on a bitter warfare on our frontier.

We could not help a feeling of sorrow, as we saw him standing there, so proud and haughty and so powerless, for his tribe was broken up and scattered, their power gone, the bones of their

bravest warriors whitening on the prairies, and their chief a captive in the hands of his enemies.

For some time he stood in front of us, returning gaze for gaze, and for a moment a smile played over his features; then drawing up his tinkling blanket closely around him he walked off.

We lost sight of him behind one of the buildings, as he directed his course towards the forest.

We turned towards our quarters, but the roll of the dinner drum sounded across the green, and changing our course we obeyed its summons.

CHAPTER IV.

A Band of Kansas.

FORT LEAVENWORTH seemed to be a place of rendezvous for parties of Indians from the neighboring tribes.

They would make their appearance quite unexpectedly, hang around the dwellings and the sutler's store for a day or two, and then disappear as suddenly as they came.

One morning we were sitting in our quarters, when a loud whoop from without informed us that one of these bands had arrived, and we went out to see who they were and whence they came.

They proved to be a party of Kansas from a village situated about one hundred miles beyond the line of the Indian boundary.

They were encamped at a little distance, upon a plot of ground in front of our quarters. There were about forty of them crowded together around a fire, which they had built under a large oak tree.

Among them were many fine-looking men ; for with the exception of the Osage Indians of the Arkansas, they are considered the most noble of the tribes which yet roam in the neighborhood of the settlements. Hitherto, from their association with the whites they have derived benefit alone. Too far from them to imbibe their vices, they have yet been able to hold sufficient intercourse to promote their own interest. They have thrown aside their buffalo-skin robes and adopted the blanket.

They have become skilful in the use of the rifle, and except in hunting the buffalo, make no use of bows and arrows.

When we came up, two or three were engaged in collecting fuel ; the rest were lounging around, some leaning listlessly upon their spears, others resting against the tree ; and five or six were lying upon their backs, with their feet to the fire, drumming with their fists upon their breasts, and chanting out a sleepy ditty, the chorus of which was a loud yell from every throat in the band.

Their heads were shaven, with the exception of the scalp lock, and their breasts were left exposed by their blankets.

There was a little squaw in the company ; and if I might judge from the foolish look of several of the men, and the loud laugh of the rest, gifted with a peppery tongue.

There was a fund of humor in her glittering eye, which gave a zest to her remarks, causing them to be more relished by the loungers, than by the unfortunate scape-goat at whose expense they were uttered.

We had not stood there long, before we came in for our share of her criticisms. Fortunately we could not understand them ; but they were received with loud bursts of merriment from the graceless troop around her, with the exception of one or two of the older Indians, whose grave faces and wrinkled brows wore a discouraging sternness.

In vain the little woman endeavored to coax a smile from them.

At last she was interrupted by an old Indian who was sitting by the fire, with one elbow resting upon his knee, and his hand supporting his chin, apparently in deep thought.

He had continued thus, until a loud burst of laughter which followed some remark of the squaw, attracted his attention.

He looked around, with a bewildered air ; then starting to his feet, strode over to the oratrix, and muttered a few low but stern words in her ear. Her face lengthened, and her mouth closed.

I presume that he had given her a lecture in good manners, for the others also followed her example.

The old man then stepped up and shook hands with us, after which he pressed his own hand against his bosom, and withdrew to his former seat by the fire.

From that time the squaw was silent, and turned her attention to a number of potatoes which were roasting in the fire.

Parties of the Indians, wrapping their blankets around them, sauntered towards the quarters of the officers ; others strolled off to the banks of the Missouri ; and five or six stretched themselves upon the grass, and joined in the chorus of those who were already engaged in chanting. A few of the others then drew together, and commenced an earnest debate, in which they were afterwards joined by the Indian who had interfered in our behalf.

The little woman, too, seemed to take a

strong interest in the subject, for she suffered a large potato to roast to a coal without noticing it.

We afterwards learned that this party had been for two days without provisions, and were appointing a committee from their band, who should commence foraging for a supply among the soldiers.

They hung round the garrison for several days, and passed their time in lounging about the quarters of the soldiers, or strolling through the woods; peering into the windows of the houses, or now and then stealing through an open door into the interior.

Their step is so hushed and noiseless, that there is nothing to warn one of their approach, and I have frequently been surprised to find several of these fellows quietly seated around me in my room, and all apparently very much at their ease. With all this, there was an unobtrusiveness in their manners, which soon reconciled us to their presence, and were it not for their eyes, which were ever fastened on one's face, creating a feeling of restless uneasiness, there was little else in their company to annoy.

It was near the close of a warm afternoon, and I had thrown myself upon a bear-skin on the floor, with that feeling of listless languor which is apt to pervade a stranger when visiting the Western country for the first time. The drum was pouring out a dull, melancholy roll, at the far end of the green, occasionally enlivened by the shrill tones of a fierce little fife. Under the window a lounging soldier, half asleep, was drawling out a tedious ditty, with a strong nasal accompaniment which did not add much to the vivacity of the tune.

My eyes were yielding to slumber; present things were fast vanishing, or only appeared blended with the fitful forms of a drowsy imagination.

“Ho! ho! ho!” shouted a dozen voices at my side. I started up—a group of Kansas were seated in a ring around my bear-skin. For a moment I was bewildered—but they soon convinced me of the reality of their presence.

They were a detachment who had been sent out to forage.

Although their language was unknown to me, their object was perfectly intelligible. They

signified their wants with a clearness of gesticulation which could not be misunderstood, and the earnestness of which was, no doubt, enhanced by a keen appetite.

Seeing that there was no alternative, I called to our half-breed boy :

“ Joseph ! ”

“ Vat you vant ? ” sounded a voice from the dark cavern below, which was dignified with the name of a kitchen.

“ Have you any meat or bread for these Indians ? ”

“ Sacre diable ! ” answered he. “ Vare de devil I to git meat for dem ? I hain't eat none my own sef, for tree day, nor Mordecai neder.

This was not altogether true, but it was conclusive, so I returned to my dusky friends with the heavy intelligence.

They were immovable. I soon found out that a hungry Indian is not open to conviction where his stomach is concerned ; and they were deaf both to arguments and to statements of facts. They heard me—they understood me—but they were not a whit nearer to conviction, and they made no motion to depart.

There was no resource left, so I determined to abdicate in their favor, and taking up my hat I left the house, and strolled off into the woods.

It was near sunset when I returned to my quarters. I opened the door of the room and looked in.

“Ho! ho! ho!” sounded a dozen guttural voices from within. My red friends were there still, awaiting my arrival. I closed the door instantly, and walked with a hasty step to the quarters of one of the officers, nor did I return until late at night, when I found that they had disappeared.

I afterwards learned that they had been supplied with provisions, on the morning previous, but were now carrying on the business of foraging for mere amusement.

Their experience was not always of the most pleasant character, as the following incident will show.

When we were at Cincinnati, on our way to Fort Leavenworth, the cholera was prevailing not only in that city, but in all the towns on the borders of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

The Commissioner, with anxious forethought for the health of the party under his charge, consulted several physicians as to the best remedy to be used in case of an attack of the epidemic.

One old gentleman urgently recommended a mixture of brandy and cayenne pepper, sold in the drug stores under the name of "Preparation No. 6."

He said that when Preparation No. 6 was swallowed, the cholera was "bound to quit."

It was made by putting about half a pint of the pepper into a quart bottle, and filling up the bottle with brandy, and was to be administered a teaspoonful at a time in half a tumblerful of water.

We reached Fort Leavenworth without having any occasion to use it, but we kept the bottle on the mantelpiece in our quarters ready for an emergency, as the cholera was slowly creeping up the Missouri River.

These Kansas were the first to test its virtues.

One afternoon Mr. D. was lying half asleep, wrapped up in his blanket, in the inner room in our quarters, but so that he could see what

took place in the outer one, when several Indians entered it.

Their moccasined feet made no noise, and he would not have noticed them had they not caught sight of the bottle containing the cholera antidote.

An Indian can never resist the temptation of liquor.

A great swarthy fellow skulked stealthily to the mantelpiece, took up the bottle, drew out the cork, smelt at the mouth of the bottle, then took a long draught, containing about twenty doses.

Few Indians have ever replaced a bottle more quickly than he did.

A sound between a hiccup and a yell burst from him as he rushed out of the room.

He was followed by all the others except one, who lingered behind and eyed the bottle with a longing, yet distrustful eye.

Preparation No. 6 carried the day. He strode up to the flask like one determined to dare the worst, seized it, and took a huge swallow.

The next moment, with a smothered howl, he darted out of the room as if shot from a cannon.

These two Indians made better time down to the Missouri River than had ever been made before, and if it was not drunk dry it was not their fault, nor the fault of Preparation No. 6. None of the band again visited our quarters, but they lingered around the fort for several days.

When the night grew dark there was a bright fire gleaming under the old oak tree, and the whole group were huddled together around it. From the piazza in front of our quarters we could see their forms flitting round the blaze, and could hear their song as it rose up in the night air with a wildness not unmixed with melody. In the morning we visited their camp, but it was deserted.

The embers had fallen to ashes, the fire was extinguished, and the whole wild troop had again set out upon its wanderings.

Two days after their departure we were seated in our room, when an Indian entered.

He wore a hat, after the fashion of the whites, a calico hunting-shirt, and rough leggings, and over the whole was wrapped a heavy blanket. His face was unpainted, and although his age was nearly seventy, his hair

was raven black and his eye as keen as a hawk's. He was White Plume, chief of the Kansas tribe. He had spent much time among the whites, and had gradually become familiarized with their manners. On entering the room he placed his hat on the table, and advancing to the Indian Commissioner, offered his hand to him, after which he shook hands in turn with the rest of us. He then stepped into the centre of the room, and wrapping his blanket around his body, commenced an address, the purport of which I do not remember. By his side stood a white man who had spent many years among the tribe, and who translated the sentences as the chief paused for that purpose.

The address lasted about ten minutes, and the most of it was dull, but in speaking of his children, who had died of the cholera during the autumn previous, his language was even poetical.

“My children,” said he, “have gone from me. The Great Spirit has called them. They have disappeared like the snow that melts on the prairie. I was lonely; I returned to my lodge, but it was desolate, for they were not there.”

When he had rested himself he rose up, and throwing out several hints of so broad a character that they smacked strongly of beggary, he received several presents and left the building, wending his way over the prairie, along the narrow trail which led to his village.

CHAPTER V.

The Forest—The Kickapoos.

FROM the time of our arrival at the garrison small parties of Indians had been constantly coming and going. They were Kickapoos, belonging to one of the tribes which had been removed from the States. Scarcely a day elapsed that we did not catch a glimpse of some gaudily dressed band, their tin trinkets glistening in the sunbeams, and their garments fluttering in the wind, as they galloped towards the fort. They carry on a species of traffic with the sutler, exchanging furs and skins for ribbons and such other showy articles as are likely to catch the eye of a savage. From long intercourse with the whites they have become accustomed to driving bargains, and are looked upon by the generality of traders as pretty shrewd customers; yet even from them the profits derived by the whites are great.

From seeing these different bands constantly

coming and going to and from this village, we conceived a desire to visit them, and accordingly upon a fine clear morning we started.

The path was for the most part through the woods. We rode about an hour, crossed several brooks, traversed several small patches of prairie, and at last found ourselves upon the summit of a bluff which overlooked the little Indian town. At our feet lay a prairie, dotted with wild-flowers. Three of its sides were enclosed by a ridge of hills, at the foot of which meandered a brook with a range of trees along its borders. The fourth side of the green was hemmed in by a thick forest, which extended back to the banks of the Missouri.

In the edge of this stood the village.

It was a retired, rural spot, shut out from the world, and looked as if it might have been free from its cares also.

When we arrived, we were told that there was to be a horse-race between two rival braves, and that nearly all the village had turned out on the occasion.

We made our way to the starting-place, which was under an oak tree not far off.

One or two of the chief men of the tribe who had seen us at Leavenworth came forward to meet us, and placed us where we could see what was going on.

After that, they devoted themselves to the business on hand, which was soon completed.

A little hard-headed old Indian was appointed umpire, and the two riders were at their posts.

Both were young men, dressed in hunting shirts and cloth leggins. Their horses were not of the class that might strictly be denominated racers. One was black, the other cream-colored. The black one had fierce little eyes, glittering like fire, beneath a long, shaggy forelock, which reached nearly to his nose.

The eyes of the other were water-colored, and had a sneaking slyness about them—an air which seemed to insinuate that their owner “knew a thing or two.”

Both horses were round-bodied, bull-necked, with thick legs garnished with fetlocks of matted hair, extending from the knee joint down to the hoof, and trailing on the ground.

They appeared but little ambitious of distinguishing themselves in the coming contest,

and, had their own inclinations been consulted, it is probable would have declined it altogether. Not so their riders; they sat as eager as hounds in the leash. Their eyes were intently fixed upon the umpire, who seemed to take the matter with wonderful coolness. At last he gave the signal; there was a hard, quick thumping of heels against the ribs of the horses, and a great clattering of hoofs. Their bounds were short but rapid. The riders whooped and yelled, and the lookers-on shouted as loud as either.

The little cream-colored pony was working wonderfully hard, but the black was gaining upon him. They were to pass round a tree which stood about half a mile off, and return to the starting-place. The black had the lead by a length; his legs were invisible as he turned the tree, but the cream-colored pony pushed him hard.

“Two to one on the black!” shouted one of the whites.

“Lay it on, old boy, or you ’re beaten!” hallooed another.

Both riders exerted themselves to the utmost, the black still keeping the lead.

As they rushed snorting in, the crowd shouted and opened a passage for them ; they dashed through, running nearly a hundred yards beyond the mark.

When the race was finished, we rode to the town. About thirty huts constructed of bark compose the village. A strong gale of wind would have prostrated even the best of them, had it not been for the shelter of the forest in which they were built.

Our arrival seemed to have created quite an excitement, especially among the children, who followed at our heels in troops until we came to the house of the Indian Agent. This officer is appointed by the United States to live with the tribe, and see that the annuities due to them from the Government are not frittered away by going through several hands before they reach the Indians.

His house was a small log cabin, and we found him at the door expecting us.

We were cordially welcomed and introduced to the head chief, and also to a tall, bony Indian with a keen black eye. The latter, who was the prophet of the tribe, had been converted to Christianity, and on Sundays deliv-

ered addresses on the subject to such as would listen.

His face was full of intelligence, but his outward appearance was rather unclerical; for when we entered he was leaning on a long rifle, and appeared to be accoutred for a hunt.

He laid aside the gun as we came in, and with the aid of an interpreter commenced a conversation with us.

We were afterwards told that this was something unusual, as he habitually kept aloof from intercourse with the whites, and that he had more influence with the tribe than any man in the village.

From the little that we saw it was evident that the chief yielded to him, and listened to his remarks with the deference of one who acknowledged his superiority. There was, however, no appearance of jealousy or heart-burning between them.

It was late when we left. The sun was sinking in the west, and its last beams were resting on the tree-tops as we rode out of the woods. An hour's ride brought us to our quarters at the cantonment.

CHAPTER VI.

Departure for the Pawnees—Prairie Life.

SEVERAL weeks had elapsed since our arrival at the garrison; yet the other Commissioner had not made his appearance, and Mr. E. determined, therefore, to set out for the Pawnee villages without him.

The cholera had broken out at the fort, and the garrison, enfeebled by sickness, could not spare a sufficient escort to overawe the savages. He therefore took the bold alternative of throwing himself among them, in a manner unarmed, piquing their honor and hospitality by this mark of confidence.

Seven soldiers constituted the whole military escort, merely sufficient to protect us from any petty, prowling band.

The servants, Mordecai and Joseph, were to drive the two light wagons, in which were packed our bedding, baggage, and camp furniture. We had also engaged a negro named Jones as cook.

The Commissioner, with prudent care for our creature comforts, had added a cow, remarking that coffee was always improved by the addition of milk, a remark in which we all concurred.

Our mess was increased by the addition of Major Dougherty, from St. Louis, the Agent for the Pawnee Indians, and Dr. May, a surgeon resident in Missouri.

Major Dougherty was to be our guide. He had lived with Indians for many years, spoke the language of several of the tribes, and was well versed in their ways.

He was an old campaigner, and was familiar with prairie life, and with the untrodden plains over which we were to make our journey.

He was known far and wide among the trappers and hunters, and was always addressed as Major, although I believe the title was given to him only as a matter of courtesy, he never having been in the army; but in Indian skirmish and warfare he had no little experience.

On the day before our departure the soldiers commenced loading two heavy, covered ox wagons, with kegs of gunpowder, barrels of flour, sacks of bacon, besides boxes and bales

containing presents for the Indians. Towards evening, a cessation of noise and clamor in the neighborhood of the store-house gave token that the task was accomplished. In the course of an hour, half a dozen oxen were yoked before each wagon, and, conducted by two teamsters, they departed under escort of the seven soldiers. The whole were to encamp on a small stream a few miles distant, and await our coming. Our party, six in number, were to follow their trail on horseback the next morning.

The sun rose cheerily over the tops of the trees on the day following, and we prepared to set out. There was quite an excitement in the garrison. Kind wishes and farewells were exchanged. Many, who had been anxious to join our troop in their journey through this unknown land, now hung around with longing eyes.

There was mystery and shadowy danger around the expedition. Nothing positive was known about the wild tribes whom we were to visit. It was said that their numbers were large; that they were cruel and unsparing in their nature; that they looked upon the whites

as enemies, and killed and scalped them whenever they could.

We gave but little heed to these rumors.

We had been lingering at Leavenworth until we were weary of inaction, and were anxious to commence our new career of adventure.

By way of adding to the excitement, two or three Job's comforters had collected all the tales of murder and bloodshed committed by Indians since the discovery of America, and poured them into our ears, with a dreary accompaniment of long faces and evil prophecies. They foretold that we would never again be seen at Leavenworth, or at all events, that if we *did*, it would be stripped of our scalps.

However, they promised that they would write to our friends the particulars of our mishaps, as soon as they learned them, and if they heard nothing, as was most probable, would send a thrilling account manufactured by themselves.

It was near mid-day when we set out, following the broad trail left by the baggage wagons as they had passed through the high grass.

Several of the officers accompanied us a short

distance, but at length they took their leave and left us to journey onward in our pilgrimage.

As long as we were in the garrison, where the busy face of man was seen, where active forms were moving around us, and the everyday concerns of life were going forward, we felt that, though distant from home, we were still connected with society; but when we bade farewell to those who had accompanied us; as we watched their forms until they were hid by the distant hills, we felt that the last link was broken which had hitherto united us to the world and its occupations.

It was intended, first, to strike up in a northerly direction, until we reached the village of the Otoe and Missouri Indians, situated upon the Platte River, about twenty miles northwest of its junction with the Missouri.

Thence the Platte was to be our guide, until we came upon the Pawnee towns which are situated on its banks, five or six days' journey farther to the westward.

During our stay at the garrison a change had come over the face of the prairies. The bright summer flowers had disappeared, a growth of

yellow and blue ones, the harbingers of the departing year, supplied their places. Here and there a red flower, the survivor of those which had flourished in the summer, shot up its head amid clusters of golden-hued blossoms. The deep green of the trees had disappeared, and the brown tinge of autumn was creeping among the leaves. The bright, soft green of the prairie grass was giving place to a color of greenish brown. The geese and pelicans had left their lives of solitude, and in large flocks were winging their way to the north; the wind swept over the rustling grass with a moaning sound that spoke strongly of the approach of winter.

At this season we commenced our travel. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the spot where the soldiers had encamped, on the side of a small prairie hill. Within a few yards of the tents a scanty stream of water stole through the grass, and at a short distance stood a grove of trees, which supplied fuel for the night fires.

The soldiers had caught sight of us long before we had seen them, and we found every thing in readiness for our arrival.

They had pitched our large tent, and had made a fire near it. Mordecai was preparing supper; Jones, the negro, was collecting wood; and Joe was equally busy in looking on and giving advice, on subjects of which he knew nothing.

We found our bear-skins and buffalo robes spread. Our horses were hobbled and turned out to graze, our saddles and blankets were carried into the tent to serve as pillows and covering, and we then devoted our attention to the supper, which Mordecai had ready for us.

Major Dougherty had an unusual fund of dry humor, and enlivened the whole evening with tales of Indians and mountain trappers.

I do not know how long we might have listened to him, had not the Doctor suggested that it was getting late, and that we had better betake ourselves to our bear-skins and blankets, which we did.

Early the next morning there was quite a stir in the camp; everybody was busy making suggestions, except the soldiers who were accustomed to obey orders, and waited for them.

Among the leaders of the party Major

Dougherty was prime-adviser, and marked out our course and stopping-places, for he had been over the ground before, and knew where fords were to be found, and where the river banks were lowest, so that there would be less digging to make a roadway for the ox wagons.

Among the soldiers, Rash was pre-eminently the leader ; he was an experienced hunter, and had been an Indian fighter almost from his boyhood.

In one of my after conversations with him, he told me that a band of hostile Indians, in one of their incursions upon our frontier, had attacked and burnt the house in which his parents lived, and had murdered his mother and brother and little sister.

By some means Rash, who was but a boy, had escaped. But he did not forget the deed, nor those who did it, and made a vow that he would kill a hundred Indians of that tribe, to avenge the slaughter of his family.

I asked him if he had completed his list.

He replied : " Not yet. I have knocked over a good many, and I *allow* that I will knock over a good many more before I die."

Fortunately we were not to visit any tribe

against which he bore this grudge, so that there was no fear of any hostile action on his part except in self-defence.

The soldiers were nominally under the command of a little short-legged sergeant, whose principal business was to swear at the oxen, and to drink honey by the quart whenever we had the fortune to fell a bee tree.

Rash, however, was looked up to by all of them ; for in him were centred all the qualifications useful in travelling through a region where it was a matter of chance whether we would meet friend or foe. He was hunter, scout, and Indian fighter combined, and was ready to bring to the front any qualification called for in emergency.

We had an early breakfast, the Commissioner's cow was milked, and as we drank our coffee we all admitted that milk certainly *did* improve coffee.

After this the tents were struck, and, with the bear-skins, robes, and cooking utensils, were packed in the wagons, and we commenced our march, keeping together as much as possible, the horsemen riding in front to break a wide trail through the high grass for the wagons.

The Doctor was clad in a buck-skin coat, with high boots, and a soft, broad-brimmed white hat, which turned up all round, and assumed any shape which the owner might wish.

He rode a small mule named Kitty Keero, upon whom he lavished various terms of endearment.

As he was a pretty lusty fellow, it is probable that Kitty would have preferred a rider who was more crusty and less heavy.

As we started on our journey we all knew that several weeks would pass before we reached the Otoe village, which was to be our first stopping-place, and was the home of one of the tribes claiming the lands which the Commissioner was empowered to buy; but we did not know what difficulties we might encounter on our way thither.

We knew also that there were rivers to be crossed and bridged in some way or other, but beyond this all was mystery. And as we looked over the prairies and saw the vast ocean of green, we could not tell what might be afloat on it, nor whether the first cruiser which we might meet on our way across it would hoist a friendly flag or fire a shot.

CHAPTER VII.

The Party of Sac Indians.

EXCEPT in the time of war there is but little variety in prairie life. The experience of one day is but a repetition of that of another.

The killing of a deer is quite an event. The appearance of one of our hunters upon a distant hill would give birth to all sorts of speculations as to his success, and a deer coming in sight, although far off, was the signal for bustle; for we were all anxious for something better than salt pork and bacon, and some one was always on the look-out and ready to start after the game which appeared within reach.

There was a keen interest in watching the hunter as he stole through the long grass towards his intended prey.

Suddenly the deer seems to grow suspicious, and is on the alert with his head erect, and his nose in the air—now he begins to move off—

“*Crack!*” goes the rifle—

In five minutes he is out of sight, or the hunter is making signals for assistance to help him bring in our intended supper.

The sight of a fresh trail through the grass would be the foundation of endless fancies.

By whom was it made? Were they friends or foes? Whither were they going? Were they warriors or hunters? These and a hundred other conjectures would be made as we stood around the marks which told us that we were not the only wanderers upon that waste.

It was a week since we had left Fort Leavenworth, and we had traversed about a hundred miles. Sometimes the prairies were studded with groves of trees which looked like islands in a sea. Sometimes high, broken hills rose up, so steep and sharp in outline, and so rugged in ascent, that they looked like the time-worn fortifications of some past century.

Ravines and forests, here and there, broke up the monotonous green waste, and trees winding in long lines across it pointed out where a brook was finding its way through the grass, to some larger river.

One evening our encampment was in a grove on the borders of a brook. Several times dur-

ing the day signs of a trail had been observed in the grass, and the whole party were on the look-out for Indians, and lest the horses should be driven off by lurking marauders, they were secured by long ropes to stakes. The night, however, passed without disturbance, and in the morning the tents were struck, and the party resumed its journey.

As the movements of the wagons were slow, four of us strolled forward on foot, and were about a mile in advance of the party. We travelled leisurely that they might overtake us, amusing ourselves by discharging our rifles at the ravens or turkey buzzards which soared above us.

We were out of sight of the wagons. In front of us, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, rose a cone-like hill, from each side of which extended a long ridge, shutting out the view beyond. Presently a black object rose over its top. Gradually it grew larger, and at last an Indian appeared.

He caught sight of us at once, and stood still, until two others joined him.

For some moments there appeared to be a consultation among them ; then seating them-

selves they waited for us to come up. The position which they had taken was directly upon the narrow trail which we were following, so that, whether friends or foes, there was no possibility of avoiding them. But as there were only three, there was little to be apprehended. Before advancing, however, the soldiers took the precaution to examine their flints and the priming of their guns. While thus engaged, one of them, named Wolf, a tall, gigantic fellow, with a neck like a bull's, who had fought against Black Hawk, took the opportunity to bestow a little of his advice and opinion upon the others, and turning round he commenced :

“ You see them ar Ingens ; well, them is Sacs and Foxes. I know 'em, for I *fit* agin 'em when Black Hawk led 'em on. And now I think on 't, it 's dreadful aggravating to see how the folks at the east'ard are honoring that ar rascal for killing and murdering the whites, while we who *fit* agin him to prevent it aint taken no notice on ; it 's monstrous aggravating. But that aint nothing to the *pint*. You see them ar Ingens on that ar hill. Now you think there 's only three on 'em. There you

think wrong, bekase there 's more behind 'em, for, if there war n't, they would come on to meet us, and would n't be squatting like so many woodchucks in the *parara*.

“They 'm waiting for the rest to come up to see whether they think it best to rob us or not. That 's my opinion, and I know something of Ingen natur, for I *fit* agin 'em. Now I know one what they won't rob, and that 's me; first, bekase I aint got nothing to lose; and second, because I intend to make my yager¹ speak to the first redskin what tries to take it.

“And now, my boys, move ahead and keep a stiff upper lip.

“If the worst comes to the worst, we can keep them off until the wagons come up, and then we 'll lick 'em.”

After finishing his address, he shouldered his yager and strode on, followed by the rest of us.

Notwithstanding his knowledge of “Ingen natur,” we did not place as much confidence in his experience as he might have supposed ;

¹ This is a short rifle, and carries a large ball. They are used by the U. S. dragoons, on account of the convenience of their length.

nor did we expect to push matters to the extremity which he seemed to take for granted would be the result of our meeting.

In a few minutes we were at the bottom of the hill. The savages maintained their sitting posture, nor did they rise until we came within about ten yards of them. Upon reaching them we found that the soldier had been correct in one of his conjectures; for at the distance of little less than a quarter of a mile, were about seventy more of the same band, driving in front of them a large drove of horses. They were all wild, uncouth-looking fellows. A few had blankets, but the most of them wore robes of buffalo skin. At the sight of us they left their horses in charge of one or two squaws and scampered over the prairie to meet us.

“I told you so,” said Wolf. “Look to your guns, and when they crowds around, keep a tight grip on the *weapons*, and don't let them go out of your hands.”

The crowd poured on, each endeavoring to outrun his neighbor.

Many threw from them the robes which impeded their motions, and several pulling them

from their shoulders packed them under their arms. Yet they appeared to be actuated by curiosity alone.

Only one of them had a gun; the rest were armed with bows and arrows and tomahawks. Upon reaching us, they pressed round us, fingering our different articles of dress with much curiosity, though without any appearance of hostility.

At length a tall, thin fellow took hold of Wolf's yager.

"No you don't, *stranger!*" shouted Wolf, jerking the gun from his grasp, with the look of a nettled bull. At the same time he whirled the Indian off, with a violence that fairly made him spin.

"Keep off, you red devils," said he, stepping back. "I want none of your *neighborship.*" Seizing his gun by the breech, he whirled it around with a violence which caused the Indians to draw back, and cleared a small circle around him.

Just then the chief of the party rode up. He spoke a few words, which caused them to draw off; then walking his horse up to us, he cordially shook hands with all. He was an

old man, dressed in Indian style, with the exception of a plaid handkerchief tied round his head. Upon the top of this was mounted a broad-brimmed black hat overshadowing a little dried-up, French-looking face.

Agreeable as his presence was at that moment, there was but little about him to justify the idea we had formed of the leader of a band of savages; and there were many nobler men in his troop.

As they stood in a large circle around us, half naked, I think I had never before beheld so many finely formed men. It seemed strange that they should be at the command of such a miserable-looking leader.

While we were standing thus, a shout from one of them attracted the attention of the whole band.

The next moment the unwieldy wagons came in sight toiling over a distant ridge, followed by the light wagons and the soldiers.

At this discovery the Indians scampered towards them, and in a short time were clustering round the vehicles. They remained there about half an hour, and then resumed their journey along the prairie.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Journey—Saline River.

ANOTHER week had elapsed, but we were still on our journey.

With the exception of the Sacs and Foxes we had met no Indians.

Our travelling was slow, for at times we came to streams whose banks had to be dug away to render them passable for wagons.

Bushes had to be cut down and thrown in the river to form a footing for the teams, and to prevent their miring, and the whole twelve oxen were often yoked to one of the heavy wagons to drag it up the roadway which had been dug.

Their efforts were accompanied by shouts and yells on the part of the teamsters, who were under the charge of a strapping backwoodsman who yelled louder than any of them.

Upon being remonstrated with for his noise and language he replied :

“I have drove oxen since Adam was a kitten, and when an ox has a hard pull to make, the louder I yell, the harder he pulls.”

We struck the Platte¹ River about forty miles from the Otoe village; then taking a westerly direction, we followed the course of this powerful tributary of the Missouri.

On the first night, our camp was upon a high bank of the Saline, a river which flows through the prairie until it empties into the Platte.

During the spring of every year moisture exudes from the soil near its source, covering the prairie for the distance of many miles.

This is dried up by the heat of summer, and leaves in its place a thick incrustation of salt.

This in turn is dissolved by successive rains and carried into the Saline River, giving to its water the brackish taste, from which it has derived its name. There is a barrenness around

¹ The Indian name for La Platte is Nebraska, signifying the shallow river; as also the word Niagara signifies the broken river. This last word might lead to a pretty correct conclusion as to the meaning of the name Niagara, given to the celebrated river and falls connecting Lake Erie with Ontario; for the word is the same among several of the different tribes, who, though they now dwell in the “Far West,” may nevertheless have once roamed in the neighborhood of our Eastern waters.

the stream, contrasting strongly with the other rivers that grace the prairie. Around *them* is always a rich forest of the deepest green, and every thing marks the luxuriance of the soil, and the nourishment yielded by the streams to the lofty trees which hang over their waters.

But the Saline has no groves to fringe its banks. Here and there a huge dead tree may be seen leaning over its surface, or lying prostrate in the water which gurgles around its branches.

Altogether it was the most cheerless camping ground that we met with, and to add to our discomforts the mosquitoes swarmed about us in clouds, and were much more attentive than agreeable.

I strolled some distance down the stream, pattering my rifle bullets on the water, to the great annoyance of several ducks who were quietly dozing upon its surface, and some sprawling terrapins who were floating down the stream.

A loud hail from the camp, and the voice of Mordecai announcing that supper was ready, recalled me to the spot.

My fellow travellers had already com-

menced, with knives of all sizes and descriptions, and the venison disappeared like magic, before their reiterated attacks.

Though at all times very well qualified to play a conspicuous part, in work of that description, they were now more than usually fitted for the task, owing to their eating only two meals a day—one at sunrise and one at sunset—the rest of the time being occupied in our journey. When we had finished, the sun had set, and the stars were glimmering in the sky. Our party collected round a fire of blazing logs, and our guide having lighted his pipe, related to us a tale, of which the following is the purport.

About forty miles above the spot where we are now encamped, lie the great salt plains, which cause the brackish taste of the Saline River.

In one part of these plains is said to be a large rock of pure salt of dazzling whiteness, and to which is attached the following legend. Many years since, long before the white settlers had crossed the Mississippi River, a tribe of Indians resided upon the Platte, near its junction with the Saline.

Their head chief was looked up to by them as a model warrior, for he was fierce and unsparing in battle, and had such a hankering for hostile encounter that often alone he would sally out to pay a bloody visit to some tribe with which they might then be at war.

His nation gloried in him as their leader, but shrank from intimate fellowship, so that even in the midst of his own people he was alone.

Yet there was one who clung to him and loved him. It was a beautiful girl, and graceful as one of the fawns of her own prairie.

She became his wife, and he loved her with all the fierce energy of his nature.

It was a new feeling to him and stole like a sunbeam into his grim heart. Her sway over him became unbounded, and he was like a tiger tamed.

But this did not last long. She died, and he buried her. He returned to his lodge, and forbade all entrance. The morning came, and with its earliest dawn he left the lodge. He had put on his war paint, and was fully armed.

He took no notice of those around him, but walked gloomily to the spot where his wife was

buried. He paused for a moment over the grave, then turning on his heel, strode across the prairie.

After the lapse of a month he returned to his village, laden with scalps. He tarried but a day, and again set out alone. A week elapsed, and he again returned, bringing with him a lump of white salt. In a few words he told his tale.

He had travelled many miles over the prairie. It was night; he was weary, and threw himself on the grass. He had not slept long when he was awakened by the low wailing of a voice near him. He started up, and by the light of the moon beheld an old hag brandishing a tomahawk over the head of a young female, who was kneeling, imploring mercy.

The warrior wondered how two women could be at this spot, alone, and at that hour of the night, for there was no village within forty miles of the place. There could be no hunting party near, or he would have discovered it.

He approached them, but they seemed unconscious of his presence. The young female, finding her prayers unheeded, sprang up and

made a desperate attempt to get possession of the tomahawk. A struggle ensued, but the old woman was victorious. Twisting one hand in the long black hair of her victim, she raised the weapon in her other and prepared to strike.

The face of the young female was turned to the light, and the warrior beheld with horror the features of his deceased wife.

In an instant he sprang forward and buried his tomahawk in the skull of the old squaw. But ere he had time to clasp the form of his wife, the ground opened, both sank from his sight, and on the spot where they had stood appeared a rock of white salt. He had broken a piece from it, and brought it to his tribe.

This tradition is still current among the Indians who frequent that portion of the country. They also imagine that the rock is still under custody of the old squaw, and that the only way to obtain a portion of it is to attack her. For this reason, before attempting to collect salt, they beat the ground with clubs and tomahawks, and each blow is considered as inflicted upon the person of the hag. The ceremony is continued until they imagine

she has been sufficiently belabored to resign her treasure without opposition.

This superstition, though privately ridiculed by the chiefs of the different tribes, is devoutly credited by the rabble.

CHAPTER IX.

The Otoe Messengers—An Otoe Warrior—The Iotan Chief.

ON the afternoon following we encamped within ten miles of the Otoe village. Several times during the day we had observed Indians watching us from a distance, but they had disappeared upon being seen, nor did any of them seem disposed to approach nearer. We encamped on a small knoll. At its foot a meagre run of water was struggling through the grass, while a line of tall, rank weeds marked its course, as it found its way through the different hollows. A solitary tree grew over a small pool, and a clump of wild plum trees clustered around its trunk. With these exceptions there was not a tree nor a bush in sight.

At a little distance was the site of a deserted Indian village. It had been uninhabited for many years, and the spots where the lodges

once stood were overgrown with weeds and creeping vines. Near by was a burial-ground, which had not been used for many years.

Tall weeds grew upon the mounds, and a frightened prairie-hen started up as we walked among them.

We had scarcely put up the largest tent, when the loud cry, "Indian ahead!" was called out by one of the soldiers.

The savage was on a hill about five hundred yards distant, mounted upon a small black horse.

He wore a scarlet blanket and carried a long spear. He sat for a long time watching our movements, then thumping his heels into the sides of his horse, he galloped up to the tent.

Here he dismounted, and turning his horse loose, walked up to Major Dougherty, whom he had met before, and saluted him with the usual Indian salutation of "How! how!" uttered from the bottom of his chest.

His dress was very scanty. A pair of rough leggins were drawn over his legs, and a piece of blue cloth was secured around his hips. The rest of his body was unclothed, unless the red blanket, which most of the time lay on the

ground at his feet, might be considered part of his apparel.

The chief of the Otoe village had been apprised of our approach, and had sent him to watch lest we should come upon the town before it was prepared for our reception.

He hung about the tent for some time, saying little ; but we could see that his dark eyes were moving with restless activity in all directions, so that he might know what report to make as to our appearance and number.

Then, having received a few presents for the chief, and one or two for himself, he caught the end of the buffalo-skin halter, which, though secured to the neck of his horse, was long enough to trail twenty feet after him, and with a sudden jerk brought the animal to him, and sprang upon his back.

He had hardly mounted before another Indian appeared on an opposite hill and galloped up. He exchanged a slight salutation with the first comer, and passing him shook hands with Dougherty. There was more cordiality about him than we had observed in the other.

Upon reaching the tent he signified his intention to remain during the night, and accord-

ingly turned his horse loose ; and lighting his pipe, wrapped his blanket round him, and, with a prudent eye to the future, seated himself near the fire, watching the cook who was preparing supper.

The other started off towards the village, and in a short time was out of sight.

The next day was bright and clear, and we started for the Otoe village. Our journey lay for the whole distance along the borders of the Platte. It was a soft golden morning, the water sparkling and bubbling along its broad channel. The river was studded with islands teeming with verdure and tinted with all the various hues of autumn. The prairie grass was bending beneath the dew-drops, which hung like strings of crystal upon its withering blades.

The wagons were now kept close together.

The party, which during the first part of the journey had straggled apart, was collected.

Our Otoe friend rode in front, accompanied by Major Dougherty.

We had travelled several miles, when another Indian galloped up. He was one of the principal braves of the tribe. He was completely naked, with the exception of a piece of

cloth around his hips. His head was shaven, and to the scalp-lock hung an ornament of deer's hair, resembling the crest of an ancient helmet. His whole person—head, face, and body—was covered with vermilion, and at a few yards' distance he looked as if he had been skinned.

But notwithstanding his bloody appearance, his countenance, though pale and grave, had a mild expression not usually met with among the Indians; and when he spoke, his voice was like soft music.

He was a favorite with most of the traders in that part of the country, on account of his generous character.

He came to give us directions as to our course, and joined our party to show us the way.

We had arrived within a short distance of the village, though as yet it was hidden from sight by a high bluff, when suddenly a horseman galloped over the hills and came towards us.

The cry of "The Iotan!" burst from several who knew him, and in a few moments this redoubtable chief was at our side. He had brought into service the whole of a wardrobe which he had received from the whites.

His long hair was bound up by a band of grizzly-bear skin. Around his neck hung a necklace of the claws of the same animal ; and what was of more importance, in his own estimation, he wore a long surtout coat, of blue cloth, adorned with red facings and enormously large brass buttons, and garnished upon each shoulder with a pair of tarnished silver epaulettes.

From beneath the skirts of the coat stuck out two bare legs ; and a pair of coarse moccasins of buffalo hide completed his outward rig.

There was a look of comic slyness around the eyes of this chief, united with an irascible twinkle, which bespoke a disposition habitually good-natured, but prone to gusts of passion.

The most prominent feature of his face, however, had suffered mutilation. The end of his nose was gone. I was curious to learn whether this singular wound had been received in battle or private brawl ; and my inquiries made me acquainted with a strange tale of Indian revenge. There are a dozen different versions of the story in circulation among the traders and trappers, but, as far as I could ascertain, the following is the most correct.

CHAPTER X.

Iotan and His Brother—Indian Revenge.

SEVERAL years before the Iotan became Chief of the Otoes he lost his nose in a drunken carouse in which nearly all of the tribe took part.

By some means or other they had become possessed of a large quantity of whiskey, and were so elated at being the owners of an article so much prized, that they determined to have a national celebration of the event.

The appointed day came round, and there was no delinquency in their attendance.

The squaws were not permitted to take any part in the ceremony, lest they might not be able to look after their husbands, who, under the circumstances, were not expected to be able to take care of themselves.

Weapons of all kinds were removed, as the Indians were fully aware of their own ungovernable nature when under the influence of

liquor, and took this precaution to guard against bloodshed.

The carouse commenced in a lodge selected for the occasion, and before long it resounded with shouts and yells, and from cries the savages got to personal encounter.

In this stage of the riot the Iotan and his brother had a scuffle. They grappled and rolled upon the ground. In the frenzy of strife and intoxication, his brother bit off the end of the nose of the Iotan, and instantly extricating himself, rushed out of the lodge.

The Iotan was perfectly sobered ; he paused for a moment, looking intently in the fire, without uttering a word ; then drawing his blanket over his head, walked out of the building and hid himself in his own lodge. On the following morning he sought his brother, and told him that he had disfigured him for life. "To-night," said he "I will go to my lodge and sleep. If I can forgive you when the sun rises you are safe ; if not, you die." He kept his word ; he slept upon his purpose ; but sleep brought not mercy. He sent word to his brother that he had resolved upon his death, that there was no further hope for him ;

at the same time he besought him to make no resistance, but to meet his fate as a warrior should.

His brother received the message and fled from the village. An Indian is untiring in his pursuit of revenge, and though years may elapse, yet he will obtain it in the end.

The brother kept out of his way for a long time ; but one day as the Iotan was in the woods, he heard the noise of a twig breaking beneath a cautious footstep. He crouched behind a log and watched. An Indian emerged from the thicket, and gazed cautiously around. The Iotan recognized his brother. His careworn face and emaciated form evinced the anxiety and privations that he had undergone. But this was nothing to the Iotan ; as yet his revenge was unsated, and the miserable appearance of his brother brought no mercy. He waited until he was within a few feet of him ; then rose up, and met him face to face. His brother was unarmed, but met his fiery look without flinching.

“ Brother,” said the Iotan, cocking his rifle, “ I have followed you long in vain ; now I have found you, you must die.”

The other made no reply ; but throwing off his blanket, stepped up to him and presented his breast. The Iotan shot him through the heart.

His revenge was gratified ; but from that hour a change came over him. He became gloomy and morose ; shunned his fellow-men, and roamed the woods, where he was nearly driven to suicide by his feelings of remorse.

Many years elapsed before he recovered from the deep anguish caused by this unnatural act of vengeance.

CHAPTER XI.

The Reception—The Town.

MANY years after this the Iotan was appointed chief of the Otoe tribe; and his after conduct fully justified the choice of the nation.

He was skilful in devising and planning war parties, and desperate and daring in leading them. And although now well stricken in years, there is no warrior more constantly on the war-path, and when it comes to the deadly struggle, no arm falls heavier upon their foes than that of the Iotan chief.

The old warrior welcomed us cordially, then turning round he rode with us in the direction of his village. While he was speaking with the Commissioner, several Indians had clambered upon a high bluff to watch our movements.

Suddenly the Iotan galloped towards them and waved his arm, uttering a long, shrill whoop.

It was answered by those on the hill ; who commenced whirling their blankets around their heads.

While we were in doubt as to the meaning of the manœuvre, a loud roar rose from behind the bluff, and a troop of horsemen burst round its base, and came pouring down upon us.

There must have been several hundred of them.

Every man was naked, but glaring with paint.

They dashed onward, with loud yells, brandishing their spears, and whirling their tomahawks. It seemed as if old Pluto had given a holiday, and that his crew were careering around us, under the forms of these snorting steeds and their wilder masters.

The old chief sat like a statue.

I looked around upon our little band ; there were several lowering brows and tightly compressed lips, and the fingers of two or three were on their gun triggers. They were not accustomed to Indian welcome, and to them, all this long parade of yelling warriors wore a menacing appearance.

The band was close upon us, when at a sig-

nal from the Iotan they separated, and galloped around us in an inner and outer circle, riding in opposite directions.

The old chief smiled with an air of grim satisfaction, as he observed the effect produced by his warriors; then with a loud whoop, he joined in the wild *mêlée*.

It was a very helter-skelter ride, as far as the Indians were concerned. Several were unhorsed, and scrambled from beneath the horses' feet as well as they could.

Fortunately none seemed to be hurt, but caught their animals, mounted them, and joined again in the general uproar.

After this scene of hubbub and confusion had continued for about fifteen minutes, the troop ceased its clamor, and formed in a large circle round us, with their horses' heads towards the party. Presently this ring opened, and was extended in two lines, through which a band of warriors advanced, keeping time to a long, solemn chant, sung by the whole troop, and accompanied by a kind of drum. This band was formed of the flower of the Indian village.

None were admitted except those who could boast of having taken a certain number of

scalps, or of having performed an equally honorable service, in stealing a large number of horses.

They were highly ornamented ; paint of every hue was laid upon their bodies. Their heads were decorated with feathers. Long strings of wampum hung from their necks and ears. Each bore a calumet adorned with feathers and tinkling bells. Some wore glittering armlets and collars of tin. Their heads were shaven, and covered with vermilion, and from the top of each hung a scalp lock, generally adorned with an eagle's plume. As much care had been bestowed upon the horses as upon their riders, and they had been selected from the whole village. They now moved forward with proud step, as if conscious of the haughty character of those who guided them ; but this was as much owing to the horsemanship of the riders as to the spirit of the animals themselves ; for there is no class of people better able to show off the points of a horse than the Indians, who live in the saddle almost from childhood.

The band moved slowly around us inside of the circle, still keeping up their loud and not in-

harmonious song, which we afterwards learned was in praise of the whites—that is, of their liberality.

At length the Iotan gave a signal, and the troop fell back into the general crowd, after which he and several of the principal chiefs seating themselves on the grass, near us, produced their pipes and began to smoke.

Presently the Iotan advanced to the Commissioner and Major Dougherty, and drawing a few whiffs from his pipe, presented it to them in turn.

Each drew a few whiffs and handed it back to him.

The Iotan then made a short address, and returned to his seat.

Major Dougherty informed us that by this “smoke and speech” he and the Commissioner had each been presented with a horse.

Several other chiefs and braves followed the example of the Iotan, and by the time they had got through these smoking performances, the Commissioner and Major Dougherty were each the prospective owner of five or six horses.

I may add here, that when the fulfilment of

these promises was carried out several days afterwards, on the part of some of the minor braves, a great deal of the enthusiasm which led to the gifts had evaporated, and the old, the halt, and the blind were among the horses which found their way to our tents as presents to the Commissioner and Indian Agent.

On a future occasion of a similar kind, at another tribe, an enthusiastic brave who had promised beyond his means, seized the occasion to visit a friend who lived in a village about thirty miles off, taking his horse with him. We never heard of him or his present afterwards.

As soon as the ceremony of "smoking horses" to their guests had been ended, an old Indian who was notorious for being the greatest thief, and for having killed more men than any other in the village, rose up to boast of what he had done in his former days, and to let us know that he was not a man to be overlooked—a thing which seemed very likely to happen in the bustle which prevailed. He was a lean and shrivelled old fellow, but his strength must have been great in his prime, for every muscle rose like a rope upon his

withered frame. He spoke for about fifteen minutes, and then drew back.

When he had concluded, another old man rose up, and in like manner vaunted his former exploits, many of which savored strongly of the marvellous. These speeches were translated with great gravity by the interpreter, who, to confirm our wavering belief, took an opportunity of whispering into our ears that, "in boasting of his exploits, an Indian was always scrupulous in adhering to the truth." This was perfectly convincing, and while he travelled along within the verge of possibility, we were resolved to give credence to all that he uttered.

After we had listened to a few more of these worthies, and had smoked a few pipes of kin-ne-ka-neek with the different chiefs, the party prepared to move towards the town.

In crossing the prairie, which separated us from the village, our course was stopped by a deep gulley, which about a dozen squaws were engaged in filling with bushes and weeds, to render it passable for the heavy wagons. While this was going on, the old Indian who had first delivered his address, came up at a

gallop. He did not pause at the hollow, but probably for the purpose of showing off his horsemanship dashed down into it. His horse made a vigorous spring up the opposite bank, but lost his footing on the slippery verge, and after a desperate scrambling, rolled with his rider floundering in the mud at the bottom.

There was a shout of laughter at his expense. For a moment he stood glaring about him; then raising his withered arm, he shook it at the crowd, and yelled out something which we could not understand, but which caused all the Indians to laugh louder than ever.

Having thus given vent to his anger, he sprang upon his horse, scrambled up the bank, and galloped to the village.

A large concourse of women and children followed the party, and clustered like bees around the heavy wagons.

In about an hour we passed through the town, and selected a small hill, at about five hundred yards' distance, as our camping ground. The heavy wagons were drawn up; the tents were pitched around them, and the horses and oxen being released from their yokes, were sent off to a thick grove of trees at a short

distance, where the wild pea vines afforded ample fodder.

The Otoe village is situated upon a ridge of hills overlooking the Platte River, which is about a quarter of a mile distant. There is but little beauty or neatness about an Indian town.

The lodges are built in the shape of a half egg. They frequently are twenty feet in height, and sometimes sixty in diameter. The roofs are formed of long poles, which diverge like the radii of a circle, from one common centre. The outer ring of the circle is formed of upright posts, driven closely together in the ground, and projecting upward about five feet. These are interwoven with brushwood and the smaller branches of trees, and form the support of the outer end of the poles composing the roof, the interstices of which are also interwoven with twigs and brushwood. The whole is then covered with earth, and when finished resembles a large hillock. The town contained about seventy of these lodges, standing singly or in groups, without any attention to order or regularity.

Within they are capacious but dark, being lighted merely by a small aperture at the top,

which serves both as window and chimney. The fire is built in a cavity in the centre, directly under the hole in the roof, by which the smoke escapes after floating in easy wreaths about the interior.

As the lodges are very spacious, a little back from the fire there is a circle of tree trunks standing like columns, and connected by poles laid in their forks, forming a support for the roof, which otherwise, from the great length of the poles that form it, and the heavy mass of superincumbent earth, might fall in and bury the inhabitants. Around the wall of the building are ranged cribs or berths for sleeping, screened from view by heavy mats of grass and rushes. Over the fire is inclined a forked stake, in the hook of which hangs a large kettle, generally filled with buffalo flesh and corn. This, to judge from its looks, is never removed from the fire, even for the purpose of being cleansed.

CHAPTER XII.

Indian Habits—The Escape.

WE had been a week in the village, and had become familiar with all the antiquated gossips of the place. The old warriors would stop to favor us with some joke, which, as in courtesy bound, we relished most highly ; though the wit of it was usually beyond our fathom, being hidden in the arcana of their language. The old squaws would hold us by the button, and whine into our ears some lugubrious tale, equally unintelligible. The children soon lost their shyness.

All day long they hung around our tents, clad in nothing, teasing the black cook, or frightening the oxen. When not thus engaged, they were scampering across the prairie, in the enjoyment of some boyish game. Here and there, a knot of them were busily engaged in gambling for arrows, and discussing with the greatest earnestness the fairness and unfairness of each cast of their competitor.

Our tents became the gathering place where the Indians collected to discuss the news of the day. Here they would light their pipes, and talk over deeds of former times; of scalps taken--of horses stolen--of buffalo hunts, and of hair-breadth escapes from the Sioux and Osage Indians. All the incidents which fill the desultory life of a savage were discussed; receiving their meed of praise or censure, as they deserved it.

Among others they spoke highly of a young Indian, who was leaning listlessly against the wheel of one of the wagons, gazing, with an air of abstraction, upon the group around the fire.

He was scarcely twenty years old; yet he was already a brave, and high among the warriors.

Among various things related of him was the following.

One day, a few weeks before our arrival, he was returning from an unsuccessful hunt, which had taken him a great distance from his home.

It was near sunset; the Otoe had yet twenty miles to travel, and it would be nightfall before

he could reach his village ; but he was unwilling to urge on his weary horse. He therefore rode slowly, but from habit kept a watchful eye over the prairie.

At last he caught sight of several dark objects upon the crest of a distant hill, and presently four mounted Indians came in full view. They did not see him, but rode in the same direction with himself. Supposing them to be some of his own tribe, he checked his horse, and gave a loud whoop to attract their notice.

At first they did not hear him ; but a second hail brought them to a halt. A consultation seemed to take place ; after which they changed their course, and rode slowly towards him ; and as they were some distance off, he dismounted, laid his rifle in the grass, and lighting his pipe, sat down waiting for them to come up. When they drew nearer he discovered, from some peculiarity in their dress, that they were not Otoes, but, as he supposed, Kansas, who were then at peace with his tribe ; so fearing nothing, he continued lolling on the grass, and smoking. But as they came on, their cautious movements awakened suspicion, and raising himself, he watched them with every sense on the alert,

though he continued to smoke his pipe with apparent tranquillity.

He now perceived that they gradually separated, as if to surround him. Another glance, showed that they were Osages, the deadly foes of his tribe. Dashing his pipe to the ground, he bent forward to seize his rifle. It was fortunate that he did so; for a bullet whizzed past him, cutting a gash in his shoulder.

In an instant he sprang upon his horse. The Osage war whoop rang in his ear; but with that daring that never forsakes an Indian, he brandished his rifle, and uttering an answering war cry, dashed off like the wind. Every thing depended upon the speed and bottom of his horse.

Hill and hollow disappeared behind him. His enemies pressed him hard, but at a gallop they could not use their rifles.

At a distance was a skirt of forest, and could he but reach this, he would be safe. His horse was nearly broken down. The rider plied the lash, the generous animal taxed his strength to the uttermost; but nature was exhausted.

Within a quarter of a mile of the forest, he broke down, and his rider sprang from his back

and bounded forward on foot. A loud cry burst from his pursuers, as they saw him abandon his horse ; but there was little cause for the shout, for his speed nearly equalled that of their jaded steeds.

He was within about a hundred yards of the thicket when, finding that they could not overtake him, the Osages halted and discharged their pieces, but missed their mark. The Otoe turned half round when on the edge of the bushes, shook his rifle in the air, and raising a yell of defiance, plunged into the thicket.

The advantage was now on his side, for the Osages dared not approach, lest he should fire upon them from his covert.

For a short time they rode up and down, at a distance, hoping to catch a glimpse of his figure, then returned across the prairie, contenting themselves with carrying off the deserted horse.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Rival Chiefs—Indian Feasts.

BESIDES the Iotan, there are two other chiefs, inferior in rank, who keep a jealous watch over each other.

The Indian names of these two worthies, I have forgotten; but they are known to the trappers by those of the Big Kaw (or Kansas) and the Thief.

This last name, no doubt, was deservedly earned by the father of the present possessor; but in process of time, the old Thief was gathered to his fathers, and the young Thief reigned in his stead.

He inherited his name, his worn-out blankets, and so large a number of grudges and private quarrels that, in acting as executor and avenging his father's injuries, years had elapsed before he could fairly say that the debts of the deceased were paid off.

The young Thief had, however, now become

the old Thief. His hair was silvered by age, and he had arrived at that period of life which old folks are apt to call "the years of discretion"; that is, he had passed the prime of his usefulness, and had reached that age when strong attachments are usually formed to easy comforts and chimney-corners.

The Big Kaw is a short, thick Indian, rather good-natured, but gifted with a large supply of mulish obstinacy, and a temper like gunpowder.

Oppose him—flash!—he is in a blaze; the children scamper, the squaws scatter, the rabble vanish.

The family of this chief consists of several wives, and a son, who is one of the most intelligent young men in the village. He, however, is the very counterpart of the old man in disposition; and when the two get fairly excited, the village is in an uproar.

If the quarrel is commenced in a lodge, the building is usually vacated by the other occupants, until silence within gives notice that the storm has blown over. Upon these occasions, those who return usually find the old man looking very foolish and the son very angry.

From this it is suspected that the former is held in subjection by his graceless offspring. Be that as it may, the young warrior has a strong affection for his old father. Although in his anger he sometimes oversteps the bounds of propriety in his manner towards him, yet, upon the whole, he is looked upon as a model son, particularly as he permits nobody to bully his father but himself.

The Thief was in every respect the reverse of his rival. He was tall and wiry. He was quiet in all his movements, and would sit for hours in the same posture, his eyes alone being busy. He slid in and out of our tent with so noiseless a step, that we were often unaware either of his presence or his absence.

The Iotan chief is the lord paramount of the village. With that cunning for which he is noted, he contrives, by balancing the interest of the two inferior chiefs, to keep them so constantly engaged in watching each other, that they have no time to turn their attention to himself.

On the day of our arrival we were invited to feast with about half the village.

The first lodge which we entered was that of

the Iotan. We found him sitting cross-legged upon some cushions to receive us.

Upon our coming up to him, he invited the Commissioner to a seat next himself. Then turning to one of his wives he called for the feast, which consisted of dried buffalo flesh, boiled with hard corn. The interior of his abode wore but a dull, dingy look. The rafters were almost hidden by the eddying clouds of smoke, lazily seeking the hole in the roof, which served for a chimney.

This old chief had divided his affections among five wives. They were seated in different parts of the lodge, engaged in pounding corn, or chattering over the news of the day. They were evidently under little subjection. While we were eating, the old man took the opportunity to disburden his heart. He confided to Dougherty a list of their caprices, and the difficulty which he found in maintaining a proper discipline where there were so many mistresses and but one master.

Upon leaving this lodge, we next visited that of the Big Kaw. He guided us himself until we reached it, and entered through its

low funnel-mouthed door. We had scarcely seated ourselves, before we found that we had got into warm quarters. Dougherty informed us in a low tone that from what he overheard the lady of the house had not expected visitors, and was unprepared for them.

There was evidently trouble in the wigwam.

We could read it in her lowering eyes, and in the look of the Indian, who was very ill at ease.

Occasionally he cast towards his helpmate a deprecating glance.

A bowl of dried buffalo flesh was placed before us; the viands being rather tough, drew forth some remark from our host, half facetious, half apologetic. By accident the squaw heard it, and thought that it was intended as a reflection upon her. In an instant she was in a blaze, and opened her artillery upon the chief. For a moment he shrank under it; and could it have been done with credit to himself, probably would have evacuated the field; but in the present case that was impossible; and to be thus harried by his wife before strangers was not to be borne, and his touch-paper temper began to take fire.

At first it evinced itself only by a few sulky shakes of his head ; but at last it burst out, and sent back shot for shot. This lasted for some moments, carried on with equal vigor on both sides, but at length the bursts from the chief grew fewer and fewer.

He was evidently preparing to bring an argument which he had not hitherto used into the field, for with a few muttered words he pointed to a large stick which lay on the floor and called the attention of his wife in that direction. It is probable that she understood its meaning, for after a few sulky looks, and a few sullen mutterings, her words ceased altogether.

We remained but a short time longer, and after visiting the lodges of several others, returned to our tents.

CHAPTER XIV.

Domestic Grievances.

AMONG our daily visitors were three old squaws. Their gray, uncombed hair hung in thick, matted locks down to their waists, and their long skinny arms, with which they coaxingly patted us, resembled grapevines. These old harridans were shuffling around all day long, peeping into every hole and cranny. One of them even stole meat from the frying-pan while Mordecai had turned his head to drive off the other.

Come upon them when we would, they were always sure to greet us with a smirking, half-piteous look, but as soon as our backs were turned they were at their old occupations. Indeed so constant was their presence, that the sight of one of them moving off towards the town was the signal for a general search to discover what we had lost, as they seldom went off without taking with them some article which did not belong to them.

They had taken a particular fancy to Jones, the black cook. This unlucky wight was yet young in years and inexperienced in the ways of the world.

He had a fond and foolish heart, and acknowledged that he always felt a sort of sneaking kindness for the other sex. When dwelling upon the subject he used to open his eyes until the small speck of a pupil was almost lost in the immense field of white, and exclaim: "I aint afeard of no man, but I can't stand the wimmen."

To the young urchins who intruded into his domains he was not so indulgent, but kept a keen eye and a long stick for their especial benefit.

This, however, only subjected him to ten times more annoyance. They would pull his coat-tail, or jerk his ragged pantaloons, until they worked him up into a passion. Then their greatest delight was to be hunted over the green by the Black Bear (the name which he had received among them).

He might as well have followed a cloud. They skipped and danced around him, but always beyond his reach, until exhausted by his

own lumbering movements, he was fain to give out, and return unavenged to his occupations. Woe to the unlucky urchin, however, who, having once been guilty, should venture at any subsequent time within his reach. A hearty cuffing convinced him that the memory of the Black Bear was good, and warned him in future to keep clear of so dangerous a neighborhood.

During the whole of our journey from Fort Leavenworth to the Otoe town, Mordecai had kept his fellow-servants in a state of constant tribulation. He gave such bloody accounts of Indians, and Indian murders, that they regarded death as almost inevitable, and I suspect would have deserted at the first opportunity, had there not been more danger in leaving than in remaining with the party. When, however, we had been received by the Otoes, and the danger was past, Mordecai forgot his tales of terror. He pretended to have a fellow-feeling for the Otoes. He talked Creek to the old women, who were willing to listen to any language so they might but remain sufficiently near the tents to get an opportunity to steal.

He regarded the children with a kind of parental eye, and thoroughly discountenanced the thwackings which Jones so liberally bestowed upon them.

After we were settled in our camp, the horses which he had driven were turned out on the prairie to feed with the others. He then took upon himself the duties of cook, devolving upon Jones the less honorable employment of cutting wood for fuel. He would stand by the hour, with a red flannel night-cap stuck upon the side of his head, his butcher-knife in one hand, and his arm akimbo, descanting upon the arduousness of the office.

He had a high opinion of his own importance, and had no hesitation in saying that he ranked next to the Commissioner, in the estimation of the Indians; that Mr. Ellsworth was respected by the chiefs on account of his having charge of the presents, but as for himself, that he was popular among the vagabonds of the village, who had no hope of presents, and therefore were delighted to come in for a share of the tit-bits and choice morsels which it was in his power to distribute while cooking.

Notwithstanding the altered tone of Morde-

cai, and the cordiality of our reception, there was one individual who remained inveterate in his prejudices against them.

This was the French boy, Joe. He never spoke of the Indians without some qualifying expression of ill-will. Whenever any thing was stolen, he at once attributed it to them. Frequently, however, his loud vociferation on these occasions caused us strongly to suspect that he was the delinquent, and that this clamor of indignation was raised that he might escape unsuspected.

His sole occupation was to spread the bearskins at night, and remove them in the morning.

During the rest of the day, he strolled about abusing the Indians, cracking his whip, or hallooing at the stray curs who were skulking around.

"Mordecai," said he one day to that worthy, who was standing in the midst of a group of Indians, in his usual stately attitude, with one hand tucked in his side, while the other held a frying-pan, "Mordecai, dere is no good in having dese Ingens around you; dey 'm all big rascals anyhow."

Mordecai gave a self-satisfied smirk, threw a compassionate glance at Joe, then extending his arm with an impressive air: "Joe," said he, "don't abuse the Indians, it hurts my feelings; I'm an Indian myself."

"Yes, a *nigger* von," replied Joe, turning upon his heel.

It seems, too, that the Iotan was of the same opinion, for whenever Mordecai spoke of his Indian descent, the old warrior quietly shook his head, remarking "that he had never seen an Indian with woolly hair."

It was evident, however, that this contempt was engendered by seeing him perform menial offices; for like all Indians, he had a great distaste for labor, and respected those only who, like himself, did nothing.

CHAPTER XV.

A Man of the World—The Chase.

AMONG the idlers who habitually drifted to our tents on sunshiny days, was a tall, thin, leathern-hided Indian, with a profusion of tangled hair, which he occasionally combed with his fingers.

Weather-beaten and smoke-dried, he looked as if further hardening were impossible ; but withal he had a small, busy eye which at times twinkled with fun, and which overcame even the gravity of the older Indians, and entrapped them into as broad a laugh as was ever known to escape the mouth of the most scape-gallows Indian of the tribe, or even the broader mouth of that vociferous character, the Black Bear.

He usually made his appearance at the tent a little after sunrise, and hung around it during the whole day, shifting his position, from time to time, to any place where eating was going on.

He wore an old buffalo robe, almost bare of hair, and in his hand was a long-stemmed pipe, as antiquated as himself.

He owned nothing beside his pipe and buffalo-skin ; he had never burthened himself with a wife, and he had never built a lodge to shelter him. His bed was his time-worn robe ; and the lodge in which night surprised him was his usual resting-place until the next morning.

Notwithstanding the apparent easiness with which he slid through the world, his life had not been without its spice of adventure. Nor had fifty years flown over his head without bringing in their train a host of those mishaps, both by "flood and field," with which the life of a savage is ever teeming. These he was accustomed to narrate to groups of old and young, with a degree of humor which completely enraptured the women, and rendered him a welcome guest in every lodge in the town.

He was sitting as usual at the door of our tent. After finishing his pipe, he gave an account of his having been chased by a party of Sioux Indians across the prairie which lay between the Elk Horn River and the Missouri, on his way to the Otoe Agency.

After laughing heartily, the interpreter translated it for the benefit of the rest.

The Otoe Agency is upon the banks of the Missouri River, thirty-five miles from the Otoe village. It consists of half-a-dozen rough buildings, tenanted by half-breed Indians, with full-blooded squaws for wives, and a plenty of mongrel children. The latter might be seen from morning till night lying on the ground in front of the Agent's dwelling, and basking in the sunshine, with that listless enjoyment which they inherit with their Indian blood.

Early one morning the Indian left the Otoe village, to visit the Agency.

As he was on a friendly visit, to gossip with his cronies at that place, he had no weapon, but carried under his arm his inseparable companion, his pipe, the stem of which was of ash, about four feet in length, half an inch in diameter, and charred in the fire, until it had acquired a dirty-brown color. The bowl was of stone, to contain the kinne-ka-neek,* which an Indian uses as a substitute for tobacco.

* *Kinne-ka-neek* is used by the Indians as a substitute for tobacco. It is made by crushing the dried leaves or bark of the wild sumach.

The kinne-ka-neek pouch of the Indians is always formed

The route to the Otoe Agency lay across a range of steep, ragged ridges.

The Indian sauntered slowly along. He had a whole summer's day before him, and was never in a hurry.

On the summit of a hill he paused to look around him. The country was broken by small patches of timber and brushwood, which served to give relief to the otherwise barren appearance of the prairie, but it was necessary to keep a watchful eye upon it, for war parties of Sioux Indians were often on the prowl there.

There was nothing to be seen wearing a hostile appearance. Notwithstanding this apparent security, his watchfulness never slumbered. He had been too often hunted and harassed by foes to relax that vigilance which from necessity becomes a second nature with an Indian.

He had travelled for several hours, and his

of the skin of some small animal. The head is left appended to it, and the bones, intestines, and fleshy substance are removed from the body through a small hole cut in the throat, which afterwards serves as the mouth of the pouch. These pouches are often highly ornamented with stained porcupine quills, beads, and, if their owners can obtain them, hawks' bells.

journey was nearly at its end. The outline of the forest on the bank of the Missouri was now in sight. Tangled thickets were becoming more frequent, and every thing bespoke a near approach to that king of rivers.

A smooth prairie about two miles wide separated the Indian from the grove in which the Agency was nestled. In front of him was a low hillock, between two thick clusters of bushes. He sauntered to the top and looked around. At the left was a clump of bushes fringing the bottom of the hill, but beyond, in that direction, there was no object to break the spotless green of the prairie which stretched far off to the northward until its distant verge was mingled with the haze of the sky.

At his right was another clump of bushes, which clustered at the base of the hill, and swept off to a distant ravine. At a short distance beyond this a long line of lofty trees, rising above a crowded underbrush, stretched off through the prairie, until it joined the forest of the Missouri.

All appeared clear of enemies. So, wrapping his robe closely around him, the Indian was preparing to quit his stand, when his

quick eye was caught by the quivering motion of a bush at the bottom of the hill.

In an instant every sense was on the alert ; it might be a deer, or it might be a lurking foe.

He paused and watched. The bush was again shaken, the head of an Indian emerged from among the leaves, and another was dimly seen crouching in the bushes near it.

From signs known to himself, the Otoe at once recognized them as Sioux, the bitter foes of his tribe. His loud, taunting laugh, accompanied by the Otoe war cry, announced to the lurking savages that they were discovered. In an instant they sprang up yelling the war cry of their tribe.

The Otoe fled down the opposite side of the hill, making for a thicket at its foot. As he ran he grasped the stem of his pipe in one hand and the stone bowl in the other.

He protruded the end beyond his side, in such a manner as to lead his enemies to suppose that he was armed with a rifle.

His pursuers, to the number of four, followed at his heels like a pack of hounds in full cry.

They gained upon him, but by dint of hard

effort he gained the covert of brushwood, leaving them full two hundred yards behind. A shout betrayed their disappointment. The wary old savage now threaded his way swiftly, but with great caution, through the thick maze of bushes. He scarcely moved a twig, lest it should catch the observant eyes of his foes, whom he could perceive lurking around, though keeping out of rifle-shot.

At last the motion of a bush through which he was forcing a passage revealed his position.

In an instant each Indian fitted an arrow to his bow, but they were careful to keep out of shot of the supposed rifle. At length they reached the edge of a ridge, not more than a hundred yards off. An arrow could not be sent with certainty at that distance, but a bullet could.*

The Otoe suddenly raised his head above the bushes and levelled his pipe. A loud yell burst from the Sioux, and they darted behind the hill to escape the dreaded shot. As they disappeared the Otoe ran in the opposite direction, and succeeded in making his way several hundred yards through the underwood

* Neither the Sioux nor Pawnee Indians at that date used fire-arms.

before his route was detected. He again raised his head above the bushes; his pipe was again at his shoulder, and aimed at the hostile group.

They fled behind the ridge, and again he pushed forward. This manœuvre was repeated several times, till he came to where the thicket terminated and was separated by about a hundred yards of open prairie from the wooded shore of the Missouri.

Seizing the moment of another dispersion of his foes, he darted from the bushes and made for the forest. He had nearly reached it when a loud whoop announced that his flight was discovered.

His pursuers were obliged to force a path through an intervening skirt of brushwood. This gave him time, and he gained the woods just as they were emerging from the thicket which he had deserted.

After rushing through the underwood, and making several turns and doublings, he lost all sounds of pursuit, and reached the Agency in safety, all glorious at having beaten off a war party by means of a pipe.*

* Omaha City now covers the ground formerly occupied by the Otoe Agency.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Metamorphosis.

ONE day when we had been at the lodge of the Iotan and were returning to our tent, we passed a group of women engaged in drying corn upon a buffalo skin tent, which had been spread on the ground for the purpose.

One of them attracted our attention by her unusual size and height, and as we approached nearer there was a masculine coarseness about her which was very repulsive.

We afterwards learned that this strange being, although clad in female garb and performing menial services, was in reality a man, and had once been one of the chief braves of the nation, and had led many an expedition against their bitter foes, the Osages. In the midst of his career he stopped short, and commenced his present life of drudgery.

The cause was this: He had been for several

weeks absent upon a war expedition against his usual enemies, the Osages, and had been successful in his foray.

One afternoon he made his appearance in the village, weary and fasting. He hastened to his lodge and remained there for the night. In the morning he collected his family about him, and told them that the Great Spirit had visited him in a dream and commanded that he should thenceforth relinquish all claim to the rank of a warrior, and assume the dress and avocations of a female. The group around him heard him in sorrow, but none attempted to dissuade him from his determination, for they listened to the communication of the Deity with a veneration equal to his own.

After speaking with his own family, he made known his intention to the tribe.

They heard him gravely and sadly, but they too bowed to the decree of the Great Spirit.

He returned to his lodge, took down his bow, and snapping it in two, threw the fragments into the fire; and buried the tomahawk which had served him in battle. Having finished this, he washed the war paint from his face, and drew the eagle's plume from his scalp-lock.

From that hour he ceased to be numbered among the warriors of the nation, and took no part in their councils. He knew that the life marked out for him was one of toil and degradation; but his resolution was fixed, and he pursued his course with unwavering firmness. Years had elapsed since he commenced this life of penance. His face was seamed with wrinkles; his frame was yielding to decrepitude; and his sullen eye plainly showed how bitter the change had been.

Neglected and overlooked, he had the misery of seeing others fill the places which he once had filled, and of knowing that, however they might have respected his motives, he was now looked upon as one of the lowest of the tribe.

CHAPTER XVII.

Indian Dogs.

AMONG the Indians dogs abound, and from their appearance I should judge that they came from the same parent stock as the wolves of the prairies.

When an Indian tribe leaves a village for the hunting-grounds, the dogs follow, and grow fat upon the offal which is left after a successful hunt.

But when the tribe returns to the town, and the store of food begins to grow scant, the hour of dog-tribulation comes on, and even the most conscientious dogs become addicted to stealing, driven to it by sheer hunger, their masters being always careful to keep every thing eatable out of their reach.

As far as I was able to judge, the only act of ownership which they ever exercised over their canine flock was to kick them whenever a chance offered, or to eat them on state occa-

sions, as we afterwards learned by unpleasant experience.

With all their thievishness they are the most pious-looking dogs in existence. Frequently have I observed a gaunt, greedy fellow saunter into the lodge in apparent absence of mind, but the moment he caught sight of an article of food, the air of abstraction vanished, and he would sidle towards the object of his wishes, watching an opportunity to seize his prize, and trusting to luck to make good his retreat.

But should he catch your eye, his eager look instantly disappears, and is succeeded by a meek and unpretending slouch, which seems to beg that you would not place any improper construction upon his motives.

It soon became known to these gentry that a band of strangers, as yet unacquainted with their ways, had arrived among them. Accordingly they deserted the town to linger around our tents. The first day was one of jubilee, and they had every thing their own way.

But we soon found them out, and removed from their reach whatever we apprehended might be in the slightest degree palatable, or even digestible.

A cordial hatred existed between them and the old squaws, who above all things detested rivalry in their business, and were unwilling that any interlopers should carry off a share of those spoils which they considered their own.

Among the number of our canine visitors, two seemed to carry on a copartnership.

One was a little rakish-looking dog, with pinkish-green eyes, who had quite a buckish way of carrying his tail.

His companion was his reverse in every respect, being lean and shaggy, with a slouch to his tail, and a quiet, pensive expression of countenance.

He never resisted attack, but fled howling away at the slightest appearance of danger; though half an hour would not elapse before he was as busy as ever.

In stealing he far excelled his companion; who made ten times as much bustle in carrying off ten times as little; and was frequently left to receive the punishment due to both.

They kept together several days, but at length the partnership was dissolved, by reason of their being detected and soundly flogged for

attempting to drag off a bag containing about twenty pounds of bacon.

There were two exceptions to these thievish characters. One was an old dog, who looked like a broken-down wolf, rheumatic and slow in gait, but quick at bite; who watched the other dogs with a venomous eye, and was ripe for a quarrel, which he occasionally showed by a low growl, and an ominous display of teeth.

His comrade was an obsequious little fellow, with sharp ears, a bushy tail, and eyes and nose like a fox.

He always treated the cook with marked respect, and when Jones, with shouts and menaces, was chasing some pilfering dog, this little fellow joined in the hue and cry, barking so vociferously and with such earnestness that he fairly danced upon his hind legs. After these demonstrations of sympathy he would sidle up to Jones, and wag his tail as if to call attention to the part which he had taken in pursuit of the delinquent.

Jones, glad to have an ally, usually rewarded him with a piece of meat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Indian Life.

AMONG these Indians, the young men have a great weakness for dress and ornament ; and the glittering presents of the whites are as much coveted by them as by the squaws and papooses. Scarcely a day elapsed but a group of them would collect before our tents for the purpose of ornamenting themselves. They were apparently very fastidious in their taste ; for when hours had been spent by an Indian beau in laying on one streak of paint after another, and in ogling himself by piecemeal in a small scrap of looking-glass, some defect would appear, and with an exclamation of dissatisfaction the whole would be rubbed off. The work would then be recommenced with unabated perseverance, until he succeeded in daubing and ornamenting himself to his entire satisfaction.

When their toilette was completed, the

young fellows would fling their blankets around them and lounge through the town, looking at the young squaws, and occasionally condescending to speak to some dirty-looking brother with that patronizing air which, in all countries, a well-dressed person has a right to assume in conversing with a ragged acquaintance. When they had finished their stroll, they would mount upon the top of a lodge, and stand to be gazed at by the different idlers; a term which, in truth, might be applied to the whole of the male portion of the town.

In war and in hunting there is no being more untiring than the Indian. He will spend days, and weeks, in search of an enemy. If in the course of his travels he meets with a strange track crossing his path, his journey is at an end, until he has satisfied himself whether it be that of friend or foe. If ascertained to be that of an enemy, and if there is any prospect of gaining a scalp, the main pursuit gives place to this. He follows upon the trail, rapidly and surely, and nothing is left undone to insure the successful accomplishment of his purpose.

There is but little chivalry in Indian war-

fare. The pursuer steals cautiously upon his foe—gives him no warning, no opportunity to resist his fate. Often the death-cry of the victim is simultaneous with the crack of the rifle that gave him the first notice of the foe.

In peace and in his own village, the Indian lounges about listlessly, and will sit for hours watching the children at their games, or will stop at the different lodges to hear the floating rumors of the town. Sometimes a knot of five or six will gather together, for the sake of talking over their own domestic grievances, and abusing their wives behind their backs; or they will assemble in the prairie and relate to the young men their exploits in battle, their success in hunting, the deeds of the different noted men of the village, always winding up by advising them to follow their excellent examples.

At a little distance from these, a single warrior may be seen lolling in the grass, warming himself in the sunshine, and drawling out a dull, sleepy song, with an air of the most perfect indifference to all things, past, present, and to come. Farther on, two or three may be observed strolling along the summits of the

different prairie hills, and keeping watch over the neighboring country.

During our stay, the crowd of visitors and pilferers increased day by day.

The chief, therefore, stationed an Indian at our camp, to keep off idlers and intruders, and to keep a keen eye on the movements of the dogs and old women. At the same time he took occasion to let us know that, although the Indian had been selected by himself, his pay would be expected to come from the Commissioner.

On the following morning the guard made his appearance, and prepared to enter upon the duties of his office.

He was tall and thin, with a shaved head, and a body highly painted with vermilion. He wore a dirty blanket, which, with a small piece of blue cloth around his hips, and a ragged pair of moccasins, completed his dress.

Like many men in office, he began to look with a patronizing air upon his former cronies, and commenced the discharge of his duties with great assiduity.

He routed the droves of children. He hunted the old squaws over the prairie, till

nothing in the shape of a petticoat dared venture in the neighborhood. A perpetual whining and howling of curs, accompanied by the thwacks of a cudgel, informed us that this portion of our visitors had also been treated with all the respect due to so numerous and busy a community.

This lasted for a day ; after which a perfect calm reigned throughout the camp. There was no excitement ; for the guard had monopolized it. There was no squabbling or howling ; for the women were driven off, and the dogs knew better than to venture a second time within the reach of a cudgel, whose favors were bestowed with such an unsparing liberality.

The office now became a sinecure. The guard sat for hours upon the head of an empty pork barrel, drumming his heels against its sides, and trolling out some Indian ditty ; or occasionally bellowing out a threat at some urchin who ventured to steal a distant look at the forbidden premises. When this became tedious he stretched himself at full length on the grass, and resumed his old occupation of singing. An hour spent at this exhausted his patience. He then rose up, threw his blanket

across his shoulders, and swaggered off to the village to hear the news and chat with the old folks, who treated him with great deference, now that he was in office. After paying one of these visits, he always returned to his post, and regaled us, through the interpreter, with the news of the day.

By degrees, his jurisdiction seemed to increase, until at last, from the charge of our goods and chattels, it reached to the charge of ourselves; and none of the party could leave the tent without receiving a very inquiring look, as to what might be the nature of the business which called him forth. All these things tended vastly to raise him in the estimation of the village; though I verily believe that at the bottom he was one of the most ar-rant vagabonds breathing; and that the chief, acting upon the principle usually followed by politicians of the present day, had promoted him to office because it was necessary that something should be done for him, and because there was no other way of doing it.

Great as had been his display of diligence for the first day, it soon disappeared; and at the end of three days there was little differ-

ence in the appearance of the camp from that which it wore previous to his appointment.

According to his notions, he had performed all that was necessary to entitle him to his pay, and any further labor he considered as altogether superfluous. Before a week had elapsed, he was nearly as great an annoyance as any of the idlers whom it was his business to remove.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Otoe Council.

A DAY had been appointed for holding a council, for the purpose of forming a treaty, with respect to the lands lying in the neighborhood of the Nemahaw River. The hour fixed upon was about three o'clock; and at that time we proceeded from the tent to the town, with a string of children at our heels.

We found the men of the tribe assembled, and seated in circles, in the lodge of the Iotan.

At the far end of it was the Iotan; and at his side were the Big Kaw and the Thief. Near them were the older warriors and braves. There was something impressive in the appearance of these war-worn veterans, as they sat there silent and motionless, prepared to listen to the terms of the treaty.

This was observable, not only in the principal braves, but throughout the whole assembly. Even the vagabonds assumed a degree of gravity befitting the occasion.

The lodge was crowded, and the passage which led to the air was filled with women and children ; and one or two curious faces looked down through the smoke-hole in the roof.

The most of them had adorned themselves for the occasion. Feathers were hanging from their scalp-locks ; their heads and breasts were painted with vermilion, and long strings of wampum hung from their necks and ears. At the present moment there appeared to be no thought of their appearance, but every eye was fixed upon the Commissioner, as he rose to address the meeting.

He stated simply and clearly the terms of the treaty. There was no sound to interrupt his voice.

They sat like statues, except when they turned to the interpreter, as he translated each sentence.

At length the speaker concluded, and a loud grunt of approbation followed from the throats of all.

The old chief sat in grave deliberation for a few moments ; then lighting his pipe, he drew a few puffs and passed it to his neighbor, until it had completed the round of the whole

assembly. He then rose and addressed the council.

He spoke but a short time, and as he did so he paused from time to time to enable the interpreter to translate his words to us. The speech was intended as an answer to that of the Commissioner, though it was addressed principally to his warriors. He spoke warmly of the liberality of the whites. He threw out hints as to the contents of the wagons which they had brought with them, and that the less difficulty the tribe made in agreeing to the terms of the treaty, the greater would be their share of the presents. He then dilated upon the advantage to be derived from a friendly intercourse with the whites, and wound up his address with a pathetic lamentation about the distance between their village and the buffalo hunting-grounds. What this portion of his speech had to do with the rest of the address, I could not well make out, but it appeared to be received with keen satisfaction by his audience, and when he resumed his seat he was greeted with a very satisfactory grunt of applause.

After him a lean, sinewy old man spoke.

His hair, which was beginning to turn white, hung in long, tangled locks upon his shoulders. He rose slowly, and gathering his robe closely about him, commenced his harangue.

At first his voice was low and his gestures feeble, but as he warmed with his subject, his voice grew strong, his withered face lighted up, and his filmy eye kindled. The crowd listened with deep attention, but soon the eloquent spirit had passed away. For a moment he seemed endeavoring to recall his train of thought, but without success. Then with a melancholy shake of the head, he drew his blanket over it and sat down.

None spoke after him. The pipe was again passed around, and the terms of the treaty were agreed to.

The written treaty was then produced, the interpreter translating each clause as it was read by the secretary.

This having been completed the head chiefs advanced to an impromptu table contrived for the occasion, and affixed their signatures by making hieroglyphic marks, opposite to each of which the secretary wrote the name of the signer.

There was quite a struggle on the part of those of lower rank to get to the table and affix their signatures also.

The Agent whispered to us that these fellows had an idea that only those who signed the treaty would get a share of the presents, and that such share would be in proportion to the size of the signature.

This was told to the secretary, who, fearing that the blank leaf of the treaty might not be large enough to hold any more signatures of such gigantic proportions as had already been affixed to it, took the pen in his own hand and made the marks, the signers holding the feather end of the quill.

This ceremony having been completed, a few friendly words were spoken by the Commissioner, and replied to by the chief in the same spirit. The pipe was again passed around, and by degrees the crowd left the lodge and scattered through the town.

CHAPTER XX.

Distribution of Presents.

ON the day following the council, the packages containing the presents for the tribe were given to the chief, who prepared to divide them among the different members of his village. A large circle, composed of men, women, and children, had collected in the prairie. In the centre of this sat the chiefs and five or six of the principal warriors. The packages were opened, and they commenced separating the different parcels, for the purpose of distribution.

There was a great anxiety evinced by the crowd. Every eye was strained with an expression of strong hankering towards the distributors, who quietly proceeded in the business of opening bundles of knives, boxes of kettles, tin cups, packages of beads, cloths, ribands, and other articles, without paying the slightest attention to the anxious looks of

the restless bystanders. When this had been completed the chief commenced cutting up the pieces of cloth, calico, and ribands, and sending off the warriors to distribute them.

Until then there had been silence, but now arose a clamor. The young squaws begged, the old crones scolded, the boys whooped, and the papooses bawled. Whenever an Indian approached the edge of the circle, a dozen hands were reached out to seize upon the article which he held.

But the distributors had been selected for their coolness. For amid all the scrambling they maintained the most philosophic calmness, and listened to the invectives of those who were disappointed, with the utmost indifference.

The distribution was managed with great impartiality, though we observed that a low word or an imploring look from some of the young girls had their weight, and more than once changed the destination of a gaudy riband or string of richly colored beads. A loud outcry was always raised by the neighbors on each of these occasions, and a few hard epithets were bestowed by the old viragos, who had lost by this change of destination.

During the distribution our attention was attracted to the manœuvres of a squaw, a diminutive little body, clothed in a dirty flannel jacket and a tattered sort of petticoat. There must have been a strong flavor of bitterness about her tongue; for we observed that the distributors shrank from wordy collision with her.

She flew about in every direction.

Whenever one of the distributors crossed the circle, to present some peculiarly tempting article, a terrible hustling and jostling would be observed at the point to which he was going, and before he could reach it the convulsed face and straining eyes of the little squaw would appear, and her shrill voice would be heard above the general clamor. She never obtained the prize, but the donor, after disappointing her, always moved off with a hurried step, until he had placed as much space as possible between himself and her vigorous tongue.

As the distribution proceeded she grew furious, and the clamor of her tongue was incessant.

At last one of the distributors, an old dried-

up Indian, with one eye, marched up to her, and either from compassion, or for the purpose of hushing her abuse, reached out a small piece of red riband towards her. She snatched it eagerly, but after looking at it for a few seconds to see what it was, she shook it at him with the utmost contempt, and gave such an expression of her opinion as raised a loud shout of laughter at his expense.

He, however, did not stop to listen, but coolly walked off, until he got beyond the reach of her fire.

Finally, to get rid of her, a large tin kettle was given to her, with which she marched off in triumph to the village, to the great relief of the whole assemblage. After her departure the business went on with a degree of good-humor which had not previously existed.

During the distribution we observed that the females, with large families of children, were particularly well provided for. To them were given articles most suited to their domestic economy. To the young squaws were given trinkets and ribands, which were of small value, but possessed the strongest attractions for them.

The knives and guns were presented to the young men who were most distinguished. The chiefs, however, were particular to lay aside one or two of the best of each for their own use.

In turning over the piles of blankets, a few small ones had been discovered. These were given to several of the wild-looking little fellows who were peering in through the ring.

For a moment they seemed to doubt the reality of the gift, and appeared to be bewildered; then forcing a passage through the crowd, they gave a loud whoop and started for the town at full speed, occasionally looking back as if they feared that the gift might have been a mistake, and that some one might be in pursuit to take it away.

After about an hour's chattering, laughing, and scolding, the distribution ended, and the crowd dispersed—some with sour and sullen looks, some with an air of indifference, while the smiling, pleased countenances of others denoted they at least were fully satisfied with the portion allotted to them.

Most of the discontent was evinced by the old folks of both sexes. The men restrained themselves, and walked sulkily off.

The women, however, gave full exercise to their tongues, and continued it until the sound of their sharp, shrill voices was lost in the distance, as they travelled in Indian file towards the town.

Notwithstanding the show of discontent, there were but few who had not obtained some trifle in the general distribution.

Shortly after this we observed a troop of Indians coming from the village. They were fantastically dressed, in buffalo skins, so as to bear a strong resemblance to that beast.

They retained the head, beard, and legs of the animal entire, and were so well disguised that several of them, at a little distance, might have been mistaken for the brute itself. They had prepared themselves to give us the buffalo dance. They drew up in a large circle, at a little distance from a skin tent which had been lent to us, our own marquee having been injured by a heavy gale a few nights before.

The leader of this band was the Big Kaw, who frisked behind the grave head and beard of an enormous buffalo bull. In the centre of the circle were seated a number of buffaloes, whose business it was to sing, while the rest,

consisting of chiefs, squaws, and papooses, or, in other words, of bulls, cows, and calves, danced to their music.

The chorus commenced with a low, mournful ditty, which set the whole herd of dancers in motion.

They began by moving slowly round the singers, but as the chant grew more and more animated, the vivacity of the herd increased. From a walk they quickened their pace to a trot; from a trot it ambled off into a full gallop. Now the spirit of the beast began to show out. The cows bellowed, the bulls frisked, roared, and fought; they kicked up; they tore up the ground, and chased each other round the circle. This lasted some time, until it grew uproarious, and the butting of horns was furious. At this sight the cows drew off; and several calves, after bursting out into a loud bawl, raised up from all fours, and mounting upon their two hind legs, started for the village, too much frightened to take any further share in the day's diversions.

The dance lasted about an hour, after which the Big Kaw, under the form of a seven-year-old bull, came and seated himself upon a

billet of wood beside us. He appeared perfectly satisfied with his performance, but was grievously out of wind.

Several dances of a similar character followed. They received their appellations from different animals ; and the merit of a dance consisted in imitating as nearly as possible the actions of the beast from which it received its name.

They continued until late in the afternoon, when the Indians, one after another, dropped off ; and long before nine o'clock all were gone, except the dogs, who remained to forage during the night.

CHAPTER XXI.

*Departure of Otoes for the Hunting-Grounds,
and our Departure for the Pawnee Villages.*

SEVERAL days had elapsed, and the growing coldness of the weather warned us that it was time for the expedition to be on its move towards the Pawnee villages.

The Otoes had consumed their supply of provisions, and were preparing to leave their town for the hunting-grounds. The Iotan offered to accompany us, with about twenty of his principal warriors, that he might exert his influence with the Pawnees, to prevent any hostility towards us. Although the chief of a different and but a small tribe, still his influence with these wild hordes was equal to that of any of their own leaders.

His desperate courage had rendered him popular with the chiefs and older warriors, and his sociable manners, though tinged with a dash of grimness, had made him a favorite with the

less distinguished of the nation. In addition to this, the reputation of the Otoe tribe for courage and pre-eminent skill with the rifle gave great consequence to their chieftain.

For this reason the offer of the Iotan was gladly acceded to, and our preparations for departure were forthwith commenced.

In the meantime a change took place in the village. Every family was making ready for its departure to the distant haunts of the buffalo.

Large droves of horses were driven in from their feeding-grounds, and the town rang with noises of all descriptions. Squaws were scolding; children squalling; papooses, too young to shift for themselves, like so many little mummies, were suspended in baskets round the inside of the lodges, where they would be out of harm's way, while their mothers were engaged in packing up.

The dogs had probably learned from painful experience that this was one of the ill-humored seasons of the tribe. Many of them had withdrawn to a short distance in the prairie, where they sat, demurely waiting until the bustle should be finished, and good-humor restored to the town. The warriors laid aside their usual

indolence, and assisted their wives in loading the horses. The only idlers in the town were children and old men. The first stood in droves, looking on, equally aware, with the dogs, of the souring effect of all this bustle upon the tempers of the grown-up portion of the community ; and equally cautious in avoiding all contact with them. The last strolled up and down ; kicking every stray cur they chanced to meet, and bellowing out advice to all who chose to listen.

Here and there a long train of those who had finished their labors was winding over the hills toward the wished-for hunting-grounds.

A long suite of dogs lounged after it, and disappeared with it behind the distant ridges.

As one family after another dropped off, the town began to wear a lonely air. Wild and uncouth as were its inhabitants, we had formed a companionship with them. When, however, we entered their lodges, found the fires extinguished, the buildings stripped, and silence and solitude reigning where we had been greeted with kind looks and smiling faces, we experienced a dreary feeling, which increased our desire to be once more on the wing toward our still distant goal.

At about ten o'clock, on a bright clear morning, we left the Otoe village.

The baggage wagons had started some hours before us, and had long since passed the hills behind the town. A crowd of gazers collected round us as we saddled our horses.

At length every thing was completed, and, bidding farewell to the dusky group, we mounted and galloped off in the direction taken by the wagons.

Our course lay along the borders of the Platte, which soon began to lose the luxuriant verdure which had fringed its banks in the neighborhood of the Otoe town. Scarcely a tree or shrub grew upon its borders.

Our party now counted about thirty, including Indians, and although, on account of the scarcity of provisions, four of the soldiers had been sent back to the garrison, still the reinforcement of Otoes more than compensated for their loss.

They had all prepared themselves for the journey.

Their blankets were thrown over their shoulders and strapped round their waists in such a manner as to leave a short skirt extending

half-way down to the knee. Their legs were protected by coarse leggins of buffalo skin. Each man carried a short scabbard, containing a knife; and several pair of moccasins were strapped upon the back of each. They had left their rifles at the village; and a short bow, with a well stocked quiver of arrows, supplied their places. This was the usual equipment of an Indian when starting on a peaceful journey.

The leader of the band was the Iotan, and next to him came the Big Kaw and the Thief.

These three were the chiefs, and after them followed the braves and fighting men.

They were all hardy, and seemed to feel no fatigue, and although we travelled over many miles of prairie before nightfall, their pace was the same and their step as unflagging as ever.

An Indian upon the prairies is in his element.

An air of wild freedom surrounds him. He is unrestrained in body, unfettered in spirit, and as wayward as the breeze which sweeps over the grass of his own hills.

On the fifth night after our departure we encamped upon the banks of the Platte River.

The reflected stars sparkled in the water.

There was no wind, and all around us was quiet, except when the stillness was broken by the neigh of our horses, who were pasturing at a short distance; or by the cry of a wild goose, the leader of a flock on their way to the north.

Far to the south a faint red light was reflected in the sky, which one of the hunters attributed to the burning of a prairie about ten miles off.

A fire of heavy logs had been built in front of the tent, and the party had gradually gathered round it. Two or three of our dusky companions mingled with the group—grave, but observing spectators of the actions of the whites.

Half of a deer was roasting before the fire; and the Black Bear, with a face of vast importance, was busily engaged in making coffee in a large tin bucket which swung from a pole over the fire. The interpreter was called upon for a story, and had just discharged a roll of tobacco from his mouth to make room for the

full play of his tongue. "Ugh!" exclaimed one of the Indians.

"What 's the matter now, Hah-che-kah-sug-hah?" * asked the Doctor, addressing the Indian by his native name. The Indian looked at the speaker as he heard his name uttered, but after standing for a moment he walked off a few steps, and placed his hand behind his ear in the attitude of earnest listening.

"What does he hear, Dougherty?" said the Doctor, turning to the Indian Agent.

"We shall know presently," returned the other quietly, without evincing more curiosity than his red companion.

For a moment the Indian stood with his eyes bent to the ground, his head inclining a little forward, and every sense apparently on the *qui vive*.

He continued so for a short time, then throwing himself upon the ground, pressed his ear closely against the sod.

* This Indian was one of the principal braves of the Otoe nation, and has since become a chief. The name Hah-che-kah-sug-hah was given to him on account of his deadly success in the war parties against the Osages. It signifies *the man who strikes the Osages*. Though distinguished for ferocity in battle, yet in private life he was one of the most joyous, pleasant fellows I ever met with.

“What do you hear, Hah-che-kah-sug-hah?” asked the Agent in the Otoe tongue.

“There are Indians on the prairie,” was the answer.

This being announced drew loud expressions of surprise from the whites, but the Indians were perfectly quiet. They appeared to have the greatest reliance upon the Indian, whose keen hearing had been first attracted by the sound. They watched him earnestly as he lay upon the ground. After continuing in this position for some time, he rose up, and taking a pouch and rifle belonging to one of the hunters, stole off.

The contrast between the whites and Indians was now clearly observable. The former immediately commenced a conversation teeming with suppositions, suggestions, and all that outpouring of confused ideas usual when a dozen persons altogether ignorant of a subject attempt to throw a little light upon it for the benefit of their neighbors.

The Indians, on the contrary, remained perfectly cool; so much so that one of them quietly turned the attention of the cook to a large piece of meat which he was frying to a

cinder in his eagerness to listen to the comments of the party. They appeared to take the matter with as much quietness as if they had been in the heart of their own town, instead of a large prairie infested by foes.

Nearly ten minutes had elapsed, when a loud, shrill cry arose in the prairie from two different quarters.

“Ugh! Otoe!” repeated several of the Indians, but without moving.

Another long, quavering whoop sounded in the air.

“Hah-che-kah-sug-hah!” ejaculated one of the Otoes.

Just then two strange Otoes appeared in the camp, followed by our Indian friend.

In a few words they told their story. They had been to the Pawnee village, which was about ten miles off, and had left it that evening.

About an hour previous they had been espied and pursued by a party of Sioux Indians. Seeing a light they fled for it. Their enemies followed, and they believed that even now they were lurking in the prairie at but a short distance from the camp.

In an instant all was uproar. Some ran for their guns; some loaded; others filled their powder-horns; others swore at their comrades on account of the loss of some article of equipment; but all were busy in suggesting to their neighbors what was best to be done in the present emergency, and all followed their own inclinations. "Raise the flag!" at last cried one, "and let them see that there are whites in the party, the fear of their rifles may keep them off."

This was no sooner proposed than executed.

A tall pole with a striped flag floating from the end of it was reared in front of the tent, in full light of the fire.

The old Iotan saw the flag hoisted, and though he did not exactly understand why it was done, still he supposed that there was some meaning in it. So he followed the example of the whites, and erected a pole among a pile of kettles, marking his place of encampment. He then decorated the end with a striped flag, which he had hitherto used as a wrapper on state occasions.

"But Major," said one, looking rather wild, and walking up to the Indian Agent, "we are

representatives of government—will the Sioux dare to fire on the United States?”

“If the people of the United States were *all* assembled, I presume they would not,” was the quiet answer. “But you had better get back from the fire. The Otoes have done so already. They know that an Indian can pick a man off easier, if he stands in the light of the blaze than if he keeps in the dark. You had better join them in the grass yonder—there is no chance for running, for there’s no place to run to.”

This was satisfactory, and the questioner followed the example of the savages.

The confusion lasted for a short time; but at length each man had prepared himself for whatever might happen. When this was completed, there was nothing more to be done. There might be enemies within a few yards, and they might be many miles off. In the darkness it was impossible to see more than ten yards beyond the fire. Our foes, on the other hand, if any there were, would be able to see any of us moving between them and the fire at twenty times that distance. At length a young Indian rose up, and moving swiftly

past the fire, threw himself on the ground beyond. For a short time he remained stationary, and then raising his head, commenced worming his way through the long grass, until he was lost in the darkness. He returned in about half an hour. He had made a long circuit round the camp, but had discovered nothing. He had seen no signs of an enemy, and gave it as his opinion that they had abandoned the pursuit, and that none besides ourselves were in the neighborhood. As he concluded, he took his seat at the fire, with the confident air of one who felt that there was nothing to be apprehended from this exposure.

He was soon followed by the rest, and in a short time the camp was as merry and noisy as if nothing had taken place to excite their fears.

CHAPTER XXII.

Preparations for Reception—Reception by Grand Pawnees.

DURING the evening previous to our arrival at the Grand Pawnee village, several half-breeds, who had been sent there by the Commissioner to give notice of our approach, came dropping in, all bearing promises of a friendly welcome. At sunrise the next morning all was bustle in the camp; the tents were struck, and wagons loaded. The soldiers seated themselves upon the grass to examine and prepare their arms, and the Otoe Indians were engaged in ornamenting themselves for the occasion. Some had spread their blankets upon the ground, and were tracing various figures in vermilion upon their woolly surfaces.

Some, bending over the small pools of still water on the shore of the river, were painting their faces with vermilion, manifesting as much interest and anxiety as a young belle

preparing for her first ball. Paint was put on and rubbed off. Faces were striped first in one direction, then in another; and the advice of those who were sitting round was asked and given, with all the gravity befitting so important an operation. In the meantime, two or three who had finished their toilettes seated themselves as models for the rest.

Several who had a reputation for skill in this art were engaged in painting their less gifted companions. In another quarter, five or six who either had no paint, or cared not about the opinion of those whom they intended to visit, were lying stretched at full length in the grass, and keeping up an incessant drumming upon their breasts with their fists, in time to a chant, which they were letting out at the top of their lungs, and which wound up with a yell by way of chorus.

But in due time there was an end of preparation. The tents were packed in the wagons, the Indians were painted and striped, the soldiers had examined their arms, the horses were saddled, the oxen were yoked to the baggage wagons, and the party commenced moving towards the village.

It was a fine sunny morning. The clump of trees which clustered on the low banks of the river, and the islands which dotted it, were alive with woodpeckers of every size and hue, darting from tree to tree. Also large flocks of gayly plumed paroquets whirled screaming past us.

At ten o'clock we had travelled several miles, and our vicinity to the village was becoming more perceptible. Mounted Indians, sent out to watch for us, were seen galloping to the town, and at a distance we could perceive others driving in large droves of horses. In another quarter, groups were standing on the hill-tops watching our movements, which, from the jaded state of the oxen, were necessarily slow.

The soldiers who had been straggling across the prairie, were now called in, and formed in a compact body round the baggage wagons. An hour more brought us in sight of the village.

The hills around it were black with mounted Indians. At length a single horseman detached himself from the crowd, and galloped across the prairie to meet us. As he ap-

proached there was a wild, free air about him, and he governed his black horse with the greatest ease. I could not but think that if the rest of these warriors were of the same mould, any resistance of our band, however desperate, would have availed but little against their attack.

Upon reaching the party, he sprang from his horse, and shook hands with the Commissioner. He then gave directions, through the interpreter, that the band should be drawn up in as small a compass as possible, so as not to be in the way of his men as they galloped around us. After completing his arrangements he rode back and gave the signal to his men. In an instant the hills were abandoned, and the whole troop poured across the prairie until they had reached within two hundred yards of us, when, at a signal from the chief, the band separated to the right and left, and commenced circling round us at full gallop.

Their whoops and yells, and the menacing manner in which they brandished their bows and tomahawks, would have led a person unacquainted with their habits to have looked upon this reception as any thing but friendly,

but by this time we had learned that all this uproar was kindly meant.

After dashing round us for some time, the chief waved his hand and the turmoil ceased.

The warriors sprang from their horses, and seating themselves in a large circle, waited for the arrival of the chief of the Grand Pawnees. In a few moments he advanced to meet Mr. E——, accompanied by the different chiefs of Tappage Pawnee, Pawnee Republican, and Pawnee Loup villages. He was a tall, powerful Indian. A fillet of bear-skin, ornamented with feathers, was bound round his head. Over his shoulder was thrown a mantle of white wolf-skin, also adorned with feathers.

His legs were encased in black leggins of dressed buffalo-hide, worked with beads, and fringed with long locks of human hair. These were taken from scalps won in his various war expeditions, and hung down over his knees, trailing upon the ground as he walked. He first advanced and welcomed the Commissioner, and afterwards the rest.

The chiefs of the three different villages were then introduced, and repeated the words of welcome uttered by the first.

This ceremony was scarcely finished when a movement was observed among the crowd, and an Indian, mounted on a roan horse, made his way to the middle of the circle, where the rider dismounted. He was a Kioway* Indian, from the borders of Mexico—a leader of those Ishmaelite tribes, who rove the immense plains of the West, and whose hands are against every man.

After looking around him for a moment, as if to challenge opposition, he walked up to the Commissioner.

His long black hair, which reached nearly to the ground, was plaited together, and ornamented for its full length with plates of silver.

A band of silver was fastened round his throat, and several large medals of the same metal hung upon his breast. Upon his arms were several bands of silver, and rings of the same upon his fingers. His leggins, though more finely wrought, like those of the chiefs',

* We afterwards learned that this Indian had become enamoured of a young girl of his own tribe, the wife of another; but her husband having gone upon some expedition, she had taken advantage of his absence to elope with her lover; and together they had fled to the Pawnee village, where they had arrived a week previous to our coming.

were fringed with scalps. A scalp consisting of the entire upper part of a human head, hung from the bit of his horse. Upon coming up he offered his hand to the Commissioner, and in succession to each of us, and after pausing and looking at us with some curiosity, he sprang upon his horse, and riding through the circle, was lost behind the more distant crowd of Indians.

One of our soldiers, being of a mercenary turn of mind, remarked that the "tail end" of that fellow's scalp would be worth having.

For a short time after the introduction of the various chiefs, the crowd of grim beings hemmed us in, sitting upon the ground like so many dark forms of statuary, without voice or motion.

Several at length arose, and coming towards the Commissioner and Major Dougherty, extended the stem of their pipes to the lips of each, then retiring, resumed their station in the crowd.

By this action, each pledged himself to present a horse to the person to whom he had extended his pipe. In the meanwhile, two old men, who had no horses to lose by the free

indulgence of liberal feelings, rose up, and by loud and vehement harangues, endeavored to pique the liberality of the rest.

They boasted of the number they *would* bestow, *if they but had them*, and recounted as examples the acts of generosity which they had performed in their youth. As that youth ran far back, beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, there was little probability of their being contradicted.

After they had finished, the Wild Horse (I do not recollect his Indian name) stood up and harangued the assembled multitude. He launched out in a long panegyric upon the whites, which was delivered with a warmth of expression no doubt greatly increased by the sight of the wagons laden with presents. This Indian was one of the most daring warriors of the tribe; and many were the tales of his war expeditions, afterwards related to us by the trappers, as we lay stretched around our night-fires.

His height could have been but little short of seven feet, and every limb was in proportion.

Unlike the rest of his tribe, his hair remained unshaven, and hung in long, tangled

locks, which reached nearly to his waist, and were profusely smeared with red ochre. His low, retreating forehead was seamed with wrinkles, and his eyes were deep-set. His nose was large and prominent, and the apparent size of an enormous mouth was not at all diminished by two streaks of vermilion, which he had drawn from each corner to his ears. He wore neither covering nor ornament, unless the profusion of black clay and red ochre which covered his body deserved that name.

From his youth upward he had been the leading warrior in the nation. Though no chief, his influence in the village was equal to theirs, rendering him as much an object of jealousy to them as of dread to their enemies.

When he had finished his address, the chief rose and spoke a few words to his men; after which the circle opened, and forming into two lines, one on each side of us, they prepared to escort us into their village.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Journey to the Grand Pawnee Village—Old Indian Female—Chief's Lodge—Indian Feasts—Kioway Female.

AS soon as we emerged from the crowd, we perceived that the plain between us and the village was swarming with Indians. Every man, woman, and child had looked upon the day of our arrival as one of jubilee. The boys had thrown aside their bows and arrows, the females had abandoned their drudgery, and the old men had ceased their songs of former victories, to paint themselves up for the occasion.

The reception was over, and all the requisite awe of their nation had been impressed upon us.

They now threw aside the stern character of the warrior, and pressed round us with all the kind hospitality of hosts receiving welcome guests.

Small bands of young men amused themselves by dashing around the party at full gallop and attempting to oust each other from their saddles.

Others would start off in a race across the plain, whooping and screaming and clattering their arms to excite their horses even beyond the mad rate at which they were careering.

Some hung round us, making remarks at our expense, and occasionally exciting loud peals of laughter from their comrades. These, however, were often cut short by a stern word from one of the chiefs.

It was not long before we reached the village; for, though the Indians crowded forward to satisfy their curiosity, they remained at such a distance as to offer no obstacle to our progress. This rule of etiquette was, however, occasionally transgressed by troops of untrimmed, goblin-looking little urchins, who hung upon the heels of the party. They crowded around the baggage wagons, and gazed with a mixture of terror and delight at the oxen, who, with lolling tongues and reeling steps, were, almost inch by inch, toiling their way to the village.

Several times when a circle of little curious faces, anxious to see, but ready to run, had formed around the team, a sharp, shrill scream from some more mischievous of the gang would in an instant disperse their courage and send them scampering at full speed across the prairie.

Another great object of attraction was Jones, *the Black Bear*, who trudged in front, surrounded by a crowd of women and children. From the first moment of our arrival he had been an object of intense curiosity, and had been gazed at with a mixture of fear and astonishment.

By degrees, the circle which had at first formed around him at a respectful distance, became more and more narrow. In vain he attempted to rid himself of their company; they swarmed around him like ants. If he quickened his pace, they did the same; if he loitered, they were equally slow; and if he turned upon them, they scattered in every direction. But after a while, they hemmed him in so closely that he found it almost impossible to move forward. When they had thus closed upon him, the lurking spirit of mischief began

to show itself. They tugged at his coat-tail, they pulled his pantaloons, and they jostled him until perspiration, the effect of fear and exertion, poured in streams down his face. At length one toothless, gray-headed old crone, attracted by the glistening appearance of his black leather cap, made a violent snatch at it. A hot scramble ensued for the prize, which, after much derangement to the wardrobe of the negro, was obtained by the rightful owner. He had no sooner regained his property, than he opened his shirt, and placed it next his bosom. He then buttoned his coat over it up to the chin, performing the rest of his journey bareheaded.

We found that the village had been rebuilt since it was burnt by the Delawares. It is situate in the open prairie, at the foot of a long range of hills, and within about fifty yards of the Platte.

The river at this place is about two miles wide, and very shallow, being constantly forded by the squaws, who visit the different islands, and obtain from them the only fuel and building materials to be found in this part of the country.

The lodges are numerous, and stand close together, without the least regard to regularity.

They are built in the same way as those in the Otoe village.

On account of the scarcity of wood, several families live together in the same lodge.

The male portion pass the whole day lounging and sleeping around, or gorging themselves from the large kettle filled with buffalo flesh, which is perpetually over the fire.

As we entered the village, the tops of the lodges were covered with women and children, and the area in front of the chief's dwelling was equally crowded. When we reached it, the chief, who had ridden in advance of the party, was waiting at the entrance to meet us.

He wore a robe of white wolf-skin, upon which was painted a hieroglyphic account of his warlike achievements. Upon the approach of the Commissioner, he advanced towards him, and taking the robe from his shoulders, presented it to him, requesting him (through the interpreter) to keep it for his sake.

He then ushered the party into the lodge, and pointed out the places allotted for the re-

ception of the contents of the wagons. After this he called together a number of Indians, and gave them directions to assist in unloading. He stood at the door, watching their movements, to prevent any attempt at purloining.

In the meanwhile the lodge was becoming crowded. One dusky form after another glided with a noiseless step over the threshold to the darkest corners of the lodge, where they seated themselves, wrapping their shaggy robes around them, so as completely to screen the lower part of their faces.

Upon our entrance into the lodge, a large kettle had been filled with buffalo flesh and hard corn, and placed over the fire. When the bustle of unloading had passed away, the wife of the chief (by-the-by he had five of them) poured its contents into a large wooden bowl, and arming each of us with a black dipper made of buffalo horn, made signs for us to commence.

We did not wait for a second invitation, but immediately, with both fingers and dippers, attacked the mountain of food before us. We had not eaten since daylight ; it was now late

in the day, and the appetites of the party, never particularly delicate, having increased in proportion to the length of their fast, we did full justice to the food. But every excess brings its own punishment; and our case was not an exception to the general rule; for scarcely had we finished, when a little Indian boy, half covered with a tattered buffalo skin, forced his way into the lodge. He came to the side of the chief, who was sitting near us, with his legs doubled under him, after the Turkish fashion, and whispered in his ear. The chief rose, and announced that the Long Hair, the second warrior of the village, had prepared a feast in honor of our arrival, and was waiting for us to come and partake of it.

It was useless to plead that we had already eaten sufficient, for that is a thing incredible to an Indian, whose appetite is always proportioned to the quantity to be eaten.

Seeing no remedy, we left the lodge, and followed our little guide through the intricacies of the village, to the dwelling of the Long Hair. When we entered he was sitting upon the floor, and assigned to us seats upon several cushions of undressed hides. He was

a stern, gloomy-looking man, with an anxious, wrinkled brow, a mouth like iron, and an eye like fire. He evidently made efforts to be sociable ; but it was not his nature ; and during the whole feast, the stern, unbending character of the Indian warrior, was continually peering out from beneath the show of hospitality.

He urged us to eat, and he even attempted to smile ; but it more resembled the angry snarl of a wild-cat than the evidence of any pleasurable emotion. In short, we liked him not, and hurried through our feast as soon as possible. When we had finished, and while a number of the party were smoking, in turn, from a large red stone pipe, which he passed round, the Doctor rose and slowly sauntered round the lodge. He at length observed a small bundle of bones, and skin, which hung from a pole crossing the centre of the lodge.

Curious to know what it might contain, he reached out his hand to take hold of it. From the moment that he had left his seat, the brow of the chief had darkened, but he said nothing, contenting himself with narrowly watching the motions of his guest ; but no sooner had he

touched the bundle, than the Indian started up, and uttered a loud cry of displeasure.

The secret was soon explained by the interpreter. The bundle that had attracted the curiosity of the Doctor, was the medicine bag* of the lodge. To disturb this is one of the greatest outrages that can be inflicted upon the superstitious feelings of an Indian. At another time, the Doctor might have paid dearly for his rashness.

As it was, at the earnest solicitations of the interpreter, he resumed his seat, and the anger of the chief passed away.

Shortly after this, another courier arrived to invite us to a third feast ; and taking our leave, we followed him. This feast was exactly the same as the former. Before we had finished, invitation after invitation came pouring in upon us, until we had visited about ten or fifteen lodges.

* Every lodge in an Indian village contains what is called its Medicine Bag, which is hung up in the most conspicuous place, and regarded with the greatest veneration, not only by the inhabitants of the individual lodge, but by the whole tribe. Little is known of their contents, as they are seldom opened, and always with the greatest formalities. On these occasions, all possible care is taken to exclude strangers, whose presence or interference is regarded as a certain source of future misfortune.

One after another, the different members of the party then gave out, and returned to the abode of the chief.

Upon our return, Mr. E—— assembled the different warriors, and after some consultation, the following day was appointed for holding a council, to agree upon the terms of the treaty.

When this was settled, the chief turned and spoke a few words to the heralds.*

They immediately started through the village, proclaiming the time appointed for the council.

While Mr. E—— was thus engaged, the rest of the party drew round the fire to discuss the different events of the day. The bear-skin, forming the inner door of the lodge, was slowly raised, and a female stepped timidly in, and moved rapidly, and evidently with a desire to escape observation, into the darkest part of the lodge. Her whole appearance bespoke her a stranger.

* These heralds are self-elected, and are composed of the oldest men in the village, who run through the town to spread the orders of the chief.

When no such service is required, they amuse themselves by stalking round the village, yelling out advice to the young men, with voices which may be heard at the distance of a mile, but which, as far as I was able to judge, was but little attended to.

She was beautiful and timid. She was the wife of the Kioway Indian, and her dress was of a richness corresponding with his. A bright band of silver was fastened round her neck; a small jacket of scarlet cloth, the spoil of some pillaged caravan, edged with silver lace and beads, was secured round her waist and breast, with scarlet ribands, and a long garment of blue cloth enveloped the rest of her form. Like her husband, she wore medals of silver upon her breast, and bracelets of the same upon her wrists. Her moccasins, also, were more finely ornamented than those of the Pawnee women who were seated around.

From the moment of her entrance she became the object of attraction to all eyes.

Observing this, she withdrew into one of the berths, and dropping in front of her a screen of grass matting, remained there for the rest of the day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Grand Pawnee Village—The Council.

THE second day after our arrival was appointed for holding the council. It was a fine frosty morning.

A number of us left the lodge early Monday morning, and strolled towards the Platte. A few gaunt wolf-dogs were prowling about in search of food.

The savages had not yet left their lairs, except one or two, muffled in their robes, who, at sight of us, hurried off to give information that the strangers were stirring. Occasionally, as we passed the dark funnel-like mouth of a lodge, a face would be seen, cautiously looking out, and after staring at us for an instant, would vanish into the interior to call out the rest of the inhabitants.

We had not gone far before a dozen dogs followed at our heels, baring their teeth, and uttering deep growls; and showing that how-

ever welcome our appearance might be to the Indians, there were some members of the village who did not participate in the general feeling.

In spite, however, of this show of ill-will, we continued our walk until we reached the Platte, where we seated ourselves upon the trunk of a fallen tree.

In the meantime the Indians had received intelligence of our movements, and began to edge towards the stream. The children came running openly and in droves. The old men and warriors sauntered along towards the water, and came down upon us as if by accident. Others, more modest, crouched down in the long grass, creeping stealthily forward, until every stump and bush seemed to be filled with curious faces.

Nearest to us was a tall, thin Indian, clad in an old worn-out buffalo-robe, who was scanning our every movement with much curiosity.

At length one of the party wishing to inquire about our horses, beckoned him forward. This was a signal for all the rest. They came trooping up under the pretence of giving information, and upon every sign made by us about a dozen gabbled out unintelligible answers.

After spending about half an hour upon the river bank, and finding that nothing was to be gained in the way of information, we returned to the village.

It was now quite astir. The men lounging around; the children were rolling and tumbling in the dirt; the squaws were engaged in bringing from their lodges leather sacks of shelled corn and spreading it out to dry upon buffalo-skins which were stretched out upon the ground.

Others were cleansing it from the decayed kernels and packing it up in small sacks of a whitish undressed leather resembling parchment. These were then deposited in cache-holes * for a winter's store.

At a distance from the village a band of females were slowly wending their way along the top of one of the prairie ridges to their

* The *cache* is a large hole dug in the ground, like a cistern. It is narrow at the top (about four feet in diameter) but wider as it descends, until its form somewhat resembles that of a jug. It will contain about an hundred bushels of corn. Upon leaving their villages the Indians deposit the corn which is to serve for their winter's store in granaries of this description, and cover the apertures with earth, so that it is impossible for a person unacquainted with their exact position to discover the entrance. The name *cache* is given by the French traders, who derive it from the word *cache*r (to conceal).

daily labor in the plantations of corn, which are scattered in every direction round the village, wherever a spot of rich black soil gives promise of a harvest. Some of them are eight miles distant from the town.

There is a fearful uncertainty hanging round the lives of these females. At the rising of the sun they depart to their toil, often never to return.

They are constantly exposed to the attacks of lurking foes on the watch to cut off stragglers, and who come and go with equal silence and celerity, and whose presence is unknown until the long absence of a woman, or the discovery of a mutilated body, found after the lapse of several days, conveys a sad notice that the hand of the destroyer has been busy among them.

As we proceeded, the dogs of the town formed a train behind us, with the same expression of ill-will that had been manifested by their predecessors. But this display of rancor was of short duration, for a tattered Indian, as dirty as he was ragged, rushed out from one of the lodges, and with a few vigorous applications of his foot scattered the troop,

who, with slouched tails, fled yelping and howling in every direction.

Our attention was now called to the old heralds, who were stalking through the town, shouting at the top of their lungs, and announcing the time and place of the coming council. Occasionally they stopped to gossip with some gray-headed crony, who stood blinking like an owl at the entrance of his dwelling.

At other times they paused to bestow a lecture upon some urchin guilty of a breach of decorum towards their guests.

Upon reaching the lodge of the chief, we found that active preparations had been made for holding the council. The goods and presents which had been received hastily into the building were now piled up carefully. The lodge had been swept clean ; a bright fire was burning in the centre ; the crowd of loungers and hangers-on had been routed ; and besides the family of the chief, we were the only occupants of the spacious building.

At mid-day the chiefs and braves began to assemble. They were in full dress, and many of the young men had spent the whole morn-

ing in preparation, and now presented themselves fully ornamented for the occasion.

As the hour for the opening of the council grew nearer, the warriors came in singly and in groups.

As they entered, they seated themselves, until five or six circles were formed, one beyond the other, the last being against the wall of the building. In the ring nearest the chief sat the principal braves, or those warriors whose deeds entitled them to a high rank in the councils of the nation. The more distant circles were filled by such young men of the village as were admitted to its councils.

The passage leading to the open air was filled with women and children, who were not admitted.

In the course of half an hour nearly all the principal warriors had assembled.

The chief then filled a large stone pipe, and lighting it, drew a few puffs, inhaling the smoke into his lungs, and blowing it out in long blasts through his nostrils.

He then passed it to the whites, who, each having inhaled a few whiffs in their turn, handed it to their neighbors. These again

passed it on until it had made the circuit of the whole assembly.

While this was going on our attention was attracted to a violent commotion in the passage. In a moment afterwards the naked head and shoulders of the Wild Horse towered above the crowd. He forced his way through and seated himself in the inner ring, leaning his back against one of the pillars which supported the roof. The chief scowled grimly at the disturbance caused by his entrance.

The Wild Horse, however, was a giant whose wrath was not to be courted, and the matter passed off in silence.

After a short time the Commissioner rose and addressed the council, stating the views of the United States, and, at the same time, the conditions of the treaty.

During the whole of the address all sat silent with their eyes fixed upon the speaker, though now and then some proposal, which met with peculiar approbation, would elicit a grunt of approval from the deep, sonorous chests of the whole assemblage when the interpreter translated it.

When the Commissioner had finished, the

chief of the Grand Pawnees rose, and for a few moments stood facing the Commissioner in silence; then stepping forward, he threw back his head, and raised his arm, with one of the fingers slightly extended, as if to command attention. He then paused and looked around. The pause was momentary, and without moving the position of his arm he commenced his reply.

It was short, energetic, and abounding with all the high-wrought figures of Indian oratory. As he proceeded he grew more and more animated, and his finely modulated voice grew loud and strong. He threw his robe from his shoulders, and waved his bare arms over our heads with wild gesticulation.

Had it not been for his words of friendship, our fancies would have led us to imagine that he intended to scalp us on the spot. Suddenly he dropped his voice to its usual guttural tones, and in a short time finished his harangue.

After him his son, the second chief of the tribe, rose and commenced an address. While he was speaking, voices were heard in angry altercation at the far end of the lodge.

The Wild Horse was crouching at the foot of one of the pillars, with his hands interlocked, his arms encompassing his legs, and his body nearly hid by the long matted hair which hung over it.

He was roused by the disturbance ; but at first contented himself by an occasional sharp word addressed to the disputants. This silenced them for a few moments ; but at last their voices broke out into open clamor. The savage started to his feet, stalked among them, shook his brawny arms over their heads, and growled a few words in their ears. This had a magical effect. The voices sank, and the noise was hushed. For a few moments he stood over them, and then again crouched at the foot of the pillar, and the chief proceeded in his speech.

After him, several chiefs spoke, welcoming the party to their village with the kindest expressions of hospitality. At the same time, they expressed their entire acquiescence in the terms of the treaty.

Several of the braves and warriors spoke to the same effect. When they had concluded, the next day was appointed for signing the treaty.

The pipe was again passed around, and the council breaking up, the warriors left the lodge.

During the whole of the deliberation, which lasted about six hours, the interior of the building was excessively hot.

When the meeting was over we strolled out into the prairie and returned to our tents.

CHAPTER XXV.

Receiving Horses—Departure from Grand Pawnees—Crossing the Platte—The Iotan's Wife.

WE remained several days with this tribe, but the morning at length arrived when we were to take our leave of them, and shape our course for the village of the Pawnee Republicans, which is situated upon the Loup fork of the Platte River, about twenty miles distant.

The couriers appointed to carry the tidings of our visit to them had left the village the night before. We were now drawn out in front of the lodge, awaiting the movements of the soldiers, who were driving in the horses which had pastured on the islands of the Platte.

The chief of the Pawnee Republican village, after lingering with us until the last moment, started to ford the river, and after he had crossed it we could perceive in the dim distance his white horse skimming like a bird over the crests of the hills.

He was pushing forward to reach his village and marshal his warriors for our reception.

In about half an hour our soldiers returned with the horses, and commenced saddling them for the march.

In the meantime, those Indians who had promised presents of horses on the first day of our meeting, brought them up. A young Indian first came forward, leading up a jet-black mare; after him followed another, holding in his hand a long buffalo tug, or halter, which restrained the wild motions of a two-years-old colt. His color was snowy white, here and there broken with spots of brown. He had been caught wild from the prairies but a few weeks before, and had never been mounted.

They led him up in his native wildness; his tail stood out, his ears were pricked up, his eyes starting, his nostrils expanded, and every hair of his long mane seemed erect with terror.

At one moment he dashed around at the full stretch of the long tug which secured him; then pausing, and shaking his long mane over his head, he fixed the gaze of his almost bursting eyes upon his captor.

Then raising his head and casting a long, lin-

gering, and almost despairing gaze upon the hills of the prairie, which till then had been his home, he made a desperate leap forward, dragging to the ground the Indian who held the end of his halter. Others rushed to the Indian's assistance. Several attempted to get near the horse, but he reared upon his hind legs and kept them at bay with rapid and powerful blows of his forefeet. At length a young Indian threw off his robe and crept up behind him. With a sudden leap he landed upon his back and seized the tug. Before this the efforts of the animal had been violent; but when he felt the burden and the curbing hand of his rider, he uttered a shrill and almost frantic scream, and bounded in the air like a cat; he reared and plunged, but in vain; his rider was a master hand, and retained his seat unmoved. He curbed him in, and lashed him with his whip until he crouched like a dog upon the prairie.

His spirit was crushed, and the last spark of freedom was extinguished. Shortly after, one of the hunters tied a pack upon his back. He made no resistance, and they led him off with the rest.

In the meantime the other Indians led up their horses. It was evident that several of them had made their promises in the excitement of the moment.

They were now fulfilling them as matters of conscience, not of inclination; and their horses were valuable in proportion. One was lame, another blind; one had large patches of skin rubbed off his back, and the ears of another were cropped close to his head.

It was evident that they had selected the very worst of their animals, but one after another they came lingering up, until one Indian alone lagged behind. The chief inquired for him, and was told that he had gone out to search for his horse. Ten minutes elapsed. At last there was a movement in the crowd, and a sly-looking, white-headed old fellow made his way through it. In his hand he held the end of a long buffalo tug; the other was secured to his horse.

Such a horse! he was blind of both eyes; his tail had been cut off short to his rump; his ribs stood out in bold relief, and his very joints creaked as he walked stiffly after his leader. As for his age there was no mode of tell-

ing it, as it is probable that his teeth had long since dropped out; but it must have been incalculable.

There was a smothered giggling among the women and a downright squall of laughter among the children, as the horse stalked forwards towards its future owner.

The old Indian moved towards the Commissioner, and, without raising his head, placed the end of the halter in the hand of one of the soldiers. There was a deal of mischief in his look, and I could hear a low chuckle beneath the folds of his robe, as he drew it up over his face and disappeared among the crowd.

We now mounted and started at a rapid pace for the river. The heavy lumbering wagons followed slowly, and a train made up of about half the village brought up the rear.

Upon reaching the banks we found that the Otoes were already on their way through the river. Some were wading up to their arm-pits; others had missed the ford and were swept down the stream, holding their blankets high over their heads to keep them dry, as they struggled across the current.

Other Otoes, mounted on horses which they

had trafficked for with the Pawnees, were fording the shallow parts of the river, or clinging to the manes of their steeds, as they missed the ford and fell into the deep current.

The river at this place was very wide, here and there interspersed with small islands.

The depth was varying; in some places it was but a few inches, in others it must have been from ten to twenty feet. At one moment the water scarce reached the fetlocks of your horse, the next step sent him floundering up to the holsters.

After reaching the banks a short consultation was held. The heavy baggage wagons were sent forward, with two Indians to guide them over the fords. After them followed the dear-born wagons. One was driven by an old soldier, who kept steadily in the wake of the teams. Two mules drew the other. They were driven by Joe, who was seated upon the dash-board of the wagon, swearing in broken English, sometimes at the animals, and at others at the slow pace of the oxen which dragged the wagons in front. For some time he followed steadily in their wake; but at length his patience became exhausted, and

he determined to drive forward at all hazards.

He plied his whip upon the flanks of the mules.

At the first application they stopped short; at the second they kicked up as well as the water would permit; but at the third they commenced moving forward, for they had learnt by long experience that the patience and perseverance of their driver in the application of the lash was greater than their ability to endure it.

Half a dozen steps brought the water up to the bottom of the wagon. The mules hesitated, but the driver still whipped. Another half a dozen steps and the water gushed over the sides of, and into, the wagon. Joe stood up and whipped harder than ever. The wagon was now full of water, in the midst of which stood Joe pouring out volleys of maledictions in broken French; but now the mules had rest, for he had to use his whip-hand to hold up the skirts of his blanket overcoat, and, as the mules did not understand French, the force of his anathemas was lost upon them.

At length, however, the deep water was

passed, and the wagon reached the shore and toiled slowly up the opposite bank.

The rest of the party then commenced their march in single file across the ford, keeping in a line with an Indian, who led the way; but some of us, missing the ford, went a short distance down the stream, where we reached a small island, and scrambling up its bank, galloped across to the opposite side.

Here we found a wife of the Iotan, standing at the edge of the water. She was to accompany him on this expedition. She was young, tall, and finely formed; and her face, next to that of the wife of the Kioway Indian, was the handsomest we had met with. Her hair was parted above her forehead, and hung down upon her shoulders. A small jacket, of blue cloth, was fastened round her shoulders and breast, and a mantle of the same was wrapped around her body. They had been presented to her by the Commissioner but a few days before. She was standing upon a small sand-bar, and the water was gurgling around her feet.

She looked at the water and then at her dress, with an expression of almost childish sorrow; for to swim the river would ruin her finery.

The Indians had all reached the opposite bank, so that no assistance could be expected from them.

Just then the hunters dashed by her, but did not even notice her. I was the last of the party, and she knew it; for though we could not speak the same language, there was an imploring expression in her large dark eyes as she looked at me, that told every thing. Still I hesitated; I thought of pushing on; there was a powerful struggle between selfishness and a desire to assist her. She saw it, and speaking a few words in her own silvery tongue, at the same time pointed to her new dress.

There was something so sorrowful in the tone and gesture that I could not resist it.

I took my rifle in my left hand, and reaching out my right, she seized it, placed her foot on mine, and with a sudden bound was upon the back of my horse, stooping behind me, with her arms round my neck.

My horse had so long been accustomed to have his own way in every thing, that he grew very indignant at this new imposition, but a lunge of the spurs subdued his opposition, and he pushed forward into the

river. He was a powerful animal, and took to the water like a sea-fowl. The river had a swift current around us, and the water reached nearly to the saddle, and we could feel the strong nervous quivering of the horse's limbs, as he bore up against it. But occasionally, as he went snorting along, he cast back spiteful glances at his riders. I expected mischief, and it came to pass. As we gained the shore, his heels flew up, the arms of the squaw were jerked from my neck, and I saw her describing a curve through the air; but she landed upon her feet and received no injury.

The Indians raised a shout of laughter, and the horse, satisfied with being relieved from his extra burden, jogged quietly on towards the Republican village.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Journey to the Republican Village, and Reception.

IN about half an hour all the stragglers belonging to our party had crossed the river and collected together on its bank.

As we looked back at the Indian town, we could see the tops of the lodges crowded with men, women, and children, watching us, probably in the expectation that our heavy ox teams would meet with mishap on the passage, but nothing of that kind had occurred, and the Indians who had crossed with us, either as guides or to lend a helping hand in case of emergency, now prepared to return.

After sunning themselves to take off the chill they had received in the water, they again betook themselves to the river—some swimming and some wading, as they happened to hit or miss the ford.

We were already on our march, and as we looked back from the top of a small hill, we

could see dark forms scattered over the whole breadth of the river.

The distance between the Grand Pawnee and the Pawnee Republican Village is about twenty miles.

The latter is situated upon what is called the Loup fork of the Platte River, and is about the same in size as that of the Grand Pawnees. The different portions of the Pawnee tribe were formerly united. In the course of time, however, as their numbers increased, the difficulty of obtaining timber for fuel and building also increased, until at last they divided into four distinct bands, each under a separate chief. The first seated itself upon the Republican fork of the Platte, and is known by the name of the Grand Pawnee tribe. The other three located themselves upon the Loup fork of the same river, and are distinguished by the names of the Republican Pawnees, the Tappage Pawnees, and the Pawnee Loups.

They are altogether distinct from the Pawnee Picks.

During our stay among the Grand Pawnees, we found a Pawnee Pick residing among them, but his language was unintelligible to the whole

nation, with the exception of one Indian, who had lived among the Picks.

Our path now lay across the prairie. An advance guard of Pawnees took the lead. Sometimes they were but ten or fifteen rods ahead of us, and then would push forward until out of sight.

Behind us followed our little band of Otoes; all on foot, except the wife of the Iotan chief.

She had contrived, by her winning arts, to soften the flinty nature of the old iron-sided soldier who drove one of the wagons, so as to get a seat upon a pile of bear-skins, composing our bedding.

Here she exerted herself, to maintain her hold on the good-will of the veteran Jehu, by narrating to him, by gestures, an account of her passage over the Platte.

The soldier listened with good-humor, and occasionally condescended to smile, when, by her gesticulation, the story appeared to warrant it the most. At length one of his comrades asked :

“What are you and the wife of Iotan laughing at, Mack.”

“Curse me if I know,” retorted the other.

“The squaw keeps up such a *bloody* cackling, I suppose there must be a joke somewhere, and so I laughed.”

After a few hours, we passed a solitary tree which stood, like a sentinel, over a small spring at its foot; the source of a brook which had crossed our path during the route. The tree was old and tempest-torn, but still sturdy.

If aught might be judged from its gnarled and fantastically twisted branches, it had for years held its ground in bitter strife with the fires and tornadoes which sweep the prairies.

We felt a kind of companionship with this “veteran of the storms,” and, as if by common consent, both Indians and whites came to a halt, to drink the water which gushed out at its roots.

Having rested our horses we again pushed on, and after a laborious journey through the high grass we came near the Pawnee town.

On the hills we descried large droves of Indian ponies gazing at us—no doubt wondering who we were, and whence came the strange animals which were dragging our heavy ox wagons.

We also perceived in the distance groups of Indians, some on foot and some mounted, but

all apparently on the watch for us ; for as soon as we came in sight they dashed off and disappeared behind a hill.

We kept on until we ascended the hill which the Indians had left, and from its top had a full view of a prairie which extended from its foot to the Platte River, upon the opposite bank of which was the Pawnee town, built upon a bluff.

The plain was swarming with Indians.

It was evident that we had arrived sooner than they had expected, and that they were not ready to receive us.

The chief, on a white horse, galloped to and fro, giving orders, and assigning stations to different squads as they came up ; but all were apparently awaiting the arrival of a band of horsemen who were making their way across the Platte.

As soon as they came up the chief despatched a courier to us.

He came at full gallop and stopped his horse in front of us by bringing him up with a jerk that nearly threw him on his haunches.

He bore a request from the chief that the party would descend to the plain, where he could receive them in better style.

This request was complied with, and our party halted to await what was to come next.

Some time elapsed while the chief rode to and fro among the Indians, whom he had divided into different bands ; but at last he waved his arm, which was the signal for his men to move, and at the same time gave a loud whoop, which was answered by yells from hundreds of throats.

Although accustomed to these sounds, and although we knew that all this was a part of a friendly ceremonial, the yells made us fairly to shiver.

At the signal the horsemen dashed forward.

At first their movements were regular, but before a hundred yards had been passed each man sent up his shrillest cry, urged his steed to his utmost speed, and the whole horde came dashing in wild confusion. At the distance of about a hundred yards in front of us the three divisions met ; then separating, the torrent whirled round us at the same mad gait. In the midst of them we could see the chief, urging his horse around in the innermost circle ; and above the din of whoops and yells we

could hear his voice, cheering his men on in their mad gallop.

After a short time he made another signal, and the band stopped. Then dismounting, many of them removed the tugs from their breasts, and let them run loose over the prairie.

The chiefs, however, and the principal men still remained and seated themselves around us, after which, the same ceremony of presenting horses, which had taken place at the arrival of the party at the village of the Grand Pawnees, was repeated.

About the same number were given as on the preceding occasion. As before, the old men who had nothing to offer, made up for it in speeches, exhorting others to munificence.

When this ceremony was finished the circle opened, and our troop again mounting, prepared for their journey to the village.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Indian Mischief—Crossing the Loup Fork of the Platte—Entrance in the Republican Village.

NO sooner did the chief give the signal to move, than the dark ring round us was broken, and the whole crowd of Indians streamed across the prairie on their way to their village. The horses which had been cast loose careered wildly around the crowd, and the mounted horsemen dashed about to show their skill.

If any thing could give to an inexperienced person an idea of a field of battle, where man and horse are alike urged on by a reckless disregard of neck and limb, it is a scene like this.

There was a striking contrast between the conduct of the old influential chiefs and that of the young warriors. The first rode quietly with the party, and there was something even stern in the fixed repose of their painted faces ; but the young fellows dashed about hither and

thither, and occasionally unhorsed a poor rider to their great delight.

During the whole way from the plain to the bank of the river the party kept compactly together.

At length, however, one of the soldiers, mounted upon a powerful horse, gradually edged away until he was about fifty yards distant from the main body.

It was done without thought, and probably for the sake of gaining space that his horse might move more freely. Here the spirit of mischief in the young Indians began to display itself in pranks which some of them attempted to play upon him. They would gallop across his path, and in passing flap their robes over the eyes of his horse, causing him to rear and plunge. This was a source of great annoyance to the rider, who was not the best horseman in the world, and had been mounted on that day more for the sake of show than from any desire of his own.

He rode well enough as long as his steed travelled at a walk, but was sorely puzzled when his speed was accelerated, and at his wit's end when the horse grew restive under the tricks of the Indians.

They took especial care to be quick in their movements, and to keep beyond the reach of his brawny arm ; for there was something in the grim, worried features, and giant form of the veteran, which betokened a man not to be trifled with.

At last a little old wiry Indian determined to come in for his share of the sport. He was mounted upon a small horse, who had no hair on his tail, but who at the successful accomplishment of any mischievous feat wagged the stump with keen satisfaction.

At first the old fellow contented himself by galloping around the veteran, so near as almost to touch him. The soldier took no notice of him.

This being borne with patience, the old fellow grew bolder. In one of his circuits, he ran his steed against the flank of the soldier's horse, nearly unseating the rider, and causing a furious discharge of the heels of the aggrieved animal, and raising a loud laugh among the young Indians.

The soldier recovered his seat, but lost his temper. The younger Indians saw that there was mischief in his eye, and drew off.

The old man, however, was too much elated to think of stopping.

Fortunately the horse relished the pranks which had been played on him as little as the rider, and understood better how to retaliate; and as the Indian came again at full sweep, and the soldier, to avoid him pulled hard upon the curb bit, his horse planted his forefeet into the sod, and his heels were discharged from behind as if thrown from a catapult. They came in contact with his opponent's horse, just as he was about to close with him. The nag was driven to the distance of several yards, and the rider hurled from his back and sent rolling in the grass.

Though the Indians had relished the pranks played by their comrade, their enjoyment of the retaliation was greater; and they hooted, and jeered their companion, not so much for his breach of hospitality as for his want of success, that, to get rid of them, he whipped up his little steed, and galloped off to the village. The soldier, in the meantime, taking advantage of the diversion in his favor, returned to the party.

A short time only elapsed before we were at

the brink of the river. Here the chief led the way across the fording place. The Indians, however, regardless of the depth of the water, plunged in, and in a few moments its whole surface was black with them.

It was a scene of great hubbub and confusion.

Some were mounted upon powerful and sinewy horses, which sped through the water like sea-birds.

Others floundered through the channel, frightening the more timid by their snorting and splashing. Some of the Indians threw themselves from their horses and stemmed the current, half swimming, and half wading; while the relieved animals, scattering in every direction, made for the nearest land.

The baggage wagons toiled slowly along in the rear, keeping close upon the trail of the chief.

After some time the whole party reached the opposite shore, upon which stood the village. The bank was steep, and almost precipitous. There was a pause of some length, before the arduous task of dragging the heavy vehicles up the hill was imposed upon the

jaded oxen. At length, however, twelve of them were fastened before a single wagon, and united their strength to draw it up. The Indians stood by, with looks of wondering curiosity; but when they saw the lash inflicted, and the nervous efforts of the beasts, they shrank back with a feeling of fear lest they should turn upon their persecutors.

Even the older warriors showed signs of timidity, and the children scampered in undisguised terror up the steep pathway. They paused, however, upon the top of the bluff, where they deemed that they might gaze in safety upon the movements of their guests.

After a sound drubbing, and much swearing on the part of the drivers, the jaded animals dragged the wagons up the hill, and slowly proceeded through the village.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Indian Females and Feasts.

MANY of the inhabitants of this town had been present at our arrival at the Grand Pawnee village, and to them the novelty of our appearance was over, but to the rest all was new, and the day of our entering the village was one of jubilee.

The tops of the lodges were crowded with spectators. Here and there were knots of wild-looking boys, with their bows and arrows tucked under their arms, staring with open mouths at the travelling lodges, as they termed our heavy wagons.

Groups, too, of women—the married ones with children, some on their backs and others at their heels—crowded around us. And young girls also, wild as deer, were gazing at us with great curiosity, but maintained a timid distance.

Our Indian guide led us through the town

to the lodge of the chief Blue Coat.* He had nothing of the stern coldness of the leader of the Grand Pawnees. He attended personally to our comfort, assisting even in unloading and bringing in our baggage. When this was finished, he seated himself and opened a conversation, through the interpreter.

There was an intelligence in his remarks and an ease in his manners which made his guests almost forget that they were conversing with a wild, untutored savage.

It was not long before messengers came from different lodges inviting us to feasts, which had been prepared in honor of our arrival. We had learned by this time that there was no escape from the invitations of an Indian host, so we followed the guide, who led us to the dwelling of the second chief.

We found him seated upon a small leather mat.

He was a fat, oily fellow, with a jolly, good-

* The name of Blue Coat is given to the chief of the Republican Pawnees on account of his wearing a blue camblet coat. He is proud of the title, and prefers it to his Indian name. He is much more refined in manners and ideas than the rest of his nation, and is considered by the traders and his own people the very *beau ideal* of an Indian warrior.

natured face. Still, its expression was tempered by that gravity which, from long habit, has become almost natural to the race and proverbial among the whites.

Around him were lounging about a dozen Indians.

Some, reclining with their backs against the pillars supporting the roof, with their eyes half closed, were smoking their stone pipes. Some were lying half asleep upon the clay floor, with their feet within a few inches of the fire; and others were keeping up a sleepy song.

At a short distance from the fire, half a dozen squaws were pounding corn in large mortars,* and chattering vociferously at the same time. In the farther part of the building about a dozen naked children, with faces almost hid by their tangled hair, were rolling and wrestling upon the floor, occasionally causing the lodge

* The mortar is in universal use among the uncivilized tribes, answering the purpose of a mill.

The hollow is formed by kindling a fire upon the top of a block of wood, into which it gradually sinks itself, until it forms a sort of bowl. The cavity is then cleaned from the coal-black and is fit for use.

These mortars are generally a foot in diameter and about eight inches deep. Corn is pulverized in them by using a billet of wood as a pestle.

to echo to their childish glee. In the background we could perceive several shaggy, thievish-looking wolf-dogs, skulking among the hides and bundles in search of food, and gliding about with the air of dogs who knew that they had no business there.

Upon our entering, the lounging Indians rose from the floor, the smokers woke from their reveries, and the dogs slunk out of sight.

The women and children, however, went on as before ; the former pounding and chattering, and the latter frolicking on the floor. When we were seated, a bowl of buffalo flesh was placed before us, and signs made for us to fall to. The chief himself acted as master of ceremonies. He thrust his hands into the bowl and turned over and over the heap of smoking meat, selecting the best morsels and welcoming us with warm expressions of friendship. Several times, annoyed by the noise and clamor of his wives, he turned around and let out a volley of angry words, which, however, they treated with no attention.

Before we had finished our meal half a dozen messengers arrived, each waiting for us to follow them to the lodges of other chiefs. It is

usual for the guest, when he is unable to eat all the food placed before him, to send what is left to his own quarters. The duty of carrying it is generally entrusted to one of the junior members of the family, who, when departing upon his errand, receives a particular caution from the squaws to be careful to bring back the bowl.

It was near sunset when we finished our visits.

We had gone from lodge to lodge, followed by our usual retinue of men women, and children, until we had visited nearly half the lodges in the village.

Our receptions were different according to the dispositions of our hosts. Some were grave and sedate in their demeanor, and others as sociable and even lively as the whites.

We had been invited to some of the lodges against the wishes of the squaws, who did not like the trouble of entertaining us; and as we could not understand their language, they had no hesitation in speaking their minds freely to their husbands.

The half-breed interpreter, in the conscientious discharge of his duty, with iron gravity,

translated the whole to us, without abating an epithet, or softening a single peppery expression.

When we came out, we found a small crowd collected, which drew back as we appeared; there was nothing troublesome in their mode of gratifying their curiosity.

The children followed at a distance. The older Indians would learn the route which we must take, and hurrying on, would seat themselves where the party must pass them; but there was none of the prying, meddling spirit which is shown among the whites.

We had scarcely reached the lodge of the chief, and were congratulating ourselves that the eating part of the business was terminated, when a boy came to the place where the interpreter was sitting.

We suspected that another feast was on foot, and were making for the door, when we were arrested by the interpreter, who was too much of an Indian not to relish these eating parties. He said that three of us had been invited to the lodge of one of the older warriors, who had prepared a great delicacy for us. Although little inclined to attempt any thing more in the

way of eating, we had to accompany him, wondering what new article of food could be raked up in the village, where every soul seemed to live on buffalo flesh and corn.

When we reached the place of invitation, we found the interior of the lodge lighted by a bright fire. In front of it was seated the Indian who had invited us. He was an old man with a bottle nose and a ponderous corporation; and when seated behind it with his feet doubled under him after the Turkish fashion, he looked like a large sphere.

Upon our entrance, after sundry puffs and heaves, he rose up and welcomed us, pointing out seats upon several mats which had been placed for us. He then told his squaw, whose leanness was in proportion to his rotundity, to place the viands before us. We watched her narrowly as she moved to a large kettle over the fire. There was something in it of a reddish-yellow color. What could it be? We had never met with any thing of that description before. The squaw seized a sharp-pointed stick, and commenced spearing into the pot, and repeatedly missed her aim, but at length struck the object of her search, and drew out, impaled

upon the point of her stick, a large boiled *pumpkin*. This she immediately commenced dividing in strips.

While the ceremony of spearing was going on, we watched with some curiosity to see what all this trouble was to produce ; but when the pumpkin made its appearance, the expression of countenances was ruefully changed. I looked at my companions. Their eyes were fixed with silent agony upon the preparing feast. There was no retreat ; it must be eaten ; and we were doomed to do it. I had hoped to derive a little comfort from them. I had hoped, too, that they might relish a sodden and water-soaked pumpkin ; and that under cover of their appetites, I might escape unobserved. The expression, however, of their faces forbade the hope, and I determined to perform my share of the mastication in a manner creditable to a civilized man.

We fell to desperately, therefore, under the vigilant eye of our fat host, who continually plied us with fresh pieces, according to the laws of Indian hospitality, and to refuse which would be regarded as a slight. How we managed to get through that feast I can hardly

say ; it was one of the severest trials of the whole of our campaign ; yet we did get through with it, and emerged from the lodge with safety.

When we returned to our lodge we found it crowded. Groups were squatting in every direction, wrapped in their robes, carrying on an earnest talk. But upon our return the conversation gradually flagged, and their sole occupation was to sit, with their eyes fixed upon us, as we were collected round the fire.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Doctor's Adventure—Indian Dirge.

UPON our return to the chief's lodge, we found that one of the party, Dr. M—, was away.

There were many conjectures as to his absence, but after a while he made his appearance, considerably out of breath, and related to us an adventure which he had just met with.

After we had left our lodge, as he had nothing in particular to do, he set out upon a voyage of discovery. He had not gone far before his attention was attracted by a low chanting song, proceeding from a lodge which stood a little apart from the others.

So he walked to it, and without hesitation entered the low, funnel-shaped mouth, and peeped over the bear-skin which hung before the inner entrance.

A fire was burning in the centre of the lodge. Over it hung a kettle, the contents of which

was stirred by an old Indian, dressed in a buffalo robe whitened with chalk and ornamented with hieroglyphic symbols. As he stirred he hummed a low chant, occasionally raising his voice to a yell, and then sinking it to a low murmur. The Doctor remarked that this Indian, as to appearance, was not an Apollo.

At a few steps from the fire two persons were lying, covered by a buffalo robe, and, leaning over them, stood another Indian, dressed like the first. He, too, was humming a low song, and dancing to a slow measure round the persons under the robe.

The Doctor suspected that those under the skin were patients, and the others Medicine-men,* performing some of the cures which give them a reputation for superior sanctity among the Indians, who believe them to hold

* Every tribe of Indians has its Medicine-men.

They are a kind of priest or prophet. Their influence, however, is very variable, and depends upon the popularity which they may have acquired with the nation. As long as they confine their prophecies to events which will be agreeable, they are regarded with high veneration; but as soon as they commence predictions of evil, or to reveal unpalatable truths, their influence wanes, and their predictions are scorned.

They are also skilled in the virtues of herbs, and act as physicians. From this they have derived the name of Medicine-man.

communion with the Great Spirit. Their ability to perform these cures arises from their knowledge of the medicinal virtues of different herbs. By jumbling with their healing art a species of mystic mummery, and by pretending to hold a direct intercourse with the Deity, the cure of their patients is attributed more to divine agency than to any virtue of the medicines administered.

After humming round them, the Medicine-man raised the edge of the robe, exposing the naked head and shoulders of two squaws. The Indian at the fire then reached to the other a large dipper, filled from the contents of the kettle. This was greedily swallowed by the squaws. The robe was again thrown over them, and again the Medicine-man commenced his hum and dance.

Now the Doctor saw every thing that was going on inside of the lodge as distinctly as if he had been there, but he resolved to see more.

For a moment he paused to reflect whether it would be prudent to intrude upon these mystic ceremonies, but prudence was a quality with which he was not much troubled; so without hesitation he kicked up the bear-skin,

and stepped into the lodge in front of the two priests.

For a moment they gazed at him as if they doubted their senses. Their eyes flashed fire, and raising their voices, they made the lodge ring with their yells. At this sound the old women peeped from under the robes, and seeing a white man, added their voices to the chorus.

Not at all discomfited, the Doctor attempted to approach the fire, but the Indians warned him back, ordering him with menacing gestures to leave the lodge.

These he pretended to misunderstand, at the same time attempting to enter into a parley with them, in order to gain as much time as possible for observation. He endeavored to explain to them that he too was a Medicine-man, and wished to be acquainted with their secrets, and that in return he would communicate his. But it was useless; either they did not understand, or did not value his information, for they placed themselves in front of him and persisted in ordering him to quit the lodge.

The Doctor pretended not to understand them, and having determined, at all events, to

obtain a look into the kettle, pushed past them and made for the fire.

There was now something of menace in their faces; and one of them, rushing to the side of the lodge, seized a large club. The Doctor, who was not prepared to meet an argument of that description, withdrew rapidly and did not stop until he arrived, disappointed and much out of wind, at the chief's lodge, where he narrated his adventure.

After this I strolled out with one of my companions. It was so late that there were few Indians to be seen. Occasionally we heard the howl of a wolf, and now and then an owl would raise his voice amid the fringe of trees which drooped over the river, and send forth a long, quavering whoop.

We strolled along the shore for half a mile, glad to be set free from the well-meant though tedious attentions of our hosts. At length we were preparing to retrace our steps, when our attention was attracted by a low, mournful cry proceeding from the burial-ground of the village, which was near by. We approached quietly. Upon one of the graves was lying an Indian girl. Her buffalo robe had escaped

from her shoulders, and her long, dishevelled black hair was mingled with the grass. Her bosom was resting upon the sod, her arms extended, as if embracing the form which was mouldering beneath.

Believing that she was singing a dirge over the grave of a friend, we listened attentively to her song. At times it would rise in the air with mournful tenderness. At other times the tone would seem to treat of battle, and then her song would burst from her with the startling energy of one in the midst of the scene itself. At such times her whole frame seemed swelling with the inspiration of her theme; but in the very midst of this exultation the chord of some mournful recollection would be touched, and the song would sink from its ardent tone to a note of woe, so despairing that it seemed to well out from a broken heart.

After a short time she rose from the ground, and wrapping her robe about her, returned slowly to the village.

We were so much interested in her, that we had accurately noted her appearance and whither she went; and now hurried towards our lodge, with the intention of finding out her

history from our interpreter,—a matter of no great difficulty, as the history of every individual of the village is known to all.

We found the half-breed interpreter sitting in front of the fire, wrapped in his blanket-coat with his elbow resting upon his knee, and his hand supporting his chin. There was an air of iron gravity and even sternness in his deep-marked features, that denoted a man not prone to yield to womanish emotion.

We went up to him, and one of us inquired in French (for he spoke no English) the history of the girl—at the same time narrating the scene in the prairie.

If it had been in the nature of his face to wear a more scornful expression than it usually did, the smile of contempt which passed over his weather-beaten features, as we related our story, would have added to it. For a moment he seemed surprised, then added that she was a squaw who lived in the adjoining lodge, and that but a short time before, he had heard her say to her mother, that as she had nothing else to do, she believed she would go and take a *bawl* over her dead brother's grave.

He had been killed five years before.

There was an expression of keen enjoyment in the eye of the half-breed, as he watched the disappointed expression of our faces.

A grim smile played over his reddish-brown face, and I believe that if he had ever been guilty of such an action, he would have indulged in a loud explosion of merriment.

Just then Jones announced that supper was ready. Discarding both the girl and her griefs from our minds, we seated ourselves upon the floor, preparatory to commencing the task of masticating a supper of dried buffalo's flesh which had been boiled for only two hours.

When we had finished, it was late in the evening; the Indians, wrapping their robes around them, had stretched themselves on the floor and were sound asleep.

The servants now busied themselves in spreading out our bear-skins, and we soon followed the example of the Indians.

About midnight I awoke; it was intensely cold; so I rose up and picked my way over the sleepers to the fire. An old Indian was sitting there; his hair was white, and hung down upon his shoulders, and his face and breast were marked with scars.

His robe had fallen, leaving bare the wreck of what must once have been a powerful frame. His cheek was resting in the palm of his hand ; his eyes were intently fixed upon the brands, which flickered up in a broken blaze. In his right hand he held a small piece of wood, with which he raked together the coals, apparently unconscious of what he was doing. In front of him lay a tomahawk, and across it his otter-skin pouch and stone pipe, the symbols of war and peace together, in a manner which seemed to denote that with their owner the day of strife was past.

Upon my approach he raised his head and reached out his hand, while a friendly smile played over his face. Then pointing to his scars, he endeavored by signs to give me an account of the different fights, in which these had been received. Each scar had a tale of its own.

After telling his story he lighted his pipe, and drawing a few puffs he passed it to me with the usual word of politeness, (*Loovah*).*

* This is a word more frequently used than any other in the language. As far as I was able to learn, it had no particular meaning, but was the usual expression of courtesy and kindness when the Indians addressed each other.

I puffed for a few moments, and returned it to him; he then inhaled a few draughts of the smoke, and again reached it to me; and I, after again smoking, reached it to him. This operation of smoking and passing it to each other, continued until the pipe was empty; then knocking the ashes from its bowl, he rose, took up his pouch and tomahawk, drew his buffalo robe over his head, and left the lodge.

Upon being deserted by my companion, I looked around upon the muffled forms thickly strewn upon the floor, with that strange feeling which is experienced by a person, the only being awake among a hundred sleeping forms, and which is peculiarly strong in a place where every individual is a stranger. The lodge was about sixty feet in diameter, and seen by the flickering, uncertain light of the fire, it had a wild appearance. The stern countenances of the sleeping warriors reminded me of the Eastern tale, in which a whole city of living beings were converted into statues. Their sleep was death-like—it seemed dreamless.

But although the Indians slept, the dogs were wide-awake and on the prowl. They knew that their hour of business had come,

and with every leaping blaze of the embers I could see them, scattered through the lodge, on the forage,—all in motion, yet not a sound was to be heard. They wound their way among the sleepers with the cautious step of practised burglars. Occasionally they cast a doubting look at me. However, they came to the conclusion that I was a stranger, and, from my short stay, not aware of their character.

While I was watching them I was startled by a loud whine, which seemed to proceed from the roof of the lodge.

At this sound there was a general scamper of dogs to the entrance, for they were certain that the cry would awaken the savages, and that their only safety was in flight. I turned to ascertain the cause of the noise. At the top of the lodge, and about ten feet from the ground, was a dog suspended by his teeth to a fitch of bacon, which had been hung up to the rafters to keep it out of reach.

The animal had espied this, and, mounting upon a pile formed by our baggage, and springing at it, had contrived to fasten his teeth in it; but in doing so had lost his footing and hung

suspended by his jaws about ten feet from the floor. He dared not let loose his hold, and he was equally certain that he could not maintain it. In this predicament he uttered a low, plaintive whine. Scarcely had the sound escaped him, before missiles of all sorts were battering his ribs, and clamorous voices were raised in hue and cry against him. With a loud yell, relaxing his jaws, he landed upon an old Indian, who had been sleeping beneath him, and scampered from the building, assisted by the kicks of such as were awake and in reach of him.

CHAPTER XXX.

Leaving Republican Village—Prairie between that and Tappage Village—Reception by Tappages — Departure — White Cranes — Black Chief of the Loups—Reception—Chief's Lodge—Soldier Chief's Feast.

THE next morning we set out for the village of the Tappage Pawnees, situated upon the Loup fork of the Platte, about eleven miles farther up the river. As we left the town, the usual crowd of men, women, and children followed. The chief, also, escorted us out, and after accompanying us about a mile, returned to his village, followed by some of his warriors. Others travelled with us, for the purpose of witnessing our reception at their rival village.

The prairie was beginning to show the effects of frost, and the grass wore a withered look. The sun shone red and lurid through the hazy atmosphere, denoting what at this

season of the year is called Indian summer. Not a breeze rustled the grass, or rippled the swift, glassy waters of the Platte. Every thing was quiet, except the loud voice of the teamster expostulating with the oxen, or an occasional crack from the whip of Joseph as he urged forward his mules.

Now and then we came upon the horses belonging to the Republican village. They were roving along the banks of the Platte, prancing and capering as wildly as if still free upon their own prairies.

Upon our approach, they raised their heads and gazed fearlessly upon us. Two or three of the largest left the drove and slowly advanced towards us, and then, with a loud snort, flinging up their heels dashed back, and the whole drove sped off at a gallop.

While we were yet several miles from the village, we observed mounted Indians driving in horses, to be used in the ceremony of our reception.

The town of the Tappage Pawnees is situated upon a broad plain overlooking the Platte. It is the smallest of all the Pawnee villages, and contains about one thousand

inhabitants. The most of the men were now out upon the prairie, mounted and waiting for the signal to come forward to meet us.

When we had approached sufficiently near, it was given. Once more we beheld them coming surge-like upon us, and changing their course before they reached us. The wild neighing of the horses was mingled with the trampling of their hoofs, with the yells and whoops of the Indians, and the clashing of bows and tomahawks.

When this was concluded, the usual ceremony of presenting horses was performed. Half an hour brought us to the town, where, as usual, we found every one on the look-out for our coming, and every preparation made to receive us in a manner worthy of the tribe. There is a sameness in Indian customs and habits which renders description tedious.

Suffice it to say, that we were received by the chief and his people with all the kindness and hospitality which their means afforded.

The next morning we left the village for the town of the Pawnee Loups, which is five miles farther up the river. This is the wildest of all the Pawnee tribes.

We rode in a long line across the low, irregular prairie. The Otoe Indians straggled along the bank of the river. Those of the soldiers who were not engaged with the teams reconnoitred the pools of water, in hopes of shooting ducks.

Here and there we observed a broken patch of corn at the bottom of a ravine. Occasionally we passed a clump of dwarf trees, grouped together over a spring or run of water. Otherwise the prairie was bare of forest, and covered only with long withered grass.

While on our journey several Otoes hurried up, to tell us that about a dozen white cranes were standing upon a sandbar in the Platte. This incident, trivial as it may seem, created quite an excitement among the party. Half a dozen loaded rifles were handed from the wagons, and as many hunters started off, followed by a troop of Indians, with their bows and arrows ready in case the fire-arms of the whites should fail. But all this preparation was useless, for when the hunters were within about three hundred yards of the river, one of the birds, that was standing with its head closely snugged up against its breast, and

gazing in moralizing mood upon the swift water, suddenly shot out a neck three feet long, and turned a quick and steady eye upon the approaching hunters.

He gazed a moment, then taking a step, and slowly raising his wings until their tips nearly met over his back, rose from the earth, as if by mere volition, uttering a shrill cry which brought his startled comrades after him. As they rose a shower of bullets whistled after them without disturbing their flight. Slowly they mounted in the air, floating like snowflakes over the river. For a few moments they lingered over its shining bosom, as if loth to leave their resting-place; but after wheeling in several widely extended circles, they soared to an immense height, and taking a steady course to the eastward were lost to sight.

It was not long before we reached a bluff, from which we descried the village of the Pawnee Loups, but saw no signs of preparation to receive us. A single Indian came galloping at full speed towards us. His horse was of a dark cream color, fierce and powerful. To his bit was attached a scalp, made of the whole upper part of a human head, the hair

of which nearly reached the ground. The horseman proved to be the Black Chief of the Loups.*

When within a few yards of us he sprang from his horse, and gave the bridle to one of our soldiers to hold.

He was far more swarthy than any Indian we had ever seen. He was perfectly naked, with the exception of a pair of leggins of dressed buffalo hide, worn apparently for the sake of displaying a profusion of scalp-locks, with which they were heavily fringed. He was not large, and his whole figure, for fine proportion and strength, might have served a sculptor, but his scowling face marred the beauty of his person. We were told that he was true to his word, faithful to his friends, but cruel and bitter in war.

He advanced and shook hands with us, then turning round, awaited the coming of his warriors, who had now assembled in the prairie.

Minute after minute passed, but still there were no signs of their approach. The Black Chief then called one of the Pawnees who had

* The complexion of this chief was unusually dark—hence his name.

accompanied us from the last village, and sent him forward with instructions to his men.

The Indian started on his errand, but before he had gone more than one quarter of the distance, a loud yell burst from the assembled troop, and they bore down upon us. At the cry of the Pawnee Loups, the chief sent up a long, shrill whoop in answer; then mounted his horse and watched their movements. They had approached within a hundred yards of the party, when he again gave a loud whoop, and waving his arms, his men separated and rushed to right and left around us.

But few horses were presented by this village, as a party of Sioux Indians had stolen down upon them but a few weeks before, and had driven off nearly one third of the horses belonging to the town.

The chief gave as an excuse, that he had gambled away nearly all that he possessed.*

*One of the principal games of the Pawnees, and the one on which the most gambling is carried on, is played by means of a small ring and a long javelin. This ring is about four inches in diameter; and the object of the player is to hurl this javelin through the ring, while it is sent rolling over the ground, with great speed, by one of his companions in the game. The javelin is filled with barbs nearly the whole length, so that when it has once passed partly through the

We afterwards learned that the horse which bore him was the only one left of a large number which he had owned but a short time before.

Upon reaching the village we found, as usual, crowds of women and children anxious to see us, though they did not press round us as in the other villages.

This was owing to the presence of the chief, who had ordered the gazers to keep at a distance. A crowd had assembled, too, around the entrance of his lodge; but upon our approach they drew back and left the passage to it open. Inside of it we found a few of the principal warriors, who alone had been admitted.

There was a feast, as usual, but we ate little, as we knew what was to follow. Scarcely had we finished before a little urchin was in attendance to conduct us to the lodge of the Soldier Chief, the second brave in the village.

ring, it cannot slide back. This is done to ascertain how far it went before it struck the edge of the ring, and the farther the cast, the more it counts in favor of the one who hurled it. It is practised by the children, young men, and chiefs. The first gamble for single arrows; the second, for a bow and quiver; and the last, for horses.

We found him seated at his fire, awaiting our arrival. As we entered he rose and presented to Mr. E—— a large buffalo robe, upon which was painted a hieroglyphic account of his warlike deeds.

After this he seated himself and described the different fights and the meaning of the various symbols on it.

He was a tall, thin man, with a sharp face and deep-sunk eyes, which glittered in their sockets like black beads. There was no spare flesh about his frame, but all was brawn and sinew. He seemed formed for the endurance of great and continued toil, and his hardened face showed that he had weathered exposures of all descriptions.

He apologized to the Commissioner for not having come with the rest of the tribe to welcome him, giving as an excuse, that he was at bitter enmity with the chief, and refused on all occasions to act in concert with him.

A large bowl of boiled corn was then placed before us, and each was furnished by the Soldier's wife with a dipper of buffalo horn. Having partaken of the mess as sparingly as the laws of Indian politeness would permit, we took our leave.

After we had left the lodge, the Indian Agent who accompanied us related the following account of a murder which had occurred but a few months before and which was the origin of the bitter feud between the Soldier and the Black Chief.

During the month of May previous, business had called Major Dougherty to the Otoe Agency on the Missouri. And while he was there, a messenger made his appearance. He had been sent by a half-breed from the Pawnee village, with intelligence that the Loups had taken a Cheyenne woman prisoner and intended to burn her at the stake.*

The Agent determined, if possible, to save her, and having made a few hurried preparations, set off with five companions. A journey of three days brought them to the village. The news of their visit, and the object of it, had preceded them, and they experienced an ungracious reception.

* The Pawnee Loups are the only Pawnees who yet retain this custom. They offer their victim to the Great Star (the planet Venus). The prisoner is, if possible, kept in ignorance of his intended fate, until led out to die. The sacrifices are generally offered in the spring of the year, to insure a bountiful harvest.

As they passed through the town the tops of the lodges were filled with women and children, and a crowd was collected in front of the lodge of the chief.

The whites forced their way through them to the entrance of the lodge. Here the chief met them. His welcome and *his* alone was cordial. He ushered the Agent into his dwelling, nor did he turn a deaf ear to his request that the Cheyenne woman might be spared. He told him, however, that *he* had no power to free her, and all that he could do would be to assemble a council of the tribe, and lay the matter before *them*; that he would use his influence, and would do his best to have the life of the captive saved.

He accordingly despatched messengers to call a council; and they assembled that very night. At the appointed hour they met, took their seats in silence, and with faces which gave but little hope of a merciful result to their deliberations. In the centre of the lodge sat the Agent and his companions; and near them the captive. She had been led in passively, and made no appeal, for she had no hope.

She looked as if every sense and feeling had

been paralyzed, by the dread of her approaching fate.

The Agent rose up and stated his object to the meeting. He was a firm man, and had spent much of his life among the savages; but it needed all his resolution, and all his knowledge of Indian character, to effect the desired object. As he spoke there was no friendly look returned; no sound of approbation uttered. They listened with a calm, cold air, and he finished his address, conscious that besides the chief he had not enlisted the friendly feeling of a single person, in the whole of the dark circle which surrounded him.

When he had ended, the chief, who had been seated at the foot of a pillar, rose. He was in favor of releasing the captive, and of sending her off with the whites. He spoke with the energy, and vehement gesticulation customary among the Indians. During his speech there was a portentous silence, and when he had finished, a hundred throats yelled out cries of anger and denunciation. It was not, however, in his nature to yield. Incensed at the opposition, he raised his voice until it even drowned the noise of the whole

assembly, and swore by the Great Spirit that she should be delivered to the whites; and he dared any man of the whole assembly, to offer her the slightest injury.

All appeared to quail before the master spirit, and one after another they left the lodge, until the chief, the captive, and the whites were its sole occupants. Soon the chief went out also. In an hour he returned, followed by two armed Indians, whom he stationed in a remote part of the lodge, placing the squaw between them. Upon being asked the reason of this precaution, he said that the Soldier Chief, instigated by one of the Medicine-men of the village, had created a disturbance, which caused him to fear for the life of the captive, and that these men were placed to protect her.

He evaded all further inquiries, and shortly afterwards left the lodge.

The whites slept in his lodge, but scarcely closed their eyes that night.

The guards kept watch on each side of the captive, motionless but sleepless.

On the following morning the horses were saddled in front of the lodge, and the party, having armed themselves, prepared to mount.

The chief led out the captive, and forcing back the angry crowd placed her upon a horse, between two of the whites, at the same time cautioning them to lose no time in leaving the village.

They accordingly attempted to push forward, but the crowd hemmed them in so closely that it was with difficulty they prevented their horses from trampling them down. This throng continued to press round them until they reached the lodge of the Soldier Chief. As they passed it a bow twanged from within, and an arrow whizzing through the air was buried up to the feather in the side of the Cheyenne captive. With a loud scream, she tossed her arms in the air, and fell forward upon the neck of the horse. At the same moment a loud roar rose from the multitude, and two Indians seizing the bridle jerked the horse onwards. The crowd opened to let them pass, but before the whites could follow it had again closed. At that moment the Agent heard a loud whoop behind him, and turning, beheld the Black Chief and the Soldier grappled in a desperate conflict, while the followers of each stood by watching the result. They were

both unarmed, and the issue was to depend upon their bodily strength alone. They were well matched, but the Black Chief had the advantage, for he had a deadly gripe upon the throat of his opponent.

The Agent knew, however, that whichever might be victorious the conflict would terminate fatally to himself. He therefore sprang from his horse, and succeeded, with the aid of several chiefs, in dragging them apart and in putting an end to the contest. He then turned to look for the captive.

She had been borne off by the crowd, who were rushing over the prairie with deafening yells.

Still determined if possible to save her, he sprang upon his horse and galloped after them. But he was too late. They had torn the wretched being to pieces, smeared themselves with her gore, and were whirling her head and quivering limbs in the air.

From that time there had been a settled hatred between the Black Chief and the Soldier. They spoke not; neither entered the lodge of the other, and they acted no more in concert than if they had been leaders of separate villages.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Exploit of the Black Chief—Alarm in the Town—Departure from Grand Pawnees—Delegation Death Song.

LATE one evening we were sitting around the fire in the lodge of the chief. There were about thirty Indians present, some lying upon the floor, and others sitting huddled up, wrapped in their robes, and watching us. Joe and Mordecai were spreading our beds of bearskins and blankets, and while this was going on the interpreter, after dwelling upon the fearless character of our host, related the following anecdote illustrative of it.

About a year before this, the Black Chief had, by some means or other, fallen into disrepute with his tribe, who refused to admit him to their councils, until by some heroic action, he should wipe off the stain upon his name.

He knew that there was no resource ; that the blood of an enemy alone would retrieve his fame.

He determined, therefore, to shed it in a manner which even the most desperate of his own tribe would not have dreamed of, and which would strike a salutary terror of his name into the hearts of his hostile neighbors.

Early one morning, fully armed, he left his lodge and started on foot for the Crow village, about two hundred miles distant. He set out upon his journey without attendants, and singing his death-song. His tribe watched until he was out of sight; they knew not whither he was going; he might return soon, in a day, in a month, and perhaps never. They knew his fearless character; they knew that his errand was one of blood; and they doubted not, that if he returned, he would bring home trophies sufficient to reinstate him in his former position in the tribe.

On the evening of the fourth day he reached the Crow village; but waited at a short distance from it, concealed in a prairie until it was dark. He then entered the town.

Several of the inhabitants were stirring, but in the darkness they did not particularly notice him, and he passed on undetected.

At length he came to a lodge, a little apart

from the rest, and with a horse standing at the door, tied by a halter. Peering over the bear-skin which hung before the entrance he saw two Indians sitting in front of a fire, and a squaw pounding corn in a large wooden mortar, and at a little distance a child sleeping on the floor. The backs of all were towards him. Drawing his knife with his left hand, and grasping his tomahawk in his right, he dashed into the building. With two blows, he clove the skulls of the men, and threatened the squaw with death if she made any outcry. Having scalped his victims he mounted the horse at the door and started off.

He had not gone far before he saw an Indian making for this lodge. He felt a strong hankering after his scalp also ; but there were other Indians near, and he feared that the whole town would be roused. Resisting, therefore, the temptation, he galloped for the prairie. Scarcely had he got clear of the village, when it rang with yells and screams ; and in a few moments he heard the cries of pursuers. In a night chase, over an open prairie, the pursued always has the advantage ; he has but to dash forward, while his foes must stop to trace his course.

So it was with the Black Chief; and, long before morning, his horse had borne him far beyond the sound of pursuit.

He reached his village in safety, related his tale, displayed his scalps, was received with honor, and once more resumed his seat in the councils of his nation.

During this narration, the chief, unconscious that he was the subject of discourse, sat gazing upon the fire, with a face as calm and quiet as if no evil passion had ever harbored in his bosom.

The tale was scarcely finished, when we were startled by a loud outcry in the village. The next moment the bear-skin was thrown back; an armed Indian stuck his head into the lodge, shouted out a few words, and as quickly disappeared. Every savage sprang to his feet and rushed to the entrance.

In a short time the chief returned. Never had I seen such a change. His eyes gleamed like fire, his teeth were clenched, and snatching his bow and arrows from a shelf, and catching up his war-club, he rushed out.

The tumult grew louder. The interpreter came in and informed us that a party of Sioux

Indians had stolen into the town, opened one of the large wicker pens, and had carried off about fifty Pawnee horses. They had nearly effected their retreat, when they were discovered by a young Indian, who gave the alarm, and the whole village was now in arms.

On sallying forth, we found every thing in a state of uproar. Whoops and yells, mingled with the cries of women, sounded in every direction.

Horsemen were galloping through the town. The voices of the leaders were heard above all, giving orders and urging on the pursuit.

At length they disappeared in the darkness, and the sounds of their voices died away in the distance.

In about an hour they returned, and the chief made his appearance, gloomy and morose. He had taken no scalps; he had seen no enemies; no horses had been stolen; and the whole tumult had been caused by a young Pawnee, who, observing one of his own tribe engaged in collecting his horses at an unusual hour of the night, mistook him for an enemy, and gave the alarm.

Nothing further occurred to disturb us, and

retiring to our bear-skins we slept soundly until morning.

We remained but a day in this village, and then returned to the Grand Pawnee town, where we made preparations for our return to the white settlements, much to the regret of the women and children, who gathered at our quarters to take a last look at us before we went.

A delegation of Pawnees, four from each village, had been selected to accompany us to the garrison.

This delegation was increased by about sixty or seventy volunteers, who joined them in hopes of obtaining a share of any presents that might be distributed, or to take part in any fight that might be on hand.

A smile of kindness illuminated the grim face of our host as he bade us farewell. The horses were saddled, and we were preparing to mount, when our attention was attracted by a low and not inharmonious cry, which rose from the distant part of the village. It came nearer and nearer, sinking into a long wailing moan, in which many voices were united.

At length a train of Indians, dressed in white buffalo robes,* came from behind one of the lodges.

As they approached us, we recognized them for our party of delegates and their fellow-travellers.

They were singing their death-song, as is customary with Indians, before setting out upon a perilous expedition. It is usually a history of their exploits in battle, and winds up by taking leave of their friends and fellow-townsmen.

The dirge swelled loudly as the long train passed us, but it became fainter and fainter as they wound their way among the distant lodges, which were thronged by their families, who were anxious to take a last look at them before they set out on the perilous journey from which their friends feared that they would never return.

In a short time the rest of us were galloping over the prairie to overtake those who had preceded us; and after travelling about a mile, we crossed over a hill and lost sight of the town.

* The white buffalo robe is so called merely from one of its sides being whitened with chalk in dressing it. The wool is of the same color as that of all others (a dark brown).

CHAPTER XXXII.

Storm—Dog Feast.

A HEAVY storm of snow and rain set in on the day after our departure from the Pawnee village.

If there is any thing truly comfortless, it is a camp upon a rainy day. Every thing combined to add to its gloomy character. The fly of the tent, which might have afforded us some additional protection, had been torn to tatters, and the roof of our canvas house settled down into a bag.

Through this a steady stream of water trickled upon the centre of a board, which we had honored with the appellation of a breakfast table. The blankets were rolled up and piled in the middle of the tent, covered by a large bear-skin. This was nearly saturated with the dripping water. A large pile of green logs, heaped up in front of the tent, refused to burn, but yielded a bountiful supply

of smoke, which the wind occasionally wafted in clouds into our canvas habitation.

The thorough drenching which they had received seemed to have soaked all pride and dignity out of our Indian companions. They crouched like wet poultry round the fire, shutting their eyes and holding their breath, determined to receive some of the warmth in defiance of the clouds of smoke which it threw into their faces. Here and there were groups squatting out in the prairie, each man huddled up into a knot, with the rain pouring in streams down his shaggy robe and dripping off into the grass. The paint was drenched from his face, and his whole demeanor so utterly changed that it was almost impossible to recognize the proud, haughty warrior in the dripping, bedraggled being then crouching in the grass beneath the pelting storm. Once or twice some poor half-drowned fellow, with a desperate attempt at jovialty, struck up a song with a come-let-'s-be-jolly kind of an air, which was intended to set the weather and fortune at defiance; but it was a failure. At the commencement one or two voices joined in with valorous spirit, but, finding that they

were not supported, they gradually sunk into silence, leaving the person who had commenced the strain to finish it as well as he might.

Drip—drip—drip—pattered the rain into a tin bucket placed in the tent to receive it. At length a large puddle which had collected in the rear overflowed its banks and stole in a small rivulet through the centre of the tent. A smothered exclamation from one of the party, who was seated in the very track of the water, announced its intrusion. Several of the soldiers were then sent out with pails and shovels, and in a short time succeeded in draining a part of the pond and digging a different outlet for its waters.

Just then the yelping of a cur was heard at a little distance in a clump of bushes, which the Wild Horse had chosen for his residence.

“So! the dog too is a sufferer on account of the inclemency of the weather. No doubt the Wild Horse is completely drenched and in a terrible fume.”

Another hour passed, but still the rain continued. Just then the entrance of the tent was darkened and the Wild Horse came in.

He held in his hand a large wooden bowl filled with boiled flesh, which he placed smoking before us. We were informed that it was dog flesh and invited to try it. The soldiers had also received a share, but without being told what it was. "What is it," said one, taking up a small morsel and holding it to his nose, "is it venison?"

"It tastes odd," said another, biting in two a large piece. Several of them then commenced an attack upon the contents of their bowl.

"I don't exactly *know* what animal this belongs to," said one of them, who was eating heartily, "and to tell the truth, I don't altogether like the *strangeish* taste there is about it."

"Poh! what should it be," repeated another, "but venison? and mighty tender too. I wish there was more of it; fresh meat don't come every day upon these prairies, for the deer are getting powerful shy."

Just then the canvas opening of the tent was pulled back, and the iron face of the interpreter was thrust in to say that the Wild Horse wished to know if the Commissioner was pleased with the *dog's* flesh. The soldiers

overheard it, and in an instant the dish was hurled from the fire, and the gourmands made for the water, writhing and twisting their faces, as if they had been stricken by St. Vitus.

The Wild Horse gazed upon them with amazement, mingled with anger ; but when the interpreter explained the cause of the tumult, his displeasure vanished, and a grim smile lighted up his hard, weather-beaten face. Then turning to his wife (for he was attended by his better half), he called for a fresh supply of the viand, and collecting round him a group of the vagabond-looking beings who were nestling in the grass, they soon left little else but clean bones in the bowl.

We remained a whole day upon the banks of the Platte River, but towards sunset a bright blue streak appeared in the west, and the dark misty clouds began to drive off towards the south.

The sun at length showed itself upon the distant hills, and before it had completely sunk in the west, the sky was as pure and cloudless as in one of the days of June. This was hailed with joy by the whole band, both Indians and whites, and preparations were made for an early start on the following morning.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Hunting—Prairie Dogs.

AFTER a few days our routine of travel was pretty well established.

At sunrise the camp broke up. The tents were struck. The Indians emerged from whatever shelter they had erected for the night, and we set out on our journey with the old Iotan as our guide.

He was familiar with the whole country. He knew where ravines were to be avoided, and where the river banks were lowest, and where fords were to be found.

As the movements of the train were slow, I always started off early in the morning to hunt.

Deer and wild fowl were to be found in the ravines and brooks, and I contrived to pick up some of the latter in the course of the day, but was not successful in bringing down a deer.

I was usually accompanied by Rash, who

was a dead shot, or by the Otoe Indian Hahche-ka-sug-ha, of whom I had made a firm friend by presenting to him a silk handkerchief, and accepting in return a belt of raw hide.

From that time he always called me "Mintarrah," which I was told by the interpreter meant "adopted brother," and as his name was a long-winded one, I abbreviated it, and called him "Archy," to which he soon became accustomed and responded.

In our hunts we often got separated and out of sight of each other, and did not meet again until at night when we, one by one, struck the trail left by our party, and followed it into the camp.

This trail, being made by about one hundred persons, mounted and in wagons, and on foot tramping through the grass and across the burnt ground, was so distinct that there was little danger of missing it.

In one of these hunts I came across a village of prairie dogs. My arrival among them was a surprise both to myself and to them.

I had ascended a hill for the purpose of taking a look around in the hope of discovering some signs of game.

Upon reaching the summit, I was surprised to see a number of small conical hillocks extending as far as the eye could reach, and on the top of each of the more distant ones was seated a small animal resembling a squirrel.

All were barking, or rather squeaking, vociferously.

As I approached them they darted into their holes before I came within gun-shot. I examined some of their burrows, and thrust my hand down into one of them. I heard afterwards that this was a risky performance, as these holes were also occupied by rattlesnakes, who were on the most friendly terms with their fellow-tenants.

I was very anxious to get one of these dogs, for I had heard much of them, but had never seen them until now; so I threw myself on the ground, levelled my rifle over the top of one of the mounds and watched, keeping perfectly motionless.

It was not long before a head appeared above the top of a mound within rifle-shot. Then it emerged a little farther. The owner of it was evidently reconnoitring. At length he came out entirely and commenced to bark.

As he did so I fired. He turned a quick summersault and darted down his hole.

The noise of the rifle drove even the most distant ones to their retreats, and I gave up all hope of getting any of them.

Reloading my rifle, I walked up to the cone on which the little animal had been, and looked down the hole. To my surprise the end of his tail was in sight. I put my hand down and pulled him out. My bullet had killed him.

When I reached the camp that evening my success was looked upon as something very unusual.

I gave the animal to one of the Indians, who cooked it and invited me to partake of it.

I did not know whether prairie dogs were eatable or not; but as the same Indian had on a previous occasion killed and eaten a wild-cat, I declined his invitation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

*Deer Hunt—Encampment—Indian Night-Fires
—Lost Horses—Doctor's Mule.*

ON the third morning after leaving the village, I started out to hunt on foot in company with three Indians: two Otoes, who had borrowed rifles from the soldiers, and a Pawnee. The party, and the train of accompanying delegates, were journeying in a long line over the prairie at some miles' distance. We hunted for several hours up and down the deep ravines which intersected the prairie. My two companions had become separated from me; but the Pawnee lingered with me, and trudged at my heels, with the hope of coming in for a share of any game that I might kill during the day. We travelled up one ravine and down another, but nothing was to be found.

“Ugh!” burst from the lips of the Pawnee.

I looked around; he was crouching flat to the ground, and made signs to me to get my rifle

ready. Vague suspicions of danger flashed across my mind, for we had heard that there was a band of Sioux Indians lurking around our party.

Could I have come unawares upon them?

These ideas flashed momentarily upon me, but they as quickly subsided, and cocking my gun I stole cautiously towards my companion. He was crouching in the bushes near the top of a ridge which overlooked a deep ravine.

As I approached him he shrank still closer into his hiding-place, and made signs to me to go to the top of the ridge. I crept up its top and peered over. As I did so I caught sight of an Indian, as he squatted quickly behind a bush. My fears seemed realized. We had fallen into the snare! I looked towards the Pawnee; he was still maintaining his position, and keenly watching my movements. As he caught my eye, he urged me by his gestures to fire: I hesitated. At that instant the Indian in front of me rose from behind the bush, and I recognized him as one of my Otoe companions.

The next moment I caught sight of a large buck lying in the grass; and the mystery was explained.

The Pawnee had seen the animal, and it was the deer and not the Indian whom he wished to be shot. As I rose to fire, the Otoe again crouched behind the bush. My bullet missed, and the beast, leaping up, sprang towards the spot where his other foe lay hid. He had scarcely taken three leaps before a shot whistled from a clump of bushes at some distance and in a different quarter. The deer changed his course, and making for the opposite side of the ravine, dashed through the bushes and up the ragged steep.

The Otoe, who had first secreted himself, had a fair view of him, and fired. The deer fell on one knee, but regained his feet. In front of him was a steep bank covered with bushes. He made a desperate effort to gain it, but failed, and rolled headlong down the hill. A loud whoop burst from the three Indians, and the two youngest sprang forward to the spot; while the third, who was a cautious old fellow, stopped to reload his rifle.

When they arrived at the place where the buck had fallen, they found that he was not dead, neither was his wound mortal; one of his forelegs had been shattered by the bullet, but

he had gained his feet, and now stood at bay. His head was bent to the ground, and he dashed his antlers furiously in every direction. The Indians made several attempts to thrust their knives into him, but were as often balked by his fiercely brandished antlers. They hovered around him, now threatening him in one direction, now in another; but his horns ever met them. Just then the Indian who had remained behind to load his rifle came up, and ended the struggle by shooting him through the head.

An Indian is a quick butcher, and not more than ten minutes had elapsed before the animal was skinned and cut up. Each of us took a quarter upon our backs and set off for the encampment, which we reached about an hour after nightfall; by which time, to judge by my feelings, the weight of my load of venison had increased about tenfold.

The party had encamped in a small isolated grove.

It was completely clear of underwood, except here and there a tall bush; and there was not another tree in sight. A spring gushed out at the foot of a hill at a short distance, and flowed in a pure but scanty stream through the grove.

The Indians had divided into squads, and every squad had kindled a fire.

All the arrangements were not yet completed.

The soldiers were felling dead trees for fuel, and Joseph was hobbling and swearing at his mules; while Mordecai, with the air of an expert, stood by, assisting him with his advice.

Some of the Pawnees and Otoes were scattered through the grove in search of fuel; some breaking dead limbs from the trees, and others collecting what was on the ground. Two or three were putting up bough-houses, and several young Otoes were employed in making a shelter of the same kind for the wife of the Iotan, who had been unwell for several days past, and whose disease always grew worse towards evening, when she would have been obliged to work, if she had been in good health.

In the course of an hour, the Indians completed their arrangements and kindled a string of fires along the dry bed of a stream. As I had never seen them when encamped, except upon the Platte, where all vivacity had been soaked out of them, I strolled among the different groups. They were all in high glee. I came to the fire occupied by the Wild Horse's

family and a few of his dependants. The old warrior was in the keen enjoyment of some witticism just uttered by a little shrivelled fellow, a hanger-on, who was evidently trying to make himself agreeable, that he might be invited to partake of a raccoon that was cooking over the fire, under the superintendence of the squaw of his host.

The Wild Horse made room for me by his side, so I seated myself, nor was I permitted to leave him until I had partaken of his viands. From his fire I went to that of the Long Hair, who was huddled up, with his whole soul apparently engaged in roasting a piece of venison upon the point of a green stick. He looked up for a moment, and then turned his attention to the roast. I soon left him and strolled to the fire of the Otoes. Here I found the Doctor, seated between the Iotan and his wife, prescribing for *her*, and taking care of *himself* by occasionally cutting a rib from a piece of venison which was roasting at the chief's fire.

Early the next morning, just as the tents were struck, Mordecai made his appearance with a very long face, informing us that two

horses and also the mule belonging to the Doctor were missing. The Doctor was in a fever. He ran down to the place where the animals had pastured; he examined the bushes and beat through all the long grass, but his mule, Kitty Keero, was not to be found. He then seated himself upon the stump of a tree, and thrusting his hands in his breeches-pockets, shouted the name of his mule at the top of his lungs; but no Kitty Keero answered him. At last the interpreter pointed to a wild-looking Pawnee, who was leaning against a tree. He advised the Commissioner to send him in search of the horses, as he was a first-rate fellow to track a hoof.

A blanket was accordingly promised the Indian in case of success, and after hovering around the grove for a short time, in search of the hoof mark, he hit upon it, and started off like a hound.

In an hour he returned, bringing with him the vagrant animals. Kitty Keero gave utterance to a long apologetic bray as she entered the grove. This was well received by her master, who was so much overjoyed at once more seeing her, that two or three reproachful repe-

titions of her name were all the chidings she received.

The wagons then drove out of the grove, followed by the Indians, the rear being brought up by the horsemen. In front of them rode the Doctor, mounted upon Kitty ; and as they jogged slowly along, I could not help thinking that they would have formed no inapt illustration of Sancho Panza and his beloved Dapple.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Elk Chase—Wandering from Party—Herd of Elk—Night Camp—Hill of Bones—Raccoon—Indian—Return to Party—Wild Horse.

ON the morning of the fifth day of our journey, an Otoe Indian, who was on the look-out, came running to us with the intelligence that a large *gang* of elk was in sight. All was excitement. The soldiers snatched their yagers; the Otoes their rifles; the Pawnees strung their bows, drew their arrows from their quivers, and all hurried after the Indian guide, over the burnt prairie. In ten minutes they reached the top of a hill, overlooking a deep ravine, about three hundred yards distant.

It was thronged with elk. Some were gambolling about; some resting amid the high, luxuriant grass, which had here escaped the fire; others browsing upon the foliage of the vines, which hung in long festoons from the dwarf bushes; and some were drinking at a

brook. But even in their moments of greatest security, their instinctive vigilance was not at rest. For, while the most of the herd were frolicking, several, who from their size and the length of their antlers appeared to be the oldest in the gang, stood on the look-out, with their heads high in the air.

As soon as our party had ascended the hill and come in sight, the sentinels gave the alarm, and a general flight commenced, across the ravine and up the opposite bank. Stones, dirt, and rocks gave way beneath the rush of the foremost, and fell among those in the rear, and some, losing their footing, fell back upon their companions; but, notwithstanding the confusion, in a very short time the whole herd made its way up the steep, and were scouring over the prairie at full speed.

“No elk meat to-day,” said Rash, leaning on the end of his yager, and watching the herd as it swept behind a distant skirt of trees.

“Ugh!” ejaculated an Otoe, in answer.

“Ugh!” ejaculated half a dozen Pawnees, unstringing their bows, and turning off towards the camp.

“Ugh! nin-gah om-pah” (no elk), said Hah-

che-kah-sug-hah, shouldering his rifle, and preparing to continue his usual hunt.

Instead of returning to the camp with the others, I followed him.

We commenced a search in the hollows, but for a long time were unsuccessful. At last the guttural "Ugh!" from the Indian informed me that he saw something, and the next moment he pointed out a large buck, reclining in a distant hollow.

He immediately made for it, while I seated myself in the grass to watch his success. After stealing along several hollows, and keeping in the tall grass, he at last came upon the animal, and fired. The buck started up, staggered a few paces, then scampered out of sight over a hill. The Indian, after pausing to reload, followed, and also disappeared. I waited, in hopes of hearing the *whoop* which usually followed a successful shot; but all was silent; so I sauntered slowly along, expecting him to return.

Nearly an hour had elapsed, when I caught sight of him, standing upon the top of a high peak, about a mile off. Supposing that he had been led off by game, I did not wait for him,

but pushed forward, selecting a route for myself. I had been in the habit of leaving the party at sunrise, previously ascertaining the direction which they intended to take during the day, and then, coming upon their trail later, by following it I had always reached the camp by nightfall. From never failing in this I had grown self-confident, and this morning had not even inquired their intended course.

I travelled many hours, following the hollows and beating up the tall grass, in hopes of starting a deer; but with the exception of a few grouse, I met with nothing. I had continued thus unsuccessful until afternoon, and was sauntering along a high ridge, looking round for some trace of the party, when suddenly turning my head, I caught sight of a number of animals walking slowly along the top of a ridge. At first I was surprised, for I mistook them for a train of pack-horses; but the next moment undeceived me, and I discovered that I had come unaware upon a herd of elk. There were about a dozen of them.

They were as quick-sighted as myself, for as soon as my eye rested upon them they also detected me. They halted and snuffed the air, but

I was too far off to taint it. So they turned away and slowly loitered on. I immediately made for a thicket of brushwood, and beneath this shelter made my way towards them. I had not gone far, however, when, upon rounding a small point of bushes, I came unexpectedly upon another herd. There must have been more than a hundred in it. Many were lying upon the ground; some were gambolling and frisking; two or three were butting each other with their horns; and several wary old fellows were mounting guard as sentinels. I was within a hundred yards of them, so I fired at a full-grown buck. The bullet struck one of his forelegs, and he stumbled forward. In an instant the whole herd were on their feet, and huddling together like frightened sheep, fled over the hills.

I sprang from my hiding-place, and drawing my knife, ran towards the wounded animal; but before I could reach him, he gained his feet and hobbled off at a rate which kept me at the full stretch of my speed. I then stopped to reload my rifle, and followed, expecting every moment to see him drop. He led me a long chase, over hill and dale, and across runs of water, until I gave out, and seating myself, saw him hobble out of sight.

It was now time to look out for the party, a thing which I had totally forgotten in the heat of the chase; nor had I taken any note of the course I was pursuing, so that when my race was ended I was completely bewildered. I was within a short distance of a well-wooded stream, and I suspected that the party would encamp somewhere upon its banks. I knew, too, that they must be westward of me, so I followed the course of the river.

I travelled till sunset, examining every ridge in the prairie, every bend in the thicket, but there was no human being to be seen, nor a trail nor footprint on the burnt sod, except the hoof-marks where the herd of elk had passed.

I clambered to the top of a high-peaked hill which overlooked the prairie for miles, but all was deserted. I determined then to encamp for the night in a neighboring grove, and in the morning to renew my search; at the same time resolving, like most persons who are in trouble, that if I got safely out of this scrape, I would take better care when next I hunted alone. I went down into the woods and built a fire. The night was cold and bleak.

There was no grass to make a bed; the wolves howled incessantly, and to judge from their snarling and yelping at the foot of a tree a little distance off, I imagined that they had pursued some animal which had taken refuge in its branches. The night passed away drearily, and with a joyous feeling I once more saw the east streaked with the light of dawn.

Before the day had fairly broken I left the grove, and pursued my course to the westward, until I again came to the ridge in the prairie.

This I ascended, and looked in every direction, but could see nothing.

I raised my voice and gave an Indian hunting whoop, which might have been heard for a mile.

The woods echoed it, but there was no other answer. I wished to discharge my rifle, in hopes that it might reach the ears of the party, but I only had a single charge of powder left in my horn, and if I should be obliged to journey to the settlements alone, I thought that this would be too precious to be wasted. So in silence and with drooping spirits I continued my journey along the line of timber. The sun rose and gradually ascended in the heavens.

A vague doubt began to steal across my mind that I had perhaps crossed the trail in the obscurity of the morning twilight, for I was now much farther to the west than I thought it possible the party could have gone. About a mile in front of me a long arm of timber jutted out into the prairie. I made for it, determining if I did not then come upon their trail, that I would retrace my steps and carefully examine that portion which I had crossed before daybreak.

I reached the timber, but saw no track. I again whooped, but, as before, the echoing forests alone answered me; and with a sensation of utter loneliness I turned round and retraced my steps.

It was near mid-day when I reached my last encamping place. I had carefully noted every mark upon the black sod; I saw my own footprints where I had struck out into the prairie in the morning, but nothing else. I then kept on for an hour longer, but my mind was constantly vacillating—whether to follow my own footprints until they guided me to the camping ground where I had left the party on the day previous, or to keep on to the eastward

until I should reach the Missouri, or once more to return over the ground which I had just passed.

I remember well the spot where I paused to settle my purpose. It was a high swell, which commanded a view over miles of prairie, and even overlooked the top of the lofty trees in the thicket. It was strewn with bones. For several hundred yards the whole hill was literally covered with them. It looked like some deserted charnel; and I recollect, even in the midst of my perplexity, taking up one and examining it—wondering whether it belonged to man or beast. The place might have been the scene of a battle, for the bones were so small that they could scarcely be those of animals.

There were no skulls, either of man or brutes, to solve the mystery; and even the bones were covered with a greenish mould, from many years' exposure.

After some consideration I resolved to retrace my steps, and accordingly turned down the hill and once more proceeded on my journey. I now was growing hungry, and for once felt the miseries of a keen appetite.

In the midst of these cogitations I caught sight of a raccoon, who was reconnoitring me from behind the stump of a tree; I shot him and skinned him, and, kindling a fire, cooked part of him on the spot.

The cinders from my fire caught in a small patch of dry grass which had escaped the general burning of the prairie, and in a moment it was in a blaze, filling the air with a cloud of black smoke. When I finished my meal I slung the residue of my prize upon my back and struck out into the prairie. I had scarcely done so before I caught sight of an Indian standing upon the top of a ridge at some distance. In a moment after he perceived me and waved his blanket over his head to attract my attention. I raised the Otoe hunting-whoop, and his shout, faint from the distance, answered me. I then started for the hill, and the Indian, seating himself, waited till I came up.

He was one of the Otoes who accompanied us.

His Indian name was Chay-je-ga, roo-garah, which, when translated, signifies "*the man that drags his heels.*" It was given him on account

of a shuffling gait which it was said that he possessed, but which I could never discover.

We started together, and about a mile beyond the arm of timber where I had turned back in the morning we came upon the trail of the party.

Night closed in upon us long before we reached their camping ground. I was nearly exhausted; the light raccoon which I carried upon my back seemed to grow almost as heavy as a deer. My thirst grew intense; I stopped to drink at every pool, and kept constantly breaking off the tops of the rosin weed and chewing its pitchy sap to keep my mouth moist.

Still the Indian kept on with unwearied steps, sometimes pausing to listen as a cry sounded through the night air, or turning to point out the light of a prairie on fire at a distance.

He did not slacken his pace until, with a deep "Ugh!" he pointed out to me the night-fires of our party, glimmering in a thick grove on the borders of a brawling stream.

A loud shout, followed by a genuine Indian yell, burst from the lips of the Doctor when he

first caught sight of me. This was followed by a hearty shake of the hand and warm congratulations from the Commissioner and the whole party.

I was afterwards informed that the Indian who discovered me, had crossed my track on the day previous, and upon being told that I had not made my appearance, he had been induced, by the promise of a blanket, to set out in search of me.

I had not been seated long before our fire when the Wild Horse, dressed in a pair of white corduroy pantaloons, with the rest of his body naked, came stalking up to shake hands with me.

His object evidently was to display this new article of dress, which had been presented to him by the Doctor. Although highly delighted, he walked in them as if in fetters; for although the Doctor had a rotundity of abdomen which completely outmeasured that of the Indian, yet the other far exceeded him in the size and length of his lower extremities; and the garment clung so tightly to his legs, that at a little distance he had the appearance of having been whitewashed. He kept about us during the

whole evening. I imagine, however, that in this short space of time he grew completely tired of his new garb; for the next morning I saw his son scampering through the bushes, dressed in the same pair of breeches—though they were as much too large for him, as they were too small for his father. He, too, soon wearied of them; and after having once or twice tripped up his own heels in wearing them, he abandoned them to the wife of the Wild Horse, who, I believe, from that period “wore the breeches.”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The False Alarm.

THE prairie had been burnt, and one morning our train slowly ascended one of the black, undulating hills which traverse the whole face of the country.

At our feet lay a great plain, intersected by a waving thread of woodland, which extended for many miles, and was now tinted with the bright and variegated hues of autumn.

By this time we had become quite familiar with our Indian associates; and although the Otoes and Pawnees made separate camps at night, they associated with each other on the journey.

As we reached the top of this hill, and were waiting to see what course the Iotan who was our guide would take next, a loud cry burst from a Pawnee, who pointed to the woods and yelled out "Kansas! Kansas!"

A deep guttural "Ugh!" burst from every

chest, as they turned towards the Indian. He was standing a little in advance of the party, his slender but muscular frame bent slightly forward, and his finger pointing to the woods.

At the foot of the hill, at the distance of about five hundred yards, a small band of Indians was emerging from among the trees, their white blankets and glittering gun-barrels contrasting strongly with the dusky forms and savage weapons of our Pawnee companions. For a moment there was silence, and then arose a wild shout from the Pawnees, while the hated name of "Kansas! Kansas! Kansas!" burst from every lip.

The little band in the glen, sending up an answering shout replete with defiance, snatched their rifles from their shoulders and prepared for the encounter.

Just then a loud whoop was heard, and the Wild Horse came rushing up the hill. His long hair streamed in the wind. In his hand he grasped his bow and about a dozen arrows. He had heard the war cry of the Kansas, and had snuffed a fight in the wind with the keen relish of a veteran warrior.

He uttered a wild, exulting laugh, and shak-

ing his war-club with a fierce motion towards the distant foes, he waved his men onward.

But above the din rose the voice of the Iotan chief, calling away his band of Otoes, and summoning them to a neighboring hill. He was at peace with the Kansas, and had nothing to do in the present strife, and he cared not which gained the day.

At a short distance stood the Long Hair. His robe was thrown over his left arm, while his right, grasping his bow, waved his men forward.

There was no order of battle; each rushed forward as he thought best. Their adversaries displayed equal alacrity. A fierce shout had answered the war cry of the Pawnees; then all was silent; they waited the coming of their foes, prepared to give cold lead in answer to arrows. As they advanced they separated, and extended their front to prevent their being outflanked.

They had now come within about two hundred yards of each other, when the Pawnees seemed to hesitate.

They stopped, and gazed steadily at their approaching enemies; then they collected in

groups, and seemed to consult. Even the Wild Horse dropped his war-club and leaned upon his bow. And the Long Hair, swinging back his quiver, folded his arms, and watched the approach of the opposite band.

A grim smile had curled the lip of the old Iotan chief when he beheld the hesitation in the Pawnee ranks. For, like the chiefs of most of the neighboring tribes, though he feared the immense hordes which belonged to that nation, yet he most heartily despised every individual of the four villages. There was an apparent acknowledgment of inferiority, in this numerous band thus hesitating to attack the handful who challenged them to the conflict, which pleased the veteran chief; for in war his own nation and the Kansas had always been looked upon as equals.

In a moment, however, a like hesitation was observed in the ranks of the foe. They shouldered their rifles, and moved frankly forward to meet the Pawnees.

The Iotan was perplexed. He held his hand over his eyes to penetrate the mystery.

Suddenly a new light seemed to flash upon him. Waving his hand in the air, he shouted

the name of his own tribe, and rushed down the hill, followed by his band. It was a band of Otoes, *not* of Kansas, and the recognition which had fortunately taken place had prevented the effusion of blood which otherwise would have followed.

The Iotan conversed a short time with a tall, thin Indian, who appeared to have command of the hunting party, and after leaving with him a worn-out horse which he had brought from the Pawnee village, resumed his journey, in which he was followed by the whites and the long train of disappointed Pawnees.

For a short time the new-comers watched the movements of our party, then turning off they crossed the prairie and disappeared in a piece of forest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Elk Chase—Indian Sagacity—Indian Camp.

ON the following day we were traversing a valley between two black prairie hills, when the crack of a rifle sounded from a distant hollow, and was followed by a loud shout. The Indians stopped short, and listened, but the shout was not repeated. At length a young Pawnee, impatient, sprang upon a horse and galloped over the hill from beyond which the shout had come. As he disappeared, a second cry was heard. After the lapse of a few moments came another loud whoop from the same quarter, and suddenly a powerful buck elk, with branching antlers, and enormous tines, dashed with mad leaps to the summit of the hill. He stopped short at the sight of us. He was wounded, and the young Pawnee was in chase. Casting a quick glance at his pursuer, he bounded along the ridge, but the wound lessened his speed. The Pawnee plied

his lash. The burnt prairie was covered with ashes, and the hoofs of the galloping horse raised a cloud of it around the Indian, who unmindful of it followed in sharp pursuit, his long hair streaming in the wind, and his heavy robe which had fallen from his shoulders flaunting from behind him as he rode.

Our troop stopped to watch the result.

The Pawnees in particular were anxious that their hunter should acquit himself well in the presence of strangers.

The Otoes lost their usual cold demeanor, in the interest of the chase, and the hunter who had wounded the elk, and had given the first whoop, now stood upon the top of the hill, leaning upon the muzzle of his rifle, watching the success of his ally.

The elk reached the end of the ridge, and sprang down a declivity beyond. The Pawnee horseman followed. The next minute the elk bounded along an opposite ridge, with his pursuer about fifty yards in the rear. Here the chase was again in full sight, and continued so for a few moments. The elk, growing weaker and weaker, came to the end of a ridge the descent from which was craggy and almost

perpendicular. He paused on the brink, looked down the steep, cast a glance behind, then gathering his feet made a desperate leap down the chasm, and the next moment scrambled to the top of an opposite ridge. The Pawnee reached the craggy bank and looked down the steep; he half urged forward his horse, then reined him in, and turning back slowly rejoined the party. As he was leaving the hill-top he looked around for the elk, but he had disappeared altogether.

The pursuit being ended, the Pawnees folded their robes around them, the Otoes shouldered their guns, and the whole party resumed its journey.

In company with Hah-che-kah-sug-hah I left the party and commenced a hunt over another prairie.

We were overtaken by a young Otoe, called "The Buffalo Chief," who was armed with a rifle, and was a keen and generally successful hunter.

Several Pawnees also came loitering up in the wake of the hunters, in hopes of obtaining a portion of what is killed.

We directed our course towards a skirt of

forest, fringed with a brushwood. Here we thought that we might find game, but the night closed in, and still we were empty-handed. So we were obliged to set out for our camp. The Indians travelled with unwearied steps, and I was obliged to hurry swiftly on, lest I should lose sight of them. They pushed forward in the dark as if guided by instinct.

“Ugh!” ejaculated Hah-che-kah-sug-hah, stopping short and examining some object upon the black sod.

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!” burst from several of the Pawnees, as they gathered round him, and stooped to examine it more closely. I joined them, but could see nothing. The Indian pointed to the ground, and after much difficulty I descried the faint impression of a moccasin in the ashes, though it would have escaped any eye except that of an Indian.

A few words passed between the Otoes, and turning off they followed steadily upon the unknown track, and I followed them. They appeared to trace it without difficulty, though to me it was totally invisible.

In about ten minutes there was another exclamation from the Indians, and a broad

gray line, traced across the black prairie, and visible even in the darkness, announced that we had at length come upon the trail of our party.

This the Indians followed until we came to the top of a hill, from which we perceived, in a hollow below, the dark line of a forest, and the blaze of fires glimmering and flickering among the trees assured us that we had at last reached our camp, nestled in a large grove. Within a few hundred yards of it, the Nemahaw River brawled over a stony bottom, with wild and not unpleasing murmurings.

The Indians had distributed themselves about the open woodland in groups of five or six.

Each group had its own night-fire and a rough shed of boughs to protect it from the dew. In the centre of the grove, and strongly reflecting the light of the fire, stood the canvas tents of the whites, and reposing before a pile of blazing logs were the uncouth forms of the soldiers, their appearance at present being little less wild than that of the Indians. At one end of the heavy logs was stretched the demi-savage, half-breed interpre-

ter, reposing after the labors of the day, and gazing sleepily upon the fire.

One or two Otoes were mingled with the whites; but the rest of the trusty band, with the old Iotan as master of ceremonies, were collected round a large fire, which burnt brightly at a few yards' distance. The Iotan's wife was reclining upon a pile of dried grass, beneath a canopy of green boughs, which had been formed for her by the young men of the party. Notwithstanding the assurance of the Doctor that she was recovering, she persisted in remaining an invalid; for as long as she travelled in this character, the soft heart of the soldier who drove the wagon prevented his refusing her a seat in the vehicle, and the fiery old Iotan insisted that the young Indians should perform her share of the drudgery.

There was something very noble and striking about this little band of Otoes—very different from their wild and uncouth allies the Pawnees.

They were very particular as to their appearance; and there was a frank, gallant bearing about them which caused us, almost unconsciously, to place more confidence in them than in their fierce, untamed associates.

Behind them, resting against the trees, were their rifles, glittering beneath the blaze of the fire. Around in every direction were the rough wicker sheds of the Pawnees, their fires gleaming with an uncertain, lurid light, among the tall, straight trunks of the overhanging grove.

The Indians, in their shaggy robes, were flitting to and fro, their painted faces glaring in the firelight. Some, wrapped in their robes, sat silent, with their eyes fixed on the fire.

At length, one young fellow struck up a wild song, which made the woods echo.

Another joined in, and another, until the whole of the group around that fire were singing.

Then a single voice from a distant pile struck in; another followed. Then another group gave tongue, until every throat in the Pawnee troop had joined in the chorus. It was a song of war, and well did the gestures and tones of the singers express the meaning of the words.

In parts, the blended voices swelled upon the night air with a mournful sound; but, when the howl with which they ended every verse burst from the throats of the whole band, it was thrilling and fearful.

The Otoes caught the wild enthusiasm of the moment, and they, too, added their voices to the savage concert, until it almost seemed to rend the black canopy above us.

The song did not cease till after midnight, for long after we had retired to our tents it kept us awake, and when we at last fell asleep it mingled in the phantasmagoria of our dreams.

The next morning was bright, and we prepared for an early start.

In our cavalcade was a very small donkey, who usually carried our sugar in two bags strapped across his back.

We all looked upon this sugar as a very important accessory to our coffee, an opinion which was fully concurred in by the Indians, who were fond of coffee when well sweetened, but not otherwise.

For this reason, the donkey and his load were objects of especial care.

But, unfortunately, one day, in crossing a brook, his feet stuck fast in the mud, and in his efforts to extricate himself he toppled over and went under water, carrying the sugar with him.

He was extricated by a gigantic soldier, who,

with the aid of a Pawnee, lifted him out—one by the ears, and the other by the tail; but the sugar was spoiled.

Fortunately we had come within the region of bee-trees, and the soldiers had brought into the camp several kettles full of honey.

This we contrived to use as a substitute for sugar.

We all decided that the substitute was a very poor one, but, under the circumstances, better than nothing.

It was quite a novelty to the Pawnee Indians, few of whom had ever tasted it, and were very anxious to know where it came from and how we found it.

The soldiers, who were in the habit of hunting for it, told them how to discover it, and they were now always on the look-out for it.

A few days afterwards, two young Indians came to a soldier to borrow his axe. They were very mysterious in their communications, but enough leaked out to let the soldier know that they had discovered a bee-tree, and wanted his axe to aid them in getting the honey. He offered his assistance, but it was declined, so he lent them the axe, and off they went.

In about two hours they returned, with swelled faces and eyes nearly closed from stings, war-worn, but triumphant. They had found the tree, vanquished the insects, and captured their comb; but there was no honey in it. Instead of a beehive, they had attacked and carried off a hornet's nest, after a bitter fight.*

* We were told that honey bees were not found far in the interior, but that they kept about fifty or a hundred miles in advance of the white settlements.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Separation from Party — Burning Prairie — Wolves—Journey.

IT was scarcely sunrise before the grove echoed with preparations for departure.

Joe was hailing the mules, which had strayed some distance down the bottom. The soldiers loaded the pack-horses; the Pawnees collected together their scanty stock of cooking utensils, and packed them upon the nag, whose evil fate had made him an Indian drudge-horse; the Iotan saw his wife snugly tucked in one of the dearborn wagons, and stationed himself as guide at the edge of the woods, waiting for us to come up.

It was a cold day, with a clear and cloudless sky, but the wind swept in sudden gusts through the trees.

In a short time the party wound their way out of the grove, and struck across the prairie in the direction taken by the Iotan. He had

been a bold marauder in his youth and knew every hole and corner of the country around.

When standing upon some high bluff, he would point out to his young warriors the different scenes of his exploits. "There," said he, pointing to a clump of forest, "there have I fought the Osages, and there," pointing in another direction, "have I stolen horses from the same nation. There is not a grove which I have not camped in, nor a prairie which I have not crossed, either in hunting or when on the war-path."

He loved in his old age to dwell upon the deeds of his youth, and when narrating them his faded features would light up, and his eye would flash, "for then," said he, "my arm was heavy and my limbs were strong." Yet it seemed to me they could not have been much heavier or stronger, unless they had been iron itself. Nor could I see that age had impaired his vigor; for, in traversing hills and ravines, forests and streams, I never knew his step to flag or falter.

After following him for a short time I turned off, in company with a strapping soldier named McClanahan, to search for wild turkeys,

which are abundant in the forests skirting the Nemahaw. We traversed several glades in the woods; but although we saw several we were unable to get a shot at them.

In beating up the forest we separated, and I soon lost sight of my companion; though for nearly an hour I occasionally heard the report of his rifle, sometimes near and sometimes far off.

Gradually each discharge appeared to be more distant, and at length they ceased altogether.

I kept on after the turkeys without killing any.

Several hours had passed in this way. I had traversed many miles, when the height of the sun warned me that it was near mid-day, and time to think of rejoining my companions.

Leaving the woods I took to the prairie, and sought the trail of the party, examining every hill and hollow, in hopes of finding it; but no trail could I see. As the day waned, I increased my speed, but still without success. The prairie was deserted. The long grass waved before the blast, but not a living thing met my eye. I then feared that I might have crossed

the trail without noticing it; but the more I thought of it, the more impossible did it seem that the broad track of so numerous a body of men should have escaped notice.

I ascended a ridge which commanded a wide prospect. A great expanse of grass was before me, with rolling hills extending in every direction; but there was nothing to be seen but the sky and the prairie. It was time to seek a resting-place for the night. I looked around for some tree, but not one was in sight. Dead grass, wild weeds, and withered stalks were the only covering of the hills.

I was like a mariner alone in the midst of an ocean. I knew not which way to turn. If I travelled westward I might be approaching my companions, or I might be going from them; and then, too, I would be journeying away from the settlements. So I at length determined to take an easterly course until I reached the Missouri, which I intended should be my guide to the abodes of the whites.

With a quick pace I pressed forward, anxious to find a shelter for the night. It was the end of October; the wind was keen and I was clad in a dress of drilling, such as is used

only for summer wear. Just as the sun was sinking I caught sight of a line of forest at many miles' distance. This acted like a spur upon a jaded horse. With fresh spirits I bounded down the sides of the prairie swells, and forced my way through the tall, clogging grass. But at last the sun set, and as the twilight darkened, objects grew indistinct, and the forest, which could not have been more than two miles off, was gradually lost in the obscurity. In front of me was a large hill ; I ascended it to wait on its summit until the moon rose, for I feared to lose my course in the darkness.

A feeling of very desolation came over me as I sat there, with nothing but the dreary waste around me and the cold sky twinkling with stars above.

The wind had increased to a gale, and swept howling along, occasionally bearing with it the yell of some prowling wolf. For hours I sat shivering, with my eyes fixed upon the eastern horizon, watching eagerly for the moon ; and never had I greeted her appearance with such heartfelt pleasure as when she at last emerged to view.

I resumed my journey, and after toiling for

an hour through a wide bottom of tall weeds and matted grass, I reached the grove, erected a small shed of boughs after the manner of the Indians, and with a flint and steel, which I always carried in my shot pouch, I soon kindled a fire against the trunk of a fallen tree, and fell asleep.

I was awakened by the increased violence of the gale. At times it sank into low wailings, and then would swell again, howling and whistling through the trees. After sitting by the fire for a short time, I again threw myself upon my pallet of dried grass, but could not sleep. There was something dismal in the sound of the wind. At times voices seemed echoing through the woodland. It was in vain that I closed my eyes; a kind of superstitious feeling came over me, and though I saw nothing, my ears drank in every sound. I gazed around in every direction, and sat with my hand on my gun-trigger, for my feelings were so wrought up that I momentarily expected to see an armed Indian start from behind each bush. At last I rose up and sat by the fire. Suddenly a swift gust swept through the grove, and whirled off sparks and cinders in every direction. In a

few moments a dozen little fires shot their forked tongues in the air.

There was scarcely time to note their birth before they were creeping up in a tall, tapering blaze, and leaping along the tops of the scattering clumps of dried grass. In a few minutes they had spread into the prairie, and a waving line of flame quivered high up in the dark air.

Another gust came rushing along the ravine.

It was announced by a distant roar; a cloud of dry leaves filled the air; the slender shrubs and saplings bent like weeds, dry branches snapped and cracked, the trees writhed and creaked. The next instant the blast reached the flaming prairie. Myriads and myriads of bright embers were flung up in the air; flakes of blazing grass whirled like meteors through the sky.

The flame spread into a vast sheet that swept over the prairie, bending forward, illuminating the black waste which it had passed, and shedding a red light far down the deep vistas of the forest, though all beyond the blaze was of a pitchy blackness. At each succeeding blast the flames threw long pyramidal streams upwards in the black sky, then flared horizon-

tally, and seemed to bound forward, kindling at each bound a new conflagration. The noise sounded like the roar of a stormy ocean, and the wild, tumultuous billows of flame were tossed about like a sea of fire. Directly in their course, and some distance out in the prairie, stood a large grove of oaks, the dry leaves still clinging to the branches. There was a red glare thrown upon them from the blazing flood. A moment passed, and a black smoke oozed from the nearest trees; the blaze roared among their branches, and shot up for a hundred feet in the air. The effect was transient. In a moment had the fire swept through a grove covering several acres. It sank again into the prairie, leaving the limbs of every tree scathed and scorched to an inky blackness, and shining with a bright crimson light between their branches. In this way the conflagration swept over the prairies; every hill seemed to burn its own funeral pyre, and the flame licked up every blade in the hollows. A cloud of gray smoke, filled with burning embers, hung over the flames, occasionally forming not ungraceful columns, which were almost instantly shattered by the wind and driven in every direction.

For several hours the blaze continued, until the whole horizon became girdled with a belt of fire. As the circle extended, the flames seemed smaller and smaller, until they looked like a slight golden thread drawn around the hills.

They then must have been nearly ten miles distant. At length the blaze disappeared, although the purple light that for hours illumined the night sky, told that the element was extending into other regions of the prairies.

It was sunrise when I rose from my resting-place and resumed my journey. What a change! All was desolate and black. The grove, which at sunset was covered with withered foliage, now spread a labyrinth of scorched and naked branches. A thin covering of gray ashes was sprinkled upon the ground beneath it, and several dead trees, whose dried branches had caught and nourished the flame, were still blazing or sending up long spires of smoke. In every direction, barrenness marked the track of the flames. It had even worked its course against the blast, hugging to the roots of the tall grass.

The wind was still raging; cinders and ashes were drifting and whirling about in suffocating clouds, sometimes rendering it impossible to see for more than one or two hundred yards.

In surveying the dreary landscape, I caught sight of a gray wolf stealing down one of the hollows. He was the only living thing to be seen. He saw me, but he did not fly. He paused as he reached the foot of the hill. Here he uttered a low, querulous howl, which was answered from the woods, and three others emerged from the timber and joined him.

They stood for a few moments gazing, but with no appearance of fear. I knew that there was not a more cowardly beast upon the prairie than the wolf. I felt very lonely; but even amid this want of companionship, I had no relish for that of wolves; so I raised my rifle and sent a bullet among them. A loud howl answered the report. I do not know that I had hit any of them, but they scampered off.

I now gave up as hopeless the task of searching for my fellow-travellers; and as the Iotan had mentioned that our party was not a week's

journey from the settlements, I shouldered my rifle, and with the aid of the sun to guide my course, started forward, trusting to make my way to the abodes of white man. It was weary wandering. Hill succeeded hill, and one valley swept off into another.

The faint tracery of distant trees disappeared as I journeyed onward, and soon there was nothing to be seen but the cold, unspecked blue of the sky, and the boundless black of the burnt prairie.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A Hunted Deer—Deserted Encampment—Distant Indians—Night Camp—Owls—Burning Sycamore.

FOR hours I continued my course, pausing upon the summit of every hill, in a faint but vain hope of seeing my comrades. At last, at a distance I saw a deer scouring over the top of a ridge, and making directly towards me. I crouched upon the burnt sod, cocked my rifle, and waited for him.

I wondered at his speed, for there was no hunter in sight; but it was soon explained. As he descended into a hollow, three wolves followed at full speed over the hill. The deer soon rose out of the bend, and kept on towards me. Almost without breathing, I watched him. I had eaten nothing since the morning of the preceding day, and there was something of ferocity in my feelings as I gazed at him. I gathered my feet under me, and slowly raised

my rifle. The animal still approached. I should have waited, but a burning feverishness rendered me impatient; and while he was at least a hundred and fifty yards distant, I rose and took aim. He stopped short and gazed steadily at me, with his head raised high in the air, and presenting only his front. I pulled the trigger; the bullet did him no injury. He did not wait for a second shot, but darted like an arrow across the prairie.

I watched him until he disappeared behind a distant hill, and then reloaded my rifle.

This incident, which for an instant had diverted the current of my thoughts, now served only to render them more heavy.

At the sound of my rifle the wolves had scampered off as hastily in one direction as the deer had done in the other, and I felt a kind of selfish satisfaction in knowing that if I had not been able to obtain a meal from his ribs this gang of vagabonds was equally disappointed.

Once more I proceeded, directing my course by the sun. I had hunted much on foot, and my limbs had become hardened by exercise, so that I could journey long without sinking,

though not without feeling fatigue. It was about an hour after mid-day when I again came in sight of a forest.

There was a golden mark upon the prairie where the blackness stopped abruptly and pointed out the spot where the fire, from some cause or other, had ceased in this direction. A column of smoke, however, hanging like a sullen pall over another quarter, showed that the element was still at work.

Within half an hour I struck an Indian trail and followed it into a grove of tall and beautiful hickories, in which were the remains of an Indian hunting-camp.

It had been evidently occupied for some time, for the frames of the wigwams were more strong and durable in their structure than those usually erected for transient purposes.

They could have been abandoned but lately, for the bark was still green on the boughs composing them, and there were the recent footprints of horses. The pea-vines were trampled down, and there was a rock jutting out in the small stream, which was covered with raccoon fur, and here and there besprinkled

with blood. I sat down upon the rock, watched the waters, and thought of the former occupants of the grove. Had I been a day sooner I might have met them ; but then they might have been enemies. So I began to think that things were better as they were, for even the most friendly tribes are apt to lose their goodwill towards the whites when a single one falls into their power. Desolate as I was, I could not but be sensible of the beauty of the grove. I could see far down deep vistas, gilded here and there by the sunbeams. The wind had gradually died away. The stream glided murmuring over a rocky bottom, and here and there glittered like silver. The wild cry of the blue-jay was heard hailing some comrade in a distant tree-top.

As I sat looking upon the water I heard a slight noise in the stream above me, and caught sight of a number of wood-ducks borne on by the current.

Now they glided beneath the bushes which drooped over the water ; now they whirled round as some changeful current caught them in its Lilliputian whirlpool. They chased each other sportively across the brook, sometimes

breasting the current, then again relinquishing themselves to its course. They were but small game, but I was famished, and had my rifle in readiness.

I waited until I got two of them in a range and then fired. My bullet struck off the head of the first and considerably confused the ideas of the second, but, after splashing about, bottom upwards, and trying some other novel modes of navigation, he righted himself and flew after his companions.

Having secured the one I had shot, I crossed the brook and struck into a trail which led up its bank.

I had scarcely left the grove when I caught sight of a train of figures moving along the top of a ridge far away to the westward. There were six in it, and they must have been a mile distant. So faint was their outline, and so small did they appear in the vast space that lay open in that direction, that they reminded me of the dim, spectre-like forms of a phantasmagoria. At first I felt a start of joy, for I thought that they might be my companions; but a second reflection convinced me that I was mistaken, for the train was moving to the

northward, the very reverse of the route to the settlements. Then, too, the idea flashed across me that they must be Indians—perhaps hostile ones.

Although so distant that there was scarcely a probability of their seeing me, I returned to the grove, where I watched their gliding forms until they disappeared behind one of the ridges; and then I pursued my course. In front of me was a prairie which had escaped the fire, and was covered with herbage. But though it was pleasing to the eye, I soon began to wish for the black waste, for the tall, tangled grass impeded my steps and rendered my journey extremely toilsome. I had not accomplished many miles before the sun was far down in the west. I then determined to travel no farther, but take up my quarters in a small grove of trees, which clustered like an island upon the borders of a brook. I collected a pile of dry wood, kindled a fire, made a spit of a green twig, on which I impaled my duck, and stuck it upright in the ground in front of the fire; then stretching myself upon a bed of dry grass, I watched the roasting of my supper with a hungry eye. When I had made a meal

with the relish of a half-famished man, I turned upon my bed and fell asleep. After a time I awoke, added fresh fuel to the fire, and stretched myself upon my pallet again to sleep.

It was a bright and beautiful night, the moon was shining amidst myriads of stars, veiled now and then by a light, fleecy cloud, from which she seemed to emerge with increasing splendor. I lay gazing at her as she moved along like a queen surrounded by her maids of honor.

“Whoop! whoop! whoo!” sounded a loud voice near me.

I started to my feet, for I thought that I had heard a human cry, perhaps one of my party, and with a loud hail I answered the sound.

“Whoop! whoo! whoo!” again repeated the voice.

A gigantic sycamore reared its naked and scathed trunk in the moonlight. At the extremity of a dry limb, which stretched out from nearly the top of the tree, was seated an owl of the largest species.

He repeated the cry which had started me: “Whoop! whoo! whoo!”

“Whoop! whoo! whoo!” responded another from a different quarter, and a dusky bird flitted down, and perched on the long limb beside his companion. I again stretched myself upon my couch and watched them, as they sat between me and the moon. There was a confused jabbering carried on between them. They probably had charge of the grove, and were puzzled at the intrusion of a stranger. After debating for some time, they concluded to take a nearer view of the intruder, and descended to a lower branch. Here they carried on the debate, apparently wondering who I was and what I wanted. They rubbed their huge heads together with an air of vast perplexity; they rocked and fluttered on their perch.

Occasionally one of them turned his head on one side, and cast a very inquisitive look down upon me, and then a fresh jabbering went on. After about fifteen minutes spent in this way, the two dignitaries, giving a farewell “Whoop! whoop! whoo!” flapped off and disappeared.

Again I turned and fixed my gaze upon the moon.

There was a feeling of fellowship connected

with it. I knew that other eyes were resting upon her pale orb, and that while she was shining upon my solitary couch, she was at the same time pouring her mellow light upon the abodes of friends, far away and unconscious of my situation.

Chilled by the night air, I turned away and looked into the fire—forming palaces, groves, and arcades amid its glowing embers, until gradually my eyes closed, and I slept.

When I awoke the sun was shining, and I resumed my journey. I continued on foot from sunrise till sunset, without seeing a living thing, unless, perhaps, a distant deer, and halted for the night in a forest of large trees. I found a huge, dead sycamore standing upright, with a complete chamber formed in its trunk by decay. I kindled a fire in front of it, and filled the empty trunk with dried grass and pea-vines for a couch. I was wearied, and slept soundly until near midnight, when I was awakened by the intense heat. The fire had by some means communicated to a pile of fuel, which I had collected to feed it with during the night.

This was in a furious blaze, causing the old

tree to smoke with the heat. The hollow trunk was no place for me, unless I chose to be roasted.

I pulled my cap from my head, and wrapped it round my powder-horn, seized my rifle, and sprang through the fire. The next instant the flame leaped upon my bed of dried vines, and the whole interior of the dead tree was in a blaze, which lasted for a few minutes and then expired.

As it was no longer possible to return to it, I seated myself upon a stump, and remained half shivering, half dozing, until morning.

CHAPTER XL.

*Wild Turkey—Squirrel—Paroquets—Trail—
Konza Indian—Night Camp—Deserted House
—Konza Agency—Reaching Leavenworth.*

BEFORE the sun was up I was on my way, directing my course by the purple streak in the east, which announced its rising. This was the morning of the fourth day since I had parted from my companions.

I had made but one meal, and the cravings of hunger were becoming excessive. I looked round, when I reached the edge of the prairie, but saw nothing; I looked through the bottom of forest, but no game was visible. I stretched out my leg, looked at the leather leggin which covered it, and wondered whether it was easy of digestion. I felt it; it *was* rather tough; so I determined to keep on and wait till night, before I proceeded to extremities.

Just then I caught sight of a turkey, leading a flock to take an airing in the prairie. I sent

a bullet after him; his wing dropped and dragged, and I commenced a hot pursuit. But, though I had injured his wing, I had not damaged his legs, and after following him for some distance, he made his way into a thicket, and I abandoned the chase.

The rest of the flock, taking advantage of the diversion created in their favor, had disappeared among the trees and bushes, so I gave up all hopes of finding them, and wandered slowly along the edge of the woods. As I was winding my way through the trees I heard a loud *click* above me, and observed a large red squirrel springing from one limb to another of a bur-oak. As he caught sight of me, he darted round the trunk and peered out, with with about an inch of his head, to take an observation.

I determined that *have* that squirrel I *would*, if I spent the whole day in shooting at him. I rested my rifle against the trunk of a tree, and after a long aim, fired; the bullet struck his head, and whirled him from the tree.

I had lost my knife on the day previous, but with the assistance of a nail which I found in my pouch, I skinned my prize, and fastening

it upon the point of a spit made of a dry stick, stuck it in the ground to roast before a fire which I made. While the cooking was going on, a flock of paroquets flew screaming through the trees, and alighted upon a dead branch directly above me, casting side-looks down upon my roast, and from the chattering that they kept up, no doubt were congratulating each other upon having arrived in time for breakfast. But I had a meal in store for them, of a very different description, for, after some management, I contrived to get three of them in a range, and fired.

My bullet missed, and the flock whirled off, though I could hear their voices raised in a clamorous outcry, long after they had disappeared among the trees.

I despatched my breakfast with a ravenous appetite, and taking with me the skin of the animal, to serve as a future meal in case of extremity, I continued my course until afternoon. But I was now becoming perplexed, for I expected to have reached the settlements before this, and I began to yield to the idea which, strange as it may seem, invariably fastens itself upon persons when wandering bewildered through these regions.

I thought *that the sun had got turned and was setting in the east*. For some time this idea was strong ; but I remembered the almost parting words of one of our hunters: "Look ye," said he, "you straggle so much from the party, that some day or other you will be lost. Then, all you have to do, is to keep straight away for the east. It will be sure to bring you right in the end. But remember one thing—never get bothered. When the sun rises, strike to the east, and don't *do*—as many have done when puzzled,—don't think that the sun rises or sets wrong; for, if you do, you will go to the d——l."

I was becoming bewildered, and I remembered this advice, just at the time when it was most needed. So I turned my back upon what I had been positive was the east, and travelled in the direction which I was equally positive was the west.

I had journeyed along the prairie for some hours, when, unexpectedly, I struck into a wide trail.

There were four paths running side by side, all evidently much travelled, and bearing prints of recent hoofs. While I was examining them,

I saw the track of a wagon wheel. New strength seemed to course through my limbs at this discovery, and I hastened along the path as swiftly as if I had just started upon a fresh journey. I followed the trail for several hours. On my right was a dense bottom of timber; and here and there, through the branches, I could perceive the waters of a river. I supposed this to be the Missouri; that I had struck the trail which led to Leavenworth, and that by continuing to follow it, I would be able to reach the garrison before nightfall; but I could see nothing that I recognized. If it were the road to Leavenworth, I had passed it before, and ought to be able to recall the landmarks; but here all was strange. As I was looking around I caught sight of a black speck moving over the path which I had already passed. It came nearer and nearer, until I could see that it was a horseman.

It might be one of the officers from the garrison, and I slackened my pace for him to come up; but as he approached I discovered that he was an Indian.

I was then certain that I must be on the banks of the Kansas; that I had struck too far

to the south, and had reached it before its junction with the Missouri. I had been longing feverishly for the sight of a human being, yet no sooner did I behold one, than my first movement was to await his approach, with my finger upon my gun trigger.

When he drew near, he held up the palm of his hand, in token of friendship, and galloped directly up to me. He was a fine-looking man of the Konza tribe, apparently not above thirty, wrapped in a blue blanket, armed with a rifle, and mounted upon a black pony. He dismounted, struck fire, and lighted his pipe, for a smoke. From that moment we were friends. I learned from him that the river near was the Kansas, and that it would be daylight before I could reach the nearest abode of a white man. As soon as our truce was settled, my Indian friend mounted, and left me to follow on foot as well as I was able. I trudged after him; while he occasionally thumped his little nag into a trot, casting a look behind, to see whether I could contrive to keep up with him. He at last reached out his rifle with the lock broken, and wished me to mend it. He then handed me a horn, with-

out a grain of powder in it, and wished me to fill it. I took the gun, and blew into the muzzle; the air passed freely through the touch-hole.

I was glad to find that he was to a certain extent unarmed. I quietly reached it to him, and he, seeing that I was not disposed to put it in order, took it and said nothing more about the matter.

We kept on together until we reached a stream which ran across the route.

Here the Indian paused, by which means I came up with him, and signified my wish to mount his horse to cross the water. He demurred at first, but I persisted. At last, though with evident reluctance, he acceded to my request, and took me up behind him. I had been mounted only for a few moments, but I found the transition far from disagreeable. I was wearied with walking, and there was something highly pleasing in travelling upon other legs than my own. I therefore quietly retained my seat; and though my companion halted the horse, for the purpose of my dismounting, I was so well satisfied with my situation that I pretended not to understand his meaning, and

listened to his words and viewed his gestures with an appearance of the greatest stolidity. At length he determined to endeavor to shake me off. For this purpose he wriggled and twisted in his seat. I, however, clung still more closely to him; and the only one that appeared annoyed by the action was the horse, who expressed his displeasure by kicking up.

The Indian, finding this to be unsuccessful, increased the speed of his nag to a gallop—but in vain; I was as securely fixed behind, as the Old Man of the Sea upon the shoulders of Sindbad. At length he gave it up, and checking his horse, sprang off.

As he did this I slid forward into his seat. I felt some twinges respecting my ungrateful conduct, but my weariness overcame them.

My next object was to gain something to eat; for, notwithstanding the squirrel, I felt a vacuum within, that required filling.

I observed that my fellow-traveller carried a bundle of dried venison slung from his shoulder.

I accordingly signified to him that I had eaten nothing for two days, at the same time pointing to the venison, but the fellow was obstinate;

he shook his head, and afterwards, whenever I started the subject, he looked in a different direction. Finding that fair means were of no avail, I determined to try what foul could do. As I was mounted, I resolved that he should think I intended to scamper off with his horse, so I thumped my rifle against his ribs, and scoured along the trail at full gallop.

The moment I started, the Indian followed with a speed that almost equalled that of the pony; but unfortunately for himself his wind was soon exhausted. He then began to think of a compromise, and at last with much reluctance loosened a piece of the deer's flesh and held it up towards me, at the same time signifying by his gestures that if I would stop he would give me a portion. This was all that I desired; and pulling in the horse, I received the venison and dismounted, relinquishing the nag to his owner. He, however, thinking the treaty between us not yet sufficiently ratified, immediately lit his pipe, and passed it to me for a second smoke. We then set out, and at dusk reached a small wood; here the Indian hobbled his horse, and throwing a few sticks together, kindled a fire. He then offered me

a small piece of venison which he had broiled upon the coals ; after which he drew his blanket round him and stretched himself at full length on one side of the fire, while I threw myself across my rifle on the other.

I must have slept an hour. When I awoke it was intensely cold, the fire having burnt very low.

My companion lay exactly as I left him when going to sleep ; he did not seem to notice that the fire was expiring, nor did the cold seem to affect him.

I rose up and stood over him, but he did not move. I then stirred him with my foot, and shouted to him, at the same time motioning to him to assist in collecting wood to keep alive the fire.

He apparently was aware of my object, for all that I could elicit was a grunt ; nor would he even open his eyes to look at me. So, in no very pleasant humor, I went in search of fuel, taking my rifle with me.

I had not gone far before I came upon his little imp of a horse. I was so much vexed with the master that I could not help bestowing a thwack upon the animal, who came smell-

ing up to me with the air of an old acquaintance. With a loud snort and a half attempt at a kick, he hobbled off as well as the confined state of his legs would let him.

Hard of hearing and difficult to rouse as the Indian had been when I attempted it, no sooner was the tramping sound of the horse's hoofs heard, as he crashed over the dead brushwood, than he sprang to his feet and came flying towards me with the swiftness of a deer.

I have but little doubt that he thought I had served him an Indian trick, and was scouring off through the bushes with his nag. As it was, when he found him safe he was for returning to stretch himself before the fire. I, however, arrested him, and made signs to him to assist in carrying a large limb to our sleeping-place, which he did with evident reluctance, for he seemed to possess in a high degree the Indian aversion to labor.

About midnight he awakened me, and signified that it was time to be on the move. He first unhobbled his horse and led him to the bank of the river, which was clayey and very steep, for the purpose of watering him. Here a violent contest took place between the nag

and the Indian; the first being afraid to venture down the slippery descent, and the master endeavoring by coaxing and kicking to induce him to advance. He had planted his feet in the very edge of the bank, and although his nose and head were pulled out to a horizontal line by the efforts of the Indian, the rest of his body was as immovable as one of the trees around. The Indian then made signs to me to assist him, for he seemed determined that the horse should drink whether thirsty or not. I did not feel in a good-humor with him; but as he seemed to wish it, I bestowed a few hearty thwacks upon the hinder parts of the animal. Finding this of no avail, I seized a small sapling, and placing it under his belly, made use of it as a lever to press him sideways over the bank. The pressure against his ribs drove him within a foot of the edge. I placed the pole beyond the verge of the bank, and again made use of it as a lever. He made a strong effort to resist, but just then the Indian jerked his halter violently, and the horse went sousing heels over head into the river, where he swam up and down, puffing and snorting. Several times he attempted to climb

the bank, but rolled back and floundered in the water.

The Indian was now alarmed lest he should be drowned. But he at last succeeded in getting him up the bank; and being satisfied that his thirst was completely quenched, once more hobbled him, and then signified that we should move forward on our journey.

Before starting, however, he took from his shoulders his piece of venison, and hung it upon a tree.

I then followed him silently, though I could not imagine why he had left his venison, or why he travelled on foot when he had a horse to carry him.

We soon came to a river, across which, though full of thin ice, we waded, and then started forward on a trail which led through a wood. Occasionally I took the lead; but the trail grew so indistinct that I was obliged to give place to my companion, who always kept on without hesitation.

We had travelled about twelve miles, making many circuits and windings, and striking from one trail to another, until we emerged from the wood, and I found myself again near the bank of the Kansas River.

Before me was a large house, with a courtyard in front. I sprang through the unhung gate, and ran to the door. It was open; I shouted; my voice echoed through the rooms, but there was no answer. I walked in. The doors were swinging from their hinges, and long grass was growing through the crevices of the floor. While I stood gazing around, an owl flew by and dashed out of an unglazed window. Again I shouted, but there was no answer; the place was desolate and deserted. I afterwards learned that this house had been built for the chief of the Kansas tribe, but that the ground upon which it was placed having been discovered to be within a tract granted to another tribe, the chief had deserted it, and it had been allowed to fall to ruin.

My guide waited until I had finished my examination, and then we again pushed forward. Several times I mistook the howling of wolves for the barking of house-dogs; and when I was passing through some dark skirt of timber, and expected to come upon a house, I was disappointed by seeing my guide launch out into the open prairie. Several times, too, my

hopes were excited by a light glimmering in the darkness, which, upon coming up, I would discover to proceed from a tree which had caught fire from the burning of the prairies.

Thus we kept on until near daylight, when we emerged from a thick forest, and came suddenly upon a small hamlet.

The barking of several dogs, who came flying out to meet us, convinced me that this time I was not mistaken. A light was shining through the crevices of a log cabin ; I knocked at the door with a violence that might have awakened one of the seven sleepers.

“ Who dere, and vot you want ? ” screamed a little cracked voice from within.

It sounded like music to me. I stated my troubles. The door was opened ; a head, garnished with a red night-cap, was thrust out, and after a little parley I was admitted into the bedroom of the man, his Indian squaw, and children.

As it was the only room in the house, it was also the kitchen. I had gone so long without food, that notwithstanding what I had eaten the gnawings of hunger were excessive, and I had no sooner mentioned my wants, than a fire

was kindled, and in twenty minutes a meal (I don't exactly know whether to call it breakfast, dinner, or supper) of hot cakes, venison, honey, and coffee was placed before me, and disappeared with the rapidity of lightning. The squaw having seen me fairly started, returned to her couch.

From the owner of the cabin I learned that I was now at the Kansas Agency, and that he was the blacksmith of the place.

At sunrise I was awakened from a sound sleep upon a bear-skin, by a violent knocking at the door.

It was my Indian guide. He threw out broad hints respecting the service which he had rendered me, and the presents he deserved. This I could not deny; but I had nothing to give. I soon found out, however, that his wants were moderate, and that a small present of powder would satisfy him; so I filled his horn, and he left the cabin apparently well pleased.

In a short time I left the house, and met the Kansas Agent, General Clark, a tall, thin, soldier-like man, arrayed in an Indian hunting-shirt and an old fox-skin cap.

He received me cordially, and I remained with him all day, during which time he talked upon metaphysics, discussed politics, and fed me upon sweet potatoes, which he roasted for me while I sprawled on a bear-skin in front of the fire. In speaking of my guide, I found that he had departed after receiving a present from the Agent, to whom he stated that he had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. I spoke of the deer's-flesh he had left behind.

"The lying rascal!" said the General; "he said he was starving."

I spoke of the Indian pony.

"What color was he?" asked the General.

"Black, with short mane and crop ears."

"The scamp! that's my horse," exclaimed he; "stolen four days ago. What an infernal villain that Konza is!"

I had met the General at Fort Leavenworth before setting out on our expedition, and he now inquired where I had left the party, and what success we had met with. I told him where we had been, and what we had done, and that the Commissioner was probably now at Fort Leavenworth with about a hundred Pawnees and Otoes, to settle the terms of a

treaty with the Kanzas and other neighboring tribes.

As soon as he heard this he was on the alert, and proposed that we should both set out for the garrison without delay, to which I agreed.

He furnished me with a mule, and at night-fall we started, he acting as guide, sometimes through the woods, and at others across a prairie which was as black as ink and almost as trackless as the sea.

We reached the garrison, which was forty miles distant, on the following morning a little before daylight.

As I passed one of the out-houses in riding up to the cantonment, I perceived an Indian leaning against one of the door-posts. "Ugh!" exclaimed he, starting forward; and the next moment my hand was in the cordial grasp of the Iotan chief.

The party had reached the garrison on the evening previous, and the whole wild band, both Pawnees and Otoes, were under the protection of the whites.

My safe arrival at the garrison so soon after the others of our party seemed to cause much surprise.

I was told that on the morning after my disappearance two Indians had been sent out in search of me, with the promise of a blanket to each in case they brought me back.

They had discovered my trail as I had passed through the grass, and had followed it about fifteen miles, until they came to where the prairie had been burnt after I had passed over it. Here they lost the trail and abandoned the search.

As soon as they learned that I had reached the garrison, they presented their claim.

As they had done their best to find me I had no wish to disappoint them, and so I accompanied them to the sutler's store, and told them to select their blankets. I soon discovered that although they had never owned one of these articles of apparel, they were very good judges of material; and they left the sutler's shop, clad in two of the most expensive blankets that he had on sale.

During the whole of that day, they lounged around their camp, the object of envy to all of their less favored companions. Ha-che-ka-sug-ha, on seeing them, thus fitted out, reminded me that I was his Min-tarrah, whereupon I presented him with one of the same kind.

CHAPTER XLI.

The Relief Party.

THE burning of the prairies, which deprived the horses of their usual supply of food, had proved a great drawback to the movements of the party.

The prairie-bred ponies had not suffered so much ; but the horses which had been accustomed to care in the garrison stables, became so feeble that they could scarcely travel, and their former riders walked by their sides.

It was important for the Commissioner to be at Fort Leavenworth ; for more than a hundred Indians were accompanying him thither, to meet the migratory tribes, and notices had been sent to the agents of the latter to have their delegates at Leavenworth at a certain time.

That time was close at hand, and the Commissioner feared that he might not be at the garrison when they arrived.

In addition to this, the supply of provisions was giving out.

Under these circumstances he determined to push on with the Indians and soldiers, and such of the horses as could carry a rider.

Mr. D—— volunteered to remain with the rest, and to come on as fast as the strength of the horess would permit ; and the Commissioner promised to send a supply of provisions to them as soon as possible.

The day after my arrival at the fort I was informed of these facts, and of the doleful plight of my friend D——.

I was also informed that our veteran hunter Rash, and another soldier, also an old campaigner, were to set out that afternoon to carry the needed supplies.

I volunteered to accompany them, for I felt a strong interest in the welfare of Mr. D——, and also in that of my two horses, which had been left behind, and were described as being thoroughly broken down.

I did not suppose that I could do much for either of them ; but I had taken a great fancy to the wild adventure of prairie life, and was anxious to have another dash into it before leaving the Far West.

I was supplied with a horse from the garri-

son ; my two comrades were similarly mounted ; and we all carried rifles, but no change of raiment. A pack horse loaded with bread, biscuits, and salt pork, etc., accompanied us. We did not expect to be absent more than two days, because the place where the party had been left was not more than fifty miles off.

There were no paths through the region which we were to travel, but the party which had come in, had left a trail across the burnt prairie so broad and distinct that it could not well be missed.

This we were to follow until we came upon those whom we sought, and whom we expected to meet pursuing the same trail towards us.

It was cloudy, and threatening rain when we set out ; but we soon found the trail, and pushed on briskly until it was nearly dark, when we came to a small river which ran between two high banks.

It was well wooded, and the grass under the trees on the edge of the prairie had escaped the fire. We thought that this was a good place to encamp ; so we hobbled the horses, took off their saddles, and turned them loose to graze as well as they could through the night.

Rash built a bough-house, covered with brushwood and branches, as a shelter from the rain which was beginning to fall.

He also made a large fire against the trunk of a fallen tree, and in front of it we took our supper. In the meantime the storm increased, the rain fell in torrents, and we retreated from the fire to our bough-house.

It was not long before Rash began to show signs of uneasiness, and once or twice he went out and watched the river.

At last he said: "I don't like the sounds which I hear up yonder. About a mile above this, the river is blocked up with dead timber and driftwood, and there 's a monstrous big pond there. I hope that the dam will hold out—that 's all."

He had scarcely finished speaking before a strange rumbling sound, which I cannot well describe, came through the woods, and near at hand. The dam had given way, and the river was coming down upon us.

There was no time to be lost. Fortunately there was a large tree near us, which had been blown partly down, and had caught in the branches of another tree. The trunk of this

tree formed an inclined plane, up which we scrambled until we were out of reach of the water.

In a few minutes, in the dim light, we could see a mass of foam, filled with branches of trees and other objects, whirled over the spot where our camp had been, and could hear the cracking of bushes as some hard object broke its way through them and swept down the valley.

This deluge did not last long ; but it had swept away our bough-house, put out our fire, and filled the " bottom " (as the hunters called it) with so much mud and slush that we thought it best to remain where we were until daylight.

We were afraid that our horses, rifles, and stock of provisions had been swept away, and that we might be obliged to return to Fort Leavenworth for a fresh supply.

Rash, with the instinct of an old hunter, had snatched up his rifle, and carried it to the tree-top with him. The other soldier and I had shown less forethought, and in the scramble had left our firearms in the bough-house ; but we all carried our powder-horns and bullet-pouches slung over our shoulders.

During the night the rain ceased, and as soon as it was daylight we clambered down to the ground.

The place where our camp had been was a mass of mud and stones, among which we found our rifles, partly buried, but fortunately uninjured. Our saddles and the bags containing provisions had lodged in the bushes.

The horses were our next objects of search, and we discovered them quietly browsing at the top of the hill.

The bread and salt pork were thoroughly soaked, and the crackers were reduced to "pap."

We contrived to kindle a fire and to dry ourselves, and our blankets and guns. We also dried the bread and salt pork, but the bag of biscuits was hopeless. It resembled a large pudding.

Rash in the meantime had shot two ducks, and these roasted with some of the "pap" formed our breakfast ; and as soon as possible we resumed our journey.

It was late in the afternoon when we discovered the party about a mile off. They had also caught sight of us, but were too weary and

worn out to increase their speed. A more woe-begone set of men I had not often seen.

Joe's mules bore their hard lot better than the horses, but both men and animals showed the want of food.

There was quite a jubilee when we met, and not a little surprise at seeing me in the relief party, as they had made up their minds that I would never reach the settlements, but would either die of starvation or be killed and scalped.

The only one of the whole party who had expected to the contrary was Major Dougherty, who said that I had hunted so much alone, and was so "tough," that unless I fell in with hostile Indians he felt sure that I would "turn up" all right.

When we met this party we were near a brook with trees growing along its banks, and all hands agreed that it was the best place to encamp for the night.

In the meantime Rash shouldered his rifle and set out in search of game.

We heard several shots, and presently he made his appearance with a duck in his hand and two animals slung on his back.

These last proved to be otters, which he had killed in the neighboring river.

The duck he handed to Mordecai to prepare for cooking, and proceeded himself to skin the otters.

Their skins being valuable he would not trust so delicate an operation to Mordecai.

The skinning having been completed in a very short time, the soldiers determined to roast the otters and make their supper of them, instead of the salt pork which we had brought.

They were accordingly spitted on two sticks driven in the ground and placed in front of the fire.

Mr. D—— came up while the roasting was going on.

He gave vent to an exclamation of disgust, and said that they looked so much like two small children on the spits that it made him sick to look at them.

At his request their heads, which had been left on, were taken off, and the roast then proceeded.

He however did not partake of them, and the hunter very considerately presented him with the duck, of which he made as good a

meal as his reminiscences of the otters would permit.

On the following morning we set out for Fort Leavenworth, which we reached in the afternoon, glad to be once more among our old comrades, and with plenty to eat.

I may mention that my horses were so completely broken down that they had been left in a "bottom" where there was plenty of water and a good supply of grass.

After I left Fort Leavenworth, a soldier was sent to hunt them up. One was found, but so thoroughly enfeebled that he died within a week after his return to the fort. The other was never heard of, and had probably been carried off by Indians.

On my return, I paid frequent visits to my Indian companions of the prairie. They were encamped in the woods around the garrison, pretty much in the same manner as when they were travelling from their villages. They had built bough houses, had lighted fires, and were gathered around them as usual.

Whenever we went among them, they always received us very cordially, and made room for us at their fires, glad to see familiar

faces among the visitors who daily came to look at them.

The wife of the Iotan had made for me a pair of moccasins and seemed much disappointed that I had abandoned the use of those articles and was wearing boots.

I took them, however, and thanked her by signs, and, in return, made her a present of a paper of pins. I was told afterwards that she looked upon my gift as quite a treasure.

CHAPTER XLII.

Assembling of Council—Council.

AS soon as the Commissioner had arrived at the fort he sent messengers to the neighboring tribes, summoning them to meet their old enemies in council.

For several days the delegates and their followers had been coming in ; and their camps were scattered through the woods around the fort.

The Pawnees and Otoes were encamped in the forest overlooking the Missouri River ; but care was taken to keep the different bands apart until a permanent peace had been established between them.

Early one morning the report of a piece of artillery announced the hour for the council ; and before long the different delegates with their friends were seen making their way to the place of meeting, which was under a grove of trees in front of the officers' quarters.

First came the Delawares, gay with silver ornaments and ribands.

They were not very warlike in their appearance, but the Pawnees had discovered that their looks belied them, and regarded them, few as they were in number, as their most formidable foes.

At their head was their chief Sou-wah-nock. It was he who had led the attack upon the Pawnee village when it was sacked and burnt.

He alone of his tribe wore no ornaments except a silver medal, which hung down upon his breast.

There was an expression of grim defiance on his face as he looked around upon his former foes.

After the Delawares came the Shawanese, headed by the same portly old Indian whom we had met when we first entered as strangers into the Indian country. The same enormous pair of spectacles was astride of his nose, and for aught I know may have remained there undisturbed since I last saw him.

Following him came the fighting men of his tribe, reeking with paint and gaudy with ribands.

These seated themselves beside the Delawares.

Then came the rest of the migratory tribes, the Peorias, Piankashaws, Pottawattomies, and Kickapoos, who all, as they arrived, took their places among their civilized brethren.

After they were seated the Otoes made their appearance, coming across the green in single file, headed by their old chief the Iotan.

They seated themselves at a short distance apart from the civilized Indians.

Last of all came the wild band of Pawnees. In front of them strode the Wild Horse, his savage features not rendered any the less hideous by a drunken frolic in which he had been engaged on the previous day.

His hair hung in tangled masses about his head and shoulders, and his body as usual was smeared with red ochre; and although the weather was cold, his neck and chest were bare. He walked to his allotted place without appearing to notice the congregated bands of civilized Indians. Next came the Long Hair and several other chiefs, and after them followed the whole savage horde from the four Pawnee towns.

They stationed themselves opposite the civilized tribes and waited for the Commissioner to open the council.

Several days before the meeting a trifling incident was near putting an end to the incipient peace.

It was this :

The Delawares claim to be descended from the Lenni Lenape, who, centuries ago, coming up from the south, settled themselves on the eastern shore of this continent, which they peopled, and were afterward known to the whites as Delawares.

According to tradition, they are the oldest tribe in Northern America.

In pursuance of this dogma the Delawares maintain that all the Indians on this continent are descended from their tribe, and they insisted that at the coming council the Pawnees, when speaking to them, should address them as their "great-grandfathers."

To this the Pawnees made strong opposition, and there was some risk that this point of etiquette would either endanger the success of the council or prevent its taking place.

For a short time the Commissioner was perplexed.

But at length, privately assembling the chiefs of the Pawnees, he endeavored to overcome their prejudices by fair words, and finally succeeded in satisfying their scrupulous pride. He begged that, for the sake of peace, the Delawares should be humored, although he acknowledged to the Pawnees that he knew there was no ground for their claim of relationship, adding it was so absurd that no one would for a moment credit that so brave and powerful a people as the Pawnees should have sprung from so paltry a stock as the Delawares. The chiefs smiled grimly as they received the pleasing unction of flattery, and at length consented to submit to the degrading appellation until the council should be ended and the treaty ratified. After which they threw out sage hints which, translated literally, would amount to the same thing as sending the Delawares to the devil.

These preliminaries had been settled before the day of council. The great-grandchildren, reversing the usual order of things, no longer disowned their great-grandfathers; though further than the mere title, there was no display of kindly feeling.

The two bands sat opposite each other with the same grim expression of countenances that might have been expected from so many wild-cats; each fearful to make a single friendly step in advance, lest he should compromise the dignity of his tribe.

After they had all assembled and were ready for business, the Commissioner rose up and stated the object of the meeting—that war had been carried on long enough between them, and that they had now met for the purpose of becoming friends. He then entered explicitly into the conditions of the intended peace.

When he had ended, the speakers of each tribe addressed the council. All professed the greatest friendship for their enemies, and closed their speeches by throwing the whole blame of every offence upon the shoulders of some other tribe.

The delegates of several little villages, which had barely inhabitants enough to hang a name upon, also eased their importance by speaking. The Delaware chief Sou-wah-nock then rose. He spoke of the destruction of the Grand Pawnee village. He did not deny his agency

in the deed. "The Pawnees," said he, "met my young men upon the hunt and slew them. I have had my revenge. Let them look at their town. I found it filled with lodges, I left it a heap of ashes." The whole of his speech was of the same bold, unflinching character, and was closed in true Indian style.

"I am satisfied," said he; "I am not afraid to avow the deeds that I have done, for I am Sou-wah-nock, a Delaware warrior; but I am willing to bury the tomahawk, and smoke the pipe of peace with my enemies. They are brave men, and fight well."

When he had finished he presented a string of wampum to the Wild Horse, as being the most distinguished warrior of the Pawnee nation. When the slight bustle of giving and receiving the present had been finished, the chief of the Republican village rose to answer his warrior enemy.

His speech abounded with one of those wild bursts of eloquence which peculiarly mark the savages of North America, and concluded in a manner which spoke highly of his opinion of what a warrior should be.

"I have promised to the Delawares," said

he, "the friendship of my tribe. I respect my promise, and I cannot lie, for I am a Pawnee chief."

When the Delawares had spoken, our little fat friend from the Shawnee village rose. After frequent expectorations, he at length succeeded in clearing a passage for the escape of his voice.

He contrived, with great difficulty, to wheeze through a speech of about ten minutes in length, after which he seated himself, perfectly convinced that he had thrown a great deal of light upon the subject.

There was a strong contrast between the deportment of the civilized and savage Indians. The first, from long intercourse with the whites, had acquired many of their habits. Their iron gravity had yielded to a more mercurial temperament.

Even in the midst of the council they gave free vent to their merriment, and uttered their gibes and jests. They were constantly on the move, coming and going to and from the place of assembly, and paying but little heed to the deliberations.

The Pawnees sat motionless, listening in

silence and with profound attention to those who spoke.

They rarely uttered a word, and the only smile which curled their lips was one of scorn at the frivolous deportment of their enemies.

From early in the morning till near sunset, the council continued. They then adjourned until the following day, in order that the delegates from some of the small villages might have an opportunity to display their eloquence.

CHAPTER XLIII.

*Kansas Council—White Plume—Tappage Chief
—Treaty—Interpreter—Departure.*

ON the following morning the report of a cannon announced the hour of council.

Once more the tribes met, but just as they had assembled, word was brought to the Commissioner that the delegates from the Kansas tribe had just arrived, and word was sent to them to attend the meeting.

They soon made their appearance, all clothed in blankets, and each carrying a rifle.

In front of them was their chief, "White Plume."

He wore a large drab overcoat with enormous pockets which gaped open.

This article of dress deprived him altogether of the dignified appearance which had marked him upon our first meeting in the summer.

He, however, seemed perfectly satisfied with his attire, and, in truth, I believe that there

was scarcely a Pawnee who did not envy him the possession of an article of apparel with pockets of such a size that, in case of emergency, they could hold nearly a bushel of scalps.

The arrival of this chief and his delegation had been anxiously expected; for the hostility between them and the Pawnees had been bitter; and it was all-important that peace should be established between two such warlike and powerful tribes.

The Pawnees eyed them in grave silence as they came up and took the places set aside for them, but they evinced no hostile feeling.

The business of the council then proceeded, and the chiefs of various small tribes in the vicinity addressed the Pawnees—all agreeing to bury the tomahawk and regard them for the future as friends.

These offers were graciously received by the Pawnees, though one of them afterwards remarked to the interpreter "that they had now made peace with several nations with whom they had never been at war, and of whom they had never heard until they rose to address them in council."

This was little to be wondered at, as the speakers were one or two short-winded fellows, dressed in dirty calico and bedraggled ribands, and their delegation probably comprised their whole tribe.

The deliberations lasted during the whole day, for as these Indians had no particular injuries to dwell upon, they expatiated on things in general, and each speaker continued his address until he had exhausted his wind. The Pawnees listened with exemplary patience, though I doubt if there was one who was not glad when the council ended.

The next morning the Pawnees and Kansas met to settle their grievances. A large room in the garrison had been selected for the purpose. The two bands occupied opposite sides of the room. There was a strong contrast between them. The Kansas had a stately appearance, and their white blankets, as they hung in loose and graceful folds around them, had the effect of classic drapery.

The Pawnees had no pride of dress. They were wrapped in shaggy robes, and sat in silence—stern, wild, and uncouth.

At length the speaking commenced. The

first of them was the White Plume. He had boasted that his speech would make the Pawnees wince. At first, in order to conciliate the whites present, he expressed a high opinion of them. After this he gradually edged off into a philippic against the Pawnee tribe.

There was a dead silence among his own people as he spoke, and every eye was fastened upon the grim group opposite.

The chief of the Tappage village was sitting directly in front of the speaker; his eye glowed like a coal of fire, but he remained silent until the speech was finished.

When the White Plume sat down, half a dozen Pawnees sprang to their feet, but the Tappage chief waved them down; then stepping out, and fixing his eye on the Kansas chief, in a calm, quiet voice he commenced his answer, and told the story of the wrongs inflicted upon his tribe by the Kansas, which had first kindled the war between the two nations.

“My young men,” said he, “visited them as friends; the Kansas treated them as enemies. They were strangers, and the Kansas fell upon them, and slew them, and concealed their

death." He then entered into the particulars of the quarrel, which, unfortunately for the Kansas, were strongly against them. The chief of the latter tribe received the answer with great philosophy, nor did he attempt to reply. Perhaps, too, he did not wish to invite a second attack from so rough a quarter. When the Pawnee had finished, the Commissioner interposed, and dropped a few words of oil upon the troubled waters, and after a short time harmony was restored.

Several other speeches were made. They were of a more calm and conciliating nature, and gradually tended to soothe the feelings of both. The council lasted until sunset, when the terms of the treaty were finally adjusted.

On this occasion I was made sensible of the justice of the complaint made by those who have had public negotiations with the savage tribes, of the inefficiency of the interpreters through whom they are obliged to receive the sentiments and language of the Indians. They are, with few exceptions, ignorant and illiterate. Those employed by us spoke a wretched French patois, and a still more wretched English. On such, the high

imaginative vein, the poetical thought, which runs through Indian eloquence, is entirely lost.

There was not a savage who addressed us who did not at times clothe his ideas in beautiful language, and make use of wild and striking similes drawn from the stores of his only instructress, nature.

This we ascertained from educated persons present who were well versed in some of the Indian tongues. As to the interpreters, they reduced every thing to a bald, disjointed jargon.*

On the day following the council the articles of peace were signed, and most of the tribes departed for their respective homes. A few of the Pawnees and Otoes remained to accompany the Commissioner to the village of the Osages, for the purpose of negotiating a peace with that tribe, with whom they had long been at deadly enmity.

Here I will conclude this series of Indian sketches, for the council being ended and my

* To give an instance of this —One of the chiefs, in speaking of their treaty, said he was so much pleased at meeting his old foes as friends, "That it made his bosom glow with warmth."

Interpreter's version: "He say, 'he so glad, he sweat a heap.'"

curiosity satisfied, I determined to return homeward on the following day. A feeling of sadness came over me as I prepared to leave those with whom I had for months associated. However different in dispositions and feelings, we had until then been united by a link of sympathy. We had led the same life, viewed the same scenes, and undergone the same privations. For months together one tent had sheltered us, and we had eaten from the same board.

A rough, untrammelled friendship had sprung up between us, increasing with the distance between ourselves and our homes, and strengthening as we retired farther from the abode of civilized man.

But now we had returned from our wanderings, and were once more in the circle of our fellows. Still old recollections bound us together by a golden tie that was painful to sever; and although my home, with all its attractions rose in my fancy, yet I felt sad when one of the orderlies informed me that all was ready.

I shook hands with my friends and comrades of the wilderness, and mounting my mule, with a heavy heart, turned my back upon Leavenworth.





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