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*J. Fenimore Cooper*

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

James Fenimore Cooper was a brilliant story-teller and a great writer, but he was also a tedious moralist and a lover of detail. His novels, written in a period when six or seven hundred pages were considered only a reasonable allowance for an author, are to-day too long to attract young readers, with whom his adventurous and exciting plots and his Indian and pioneer characters should make him a favorite. "The Deerslayer," the first of the Leatherstocking Tales, has been abridged to about one half its original length, in the hope that it may inspire enthusiasm for this great American author among boys and girls.

The Leatherstocking Tales are Cooper's most distinctive and original work. As Professor Bronson has well said, "He was the creator of the novel of Indian adventure, and his followers are not his rivals." His poetic instinct enabled him not only to feel but to make his readers feel the wonderful romance of the American forest and of its Indian inhabitant, who was being gradually driven back by the relentless onward march of the white man. He saw the charm of the pioneer spirit at its best, and brought it out the more strongly by contrasting it with the selfish and callous instinct for gain and for violence that sometimes went with it. Most of all, he felt the harmony between the characters of the forest dwellers and the wild, unpeopled

solitudes through which they roamed ; and the result for his readers is a wonderful succession of nature descriptions.

Cooper's works can be improved rather than injured by abridgment because he carried realism to an extreme. In the present novel, for instance, he undertakes to carry his seven characters through seven nights and seven days, and never to lose sight of one for a moment. If one is absent for a few minutes on some errand necessary for the progress of the plot, he must, on his return, be placed in a position where he can be informed by another of what has occurred in his absence, — and all the other five must be occupied in some appropriate manner during the interval. This difficulty the editor has sought to obviate, and it has been a pleasure to feel that as the work progressed many lines of the picture which had been overlaid by a mass of explanatory narrative stood out in more bold and striking relief. To add to the usefulness of this volume in the schools, the editor has made a study of the plot from various points of view, which will be found, with other matter, in the Appendix.

In one of their early editions Cooper's novels were illustrated by Darley, who also illustrated, at about the same time, Irving's "Sketch-Book" and Longfellow's "Evangeline." We have been fortunate in being able to obtain copies of these and other rare old engravings, which are in such harmony with the spirit of the author.

M. F. L.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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# THE DEERSLAYER

## PART I. THE SURPRISE

### CHAPTER I

The incidents of this tale occurred between the years 1740 and 1745, when the settled portions of the colony of New York were confined to the four Atlantic counties, a narrow belt of country on each side of the Hudson, extending from its mouth to the falls near its head, and to a few advanced "neighborhoods" on the Mohawk and the Schoharie. Broad belts of the virgin wilderness not only reached the shores of the first river, but they even crossed it, stretching away into New England, and affording forest covers to the noiseless moccasin of the native warrior, as he trod the secret and bloody warpath. A bird's-eye view of the whole region of New York State, west of the Hudson River, must then have offered one vast expanse of woods, dotted by the glittering surfaces of lakes, and intersected by the waving lines of rivers.

It was in such a vast solitude, where centuries of summer suns had already warmed the tops of the noble oaks and pines, that voices were heard calling to each other, in the depths of a forest, of which the leafy surface lay bathed in the brilliant light of a cloudless day in June, while the trunks of the trees rose in gloomy grandeur in

the shades beneath. The calls were in different tones, evidently proceeding from two men who had lost their way, and were searching in different directions for their path. At length a shout proclaimed success, and presently a man of gigantic mould broke out of the tangled labyrinth of a small swamp, emerging into an opening that appeared to have been formed partly by the ravages of the wind, and partly by those of fire. This little area, which afforded a good view of the sky, although it was pretty well filled with dead trees, lay on the side of one of the high hills, or low mountains, into which nearly the whole surface of the adjacent country was broken.

"Here is room to breathe in!" exclaimed the liberated forester, as soon as he found himself under a clear sky, shaking his huge frame like a mastiff that has just escaped from a snowbank. "Hurrah, Deerslayer! here is daylight at last, and yonder is the lake."

These words were scarcely uttered when the second forester dashed aside the bushes of the swamp, and appeared in the area. After making a hurried adjustment of his arms and disordered dress, he joined his companion, who had already begun his preparations for a halt.

"Do you know this spot?" demanded the one called Deerslayer, "or do you shout at the sight of the sun?"

"Both, lad, both; I know the spot, and am not sorry to see so useful a friend as the sun. Now we have got the p'int of the compass in our minds once more, and 't will be our own faults if we let anything turn them topsy-turvy ag'in, as has just happened. My name is not Hurry Harry, if this be not the very spot where the land-hunters 'camped the last summer, and passed a week. See! yonder are the

dead bushes of their bower, and here is the spring. Much as I like the sun, boy, I've no occasion for it to tell me it is noon; this stomach of mine is as good a timepiece as is to be found in the colony, and it already p'int to half-past twelve. So open the wallet, and let us wind up for another six hours' run."

At this suggestion, both set themselves about making the preparations necessary for their usual frugal but hearty meal. We will profit by this pause to give the reader some idea of the appearance of the men, each of whom is destined to enact no insignificant part in our legend. It would not have been easy to find a more noble specimen of vigorous manhood than was offered in the person of him who called himself Hurry Harry. His real name was Henry March; but the frontiersmen having caught the practice of giving sobriquets from the Indians, the appellation of Hurry was far oftener applied to him, and not unfrequently he was termed Hurry Skurry, a nickname he had obtained from a dashing, reckless, offhand manner, and a physical restlessness that kept him constantly on the move. His stature exceeded six feet four, and being unusually well proportioned, his strength fully realized the idea created by his gigantic frame. His face was both good-humored and handsome, and he had a bold, free air of independence, that bordered on insolence.

Deerslayer, as Hurry called his companion, was a very different person in appearance, as well as in character. In stature he stood about six feet in his moccasins, but his frame was comparatively light and slender, showing muscles, however, that promised unusual agility, if not unusual strength. His face would have had little to recommend it

except youth, were it not for an expression that seldom failed to win the confidence of those with whom he came in contact. This expression was simply that of guileless truth, sustained by an earnestness of purpose, and a sincerity of feeling, that rendered it remarkable.

Both these frontier-men were still young, Hurry having reached the age of six or eight and twenty, while Deerslayer was several years his junior. Their attire needs no particular description, though it may be well to add that it was composed in no small degree of dressed deerskins. There was, notwithstanding, some attention to smartness and the picturesque in the arrangements of Deerslayer's dress, more particularly in the part connected with his arms and accoutrements. His rifle was in perfect condition, the handle of his hunting-knife was neatly carved, his powder-horn was ornamented with suitable devices lightly cut into the material, and his shot-pouch was decorated with wampum. On the other hand, Hurry Harry wore everything in a careless, slovenly manner, as if he felt a noble scorn for the trifling accessories of dress and ornaments.

"Come, Deerslayer, fall to, and prove that you have a Delaware stomach, as you say you have had a Delaware edication," cried Hurry, setting the example by opening his mouth to receive a huge slice of cold venison steak; "fall to, lad, and prove your manhood on this poor devil of a doe with your teeth, as you've already done with your rifle."

"Nay, nay, Hurry, there's little manhood in killing a doe, and that too out of season," returned the other, disposing himself to comply. "The Delawares have given me my name, not so much on account of a bold heart, as



on account of a quick eye and an active foot. There may not be any cowardice in overcoming a deer, but sartin it is there 's no great valor."

"The Delawares themselves are no heroes," muttered Hurry through his teeth, the mouth being too full to permit it to be fairly opened, "or they would never have allowed them loping vagabonds, the Mingos, to make them women."

"That matter is not rightly understood — has never been rightly explained," said Deerslayer earnestly; "the Mingos fill the woods with their lies, and misconstruct words and treaties. I have now lived ten years with the Delawares, and know them to be as manful as any other nation, when the proper time to strike comes."

"Harkee, Master Deerslayer, since we are on the subject, we may as well open our minds to each other in a man-to-man way; answer me one question, — you have had so much luck among the game as to have gotten a title, it would seem, but did you ever hit anything human or intelligible; did you ever pull trigger on an inimy that was capable of pulling one upon you?"

"To own the truth, I never did," answered Deerslayer after a moment's hesitation; "seeing that a fitting occasion never offered. The Delawares have been peaceable since my sojourn with 'em, and I hold it to be onlawful to take the life of man, except in open and generous warfare."

ⓧ "What! did you never find a fellow thieving among your traps and skins, and do the law on him with your own hands, by way of saving the magistrates trouble in the settlements, and the rogue himself the cost of the suit?"

"I am no trapper, Hurry," returned the young man proudly; "I live by the rifle, a we'pon at which I will not turn my back on any man of my years, atween the Hudson and the St. Lawrence. I never offer a skin that has not a hole in its head besides them which natur' made tō see with or to breathe through."

"Aye, aye, this is all very well, in the animal way, though it makes but a poor figure alongside of scalps and ambushes. Shooting an Indian from an ambush is acting up to his own principles, and now we have what you call a lawful war on our hands, the sooner you wipe that disgrace off your character, the sounder will be your sleep; if it only come from knowing there is one inimy the less prowling in the woods. I shall not frequent your society long, friend Natty, unless you look higher than four-footed beasts to practise your rifle on."

"Our journey is nearly ended, you say, Master March, and we can part to-night, if you see occasion. I have a fri'nd waiting for me, who will think it no disgrace to consort with a fellow-creatur' that has never yet slain his kind."

"I wish I knew what has brought that skulking Delaware into this part of the country so early in the season," muttered Hurry to himself, in a way to show equally distrust and a recklessness of its betrayal. "Where did you say the young chief was to give you the meeting?"

"At a small round rock, near the foot of the lake, where, they tell me, the tribes are given to resorting to make their treaties, and to bury their hatchets. This rock have I often heard the Delawares mention, though lake and rock are equally strangers to me. The country is

claimed by both Mingos and Mohicans, and is a sort of common territory to fish and hunt through, in time of peace, though what it may become in war-time the Lord only knows!"

"Common territory!" exclaimed Hurry, laughing aloud. "I should like to know what Floating Tom Hutter would say to that? He claims the lake as his own property, in virtue of fifteen years' possession; and what Tom claims, he'll be very likely to maintain."

Q By what I've heard you say in years past, this Floating Tom must be an uncommon mortal. What's the man's history and natur'?"

A "Why, as to old Tom's human natur', it is not much like other men's human natur', but more like a muskrat's human natur', seeing that he takes more to the ways of that animal than to the ways of any other fellow-creatur'. Some think he was a free liver on the salt water, in his youth, and a companion of a sartain Kidd, who was hanged for piracy, long afore you and I were born, and that he came up into these regions, thinking that the king's cruisers could never cross the mountains, and that he might enjoy the plunder peaceably in the woods; and he enjoys it, too, if plunder he has really got, with his darters, in a very quiet and comfortable way."

"Aye, he has darters, too; I've heard the Delawares, who've hunted this-a-way, tell their histories of these young women. Is there no mother, Hurry?"

"She has been dead these two good years, but it's recommend enough to one woman to be the mother of such a creatur' as her darter, Judith Hutter!"

"Aye, Judith was the name the Delawares mentioned, though it was pronounced after a fashion of their own. From their discourse, I do not think the girl would much please my fancy."

"Thy fancy!" exclaimed March, taking fire equally at the indifference and at the presumption of his companion, "what the devil have you to do with a fancy, and that, too, consarning one like Judith? You are but a boy—a sapling, that has scarce got root. Judith has had *men* among her suitors ever since she was fifteen, which is now near five years; and will not be apt even to cast a look upon a half-grown creatur' like you!"

"It is June, and there is not a cloud atween us and the sun, Hurry, so all this heat is not wanted," answered the other, altogether undisturbed; "any one may have a fancy, and a squirrel has a right to make up his mind touching a catamount."

"Aye, but it might not be wise, always, to let the catamount know it," growled March. "But you're young and thoughtless, and I'll overlook your ignorance. Come, Deerslayer," he added, with a good-natured laugh, "we are sworn fri'nds, and will not quarrel about a light-minded, jilting jade, just because she happens to be handsome; more especially 'as you have never seen her. Judith is only for a man whose teeth show the full marks, and it's foolish to be afeard of a boy. What *did* the Delawares say of the hussy? for an Indian, after all, has his notions of woman-kind, 'as well as a white man."

"They said she was fair to look on, and pleasant of speech; but over-given to admirers, and light-minded"

"They are devils incarnate! Now that's Judith's character to a ribbon! To own the truth to you, Deerslayer, I should have married the gal two years since, if it had not been for two particular things, one of which was this very light-mindedness."

"And what may have been the other?" demanded the hunter, who continued to eat like one that took very little interest in the subject.

"T' other was an insartainty about her having *me*. The hussy is handsome, and she knows it. Boy, not a tree that is growing in these hills is straighter, or waves in the wind with an easier bend, nor did you ever see the doe that bounded with a more nat'ral motion. But her behavior has been such that sometimes I swear I'll never visit the lake ag'in."

"Which is the reason that you always come back?"

"Ah, Deerslayer, if you know'd all that I know consarning Judith, you'd find a justification for a little cussing. Now, the officers sometimes stray over to the lake, from the forts on the Mohawk, to fish and hunt, and then the creatur' seems beside herself! You can see it in the manner in which she wears her finery, and the airs she gives herself with the gallants."

"That is unseemly in a poor man's darter," returned Deerslayer gravely, "the officers are all gentry, and can only look on such as Judith with evil intentions."

"There's the unsartainty, and the damper! The clouds that drive among these hills are not more unsartain. Not a dozen white men have ever laid eyes upon her since she was a child, and yet her airs, with two or three of these officers, are extinguishers! Could I bring my mind to be

easy about the officers, I would carry the gal off to the Mohawk by force, make her marry me in spite of her whiffing, and leave old Tom to the care of Hetty, his other child, who, if she be not as handsome or as quick-witted as her sister, is much the more dutiful."

"Is there another bird in the same nest?" asked Deerslayer. "The Delawares spoke to me only of one."

"That's nat'ral enough, for while poor Hetty is comely, she is at the best what I call on the varge of ignorance, and sometimes she stumbles on one side of the line, and sometimes on t' other."

"Them are beings that the Lord has in his 'special care," said Deerslayer solemnly; "for He looks carefully to all who fall short of their proper share of reason. The redskins honor and respect them who are so gifted, knowing that the Evil Spirit delights more to dwell in an artful body, than in one that has no cunning to work upon."

"I'll answer for it, then, that he will not remain long with poor Hetty. Yet old Tom has a feeling for the gal, and so has Judith, quick-witted and glorious as she is herself, and, harkee, Deerslayer, — you know what the hunters, and trappers, and peltry-men in general be; and their best friends will not deny that they are headstrong and given to having their own way, without much bethinking 'em of other people's rights or feelin's, — and yet I don't think the man is to be found, in all this region, who would harm Hetty Hutter, if he could; no, not even a redskin."

"I rejoice to hear it, fri'nd Hurry, I rejoice to hear what you say; but as the sun is beginning to turn towards the a'ternoon's sky, had we not better strike the trail ag'in,

and make forward, that we may get an opportunity of seeing these wonderful sisters?"

Harry March giving a cheerful assent, the remnants of the meal were soon collected; then the travelers shouldered their packs, resumed their arms, and, quitting the little area of light, they again plunged into the deep shadows of the forest.

## CHAPTER II

Our two adventurers had not far to go. Hurry knew the direction, as soon as he had found the open spot and the spring, and he now led the way. The forest was dark, but it was no longer obstructed by underbrush, and the footing was firm and dry. After proceeding near a mile, March stopped, and began to cast about him with an inquiring look, examining the different objects with care, and occasionally turning his eyes on the trunks of the fallen trees, with which the ground was well sprinkled.

"*This* must be the place, Deerslayer," March at length observed; "here is a beech by the side of a hemlock, with three pines at hand, and yonder is a white birch with a broken top; and yet I see no rock, nor any of the branches bent down, as I told you would be the case."

"Broken branches are onskillful landmarks, as the least exper'enced know that branches don't often break of themselves," returned the other; "and they also lead to suspicion and discoveries. The Delawares never trust to broken branches, unless it is in friendly times, and on an open trail. As for the beeches, and pines, and hemlocks, why, they are to be seen on all sides of us, not only by twos and threes, but by forties and fifties and hundreds."

“Very true, Deerslayer, but you never calculate on position. Here is a beech and a hemlock —”

“Yes, and there is another beech and a hemlock, as loving as two brothers; and yonder are others, for neither tree is a rarity in these woods. I fear me, Hurry, you are better at trapping beaver and shooting bears, than at leading on a blindish sort of a trail. Ha! there’s what you wish to find, a’ter all!”

“Now, Deerslayer, this is one of your Delaware pretensions, for hang me if I see anything but these trees, which do seem to start up around us in a most onaccountable and perplexing manner.”

“Look this-a-way, Hurry — here, in a line with the black oak — don’t you see the crooked sapling that is hooked up in the branches of the bass-wood, near it? Now that sapling was once snow-ridden, and got the bend by its weight; but it never straightened itself, and fastened itself in among the bass-wood branches in the way you see. The hand of man did that act of kindness for it.”

“That hand was mine!” exclaimed Hurry; “I found the slender young thing bent to the airth, like an unfortunate creatur’ borne down by misfortune, and stuck it up where you see it. After all, Deerslayer, I must allow, you’re getting to have an oncommon good eye for the woods!”

“’T is improving, Hurry — ’t is improving, I will acknowledge; but ’t is only a child’s eye, compared to some I know. There’s Tamenund, now, though a man so old that few remember when he was in his prime, Tamenund lets nothing escape his look, which is more like the scent



of a hound than the sight of an eye. Then Uncas, the father of Chingachgook, and the lawful chief of the Mohicans, is another that it is almost hopeless to pass unseen."

"And who is this Chingachgook, of whom you talk so much, Deerslayer?" asked Hurry, as he moved off in the direction of the righted sapling; "a loping redskin, at the best, I make no question."

"Not so, Hurry, but the best of loping redskins, as you call 'em. If he had his rights, he would be a great chief; but, as it is, he is only a brave and just-minded Delaware; respected, and even obeyed in some things, 't is true, but of a fallen race, and belonging to a fallen people. Ah! Harry March, 't would warm the heart within you to sit in their lodges of a winter's night, and listen to the traditions of the ancient greatness and power of the Mohicans! But see; this is the spot you come to find."

This remark cut short the discourse, and both the men now gave all their attention to the object immediately before them. Deerslayer pointed out to his companion the trunk of a huge linden, or bass-wood, which had filled its time, and fallen by its own weight. This tree, like so many millions of its brethren, lay where it had fallen, and was mouldering under the slow but certain influence of the seasons. The decay, however, had attacked its centre, even while it stood erect in the pride of vegetation, hollowing out its heart, as disease sometimes destroys the vitals of animal life, even while a fair exterior is presented to the observer. As the trunk lay stretched for near a hundred feet along the earth, the quick eye of the hunter detected this peculiarity, and, from this and

other circumstances, he knew it to be the tree of which March was in search.

"Aye, here we have what we want," cried Hurry, looking in at the larger end of the linden; "everything is as snug as if it had been left in an old woman's cupboard. Come, lend me a hand, Deerslayer, and we'll be afloat in half an hour."

Hurry removed some pieces of bark that lay before the large opening in the tree, and the two then drew out a bark canoe, containing seats, paddles, and other appliances, even to fishing lines and rods. This vessel was by no means small; but such was its comparative lightness, and so gigantic was the strength of Hurry, that the latter shouldered it with seeming ease, declining all assistance, even in the act of raising it to the awkward position in which he was obliged to hold it.

"Lead ahead, Deerslayer," said March, "and open the bushes; the rest I can do for myself."

The other obeyed, and the men left the spot, Deerslayer clearing the way for his companion. In about ten minutes they both broke suddenly into the brilliant light of the sun, on a low gravelly point, that was washed by water on quite half its outline.

An exclamation of surprise broke from the lips of Deerslayer, an exclamation that was low and guardedly made, however, for his habits were much more thoughtful and regulated than those of the reckless Hurry, when, on reaching the margin of the lake, he beheld the view that unexpectedly met his gaze. It was, in truth, sufficiently striking to merit a brief description. On a level with the point lay a broad sheet of water, so placid and

limpid that it resembled a bed of the pure mountain atmosphere, compressed into a setting of hills and woods. Its length was about three leagues, while its breadth was irregular, expanding to half a league, or even more, opposite to the point, and contracting to less than half that distance, more to the southward. Of course, its margin was irregular, being indented by bays, and broken by many projecting, low points. At its northern, or nearest end, it was bounded by an isolated mountain, lower land falling off east and west, gracefully relieving the sweep of the outline. Still the character of the country was mountainous ; high hills, or low mountains, rising abruptly from the water, on quite nine tenths of its circuit ; and even beyond the parts of the shore that were comparatively low, the background was high, though more distant.

But the most striking peculiarities of this scene were its solemn solitude and sweet repose. On all sides, wherever the eye turned, nothing met it but the mirror-like surface of the lake, the placid view of heaven, and the dense setting of woods. So rich and fleecy were the outlines of the forest, that scarce an opening could be seen, the whole visible earth, from the rounded mountain-top to the water's edge, presenting one unvaried hue of unbroken verdure. As if vegetation were not satisfied with a triumph so complete, the trees overhung the lake itself ; and the whole scene lay bathed in the sunlight, a glorious picture of affluent forest grandeur, softened by the balminess of June, and relieved by the beautiful variety afforded by the presence of so broad an expanse of water.

“ This is grand ! — ’t is solemn ! — ’t is an edication of itself, to look upon ! ” exclaimed Deerslayer, as he stood

leaning on his rifle, and gazed about; "not a tree disturbed even by redskin hand, as I can discover, but everything left in the ordering of the Lord, to live and die according to his own designs and laws! But what is this I see off here, abreast of us, that seems too small for an island, and too large for a boat, though it stands in the midst of the water?"

"Why, that is what these gallanting gentry, from the forts, call Muskrat Castle. 'Tis old Tom's stationary house, there being two; this, which never moves, and the other, that floats, being sometimes in one part of the lake and sometimes in another. The last goes by the name of the ark; 't is down south, no doubt, or anchored in some of the bays. But the canoe is ready, and fifteen minutes will carry two such paddles as yourn and mine to the castle."

At this suggestion, Deerslayer helped his companion to place the different articles in the canoe, which was already afloat. This was no sooner done than the two frontier-men embarked, and by a vigorous push sent the light bark some eight or ten rods from the shore. Hurry now took the seat in the stern, while Deerslayer placed himself forward, and by leisurely but steady strokes of the paddles, the canoe glided across the placid sheet, towards the extraordinary-looking structure that the former had styled Muskrat Castle. Several times the men ceased paddling, and looked about them at the scene, as new glimpses opened from behind points, enabling them to see further down the lake, or to get broader views of the wooded mountains.

"This *is* a sight to warm the heart!" exclaimed

Deerslayer, when they had thus stopped for the fourth or fifth time; "the lake seems made to let us get an insight into the noble forests; and land and water alike stand in the beauty of God's providence! Right glad am I that Chingachgook app'nted our meeting on this lake, for hitherto eye of mine never looked on such a glorious spectacle."

"That's because you've kept so much among the Delawares, in whose country there are no lakes. Now, farther north and farther west these bits of water abound; and you're young, and may yet live to see 'em."

"Have the governor's or the king's people given this lake a name?" asked Deerslayer suddenly, as if struck with a new idea. "If they've not begun to blaze their trees, and set up their compasses, and line off their maps, it's likely they've not bethought them to disturb nature with a name."

"They've not got to that, yet," replied Hurry, "though the last time I went in with skins, one of the king's surveyors was questioning me consarning all the region hereabouts."

"I'm glad it has no name," resumed Deerslayer, "or, at least, no paleface name; for their christenings always foretell waste and destruction. No doubt, how's ever, the redskins have their modes of knowing it, and the hunters and trappers, too; they are likely to call the place by something reasonable and resembling."

"As for the tribes," continued Hurry, "each has its own tongue, and its own way of calling things; and they treat this part of the world just as they treat all others. Among ourselves, we've got to calling the place the

'Glimmerglass,' seeing that its whole basin is so often fringed with pines, cast upward from its face; as if it would throw back the hills that hang over it."

"Aye, that is a good name," replied Deerslayer thoughtfully. "Glimmerglass! it has a pleasant sound to the ear. I'll warrant it was your fair Judith who thought of that pretty conceit."

Both now pulled vigorously until they got within a hundred yards of the "castle." This singular edifice, which had been facetiously named Muskrat Castle, stood in the open lake, at a distance of fully a quarter of a mile from the nearest shore. On every other side the water extended much farther, the precise position being distant about two miles from the northern end of the sheet, and nearly, if not quite, a mile from its eastern shore. As there was not the smallest appearance of any island, but the house stood on piles with the water flowing beneath it, and Deerslayer had already discovered that the lake was of a great depth, he was fain to ask an explanation of this singular circumstance. Hurry solved the difficulty by telling him that on this spot alone, a long, narrow shoal, which extended for a few hundred yards in a north and south direction, rose within six or eight feet of the surface of the lake, and that Hutter had driven piles into it, and placed his habitation on them, for the purpose of security.

"The old fellow was burnt out three times, atween the Indians and the hunters; and in one affray with the redskins he lost his only son, since which time he has taken to the water for safety. No one can attack him here, without coming in a boat, and the plunder and scalps would scarce be worth the trouble of digging out canoes.

Then it's by no means certain which would whip in such a scrimmage, for old Tom is well supplied with arms and ammunition, and the castle, as you may see, is a tight breastwork agin light shot."

Deerslayer had some theoretical knowledge of frontier warfare, and he saw that Hurry did not overrate the strength of this position, since it would not be easy to attack it without exposing the assailants to the fire of the besieged. A good deal of art had also been manifested in the disposition of the timber of which the building was constructed and which afforded a protection much greater than was usual to the ordinary log-cabins of the frontier. The sides and ends were composed of the trunks of large pines, cut about nine feet long, and placed upright, instead of being laid horizontally, as was the practice of the country. These logs were squared on three sides, and had large tenons on each end. Massive sills were secured on the heads of the piles, with suitable grooves dug out of their upper surfaces, which had been squared for the purpose, and the lower tenons of the upright pieces were placed in these grooves, giving them a secure fastening below. Plates had been laid on the upper ends of the upright logs, and were kept in their places by a similar contrivance; the several corners of the structure being well fastened by scarfing and pinning the sills and plates. The floors were made of smaller logs, similarly squared, and the roof was composed of light poles, firmly united, and well covered with bark. The effect of this ingenious arrangement was to give its owner a house that could be approached only by water, the sides of which were composed of logs closely wedged together, which were two

feet thick in their thinnest parts, and which could be separated only by a deliberate and laborious use of human hands, or by the slow operation of time. The outer surface of the building was rude and uneven, the logs being of unequal sizes; but the squared surfaces within gave both the sides and floor as uniform an appearance as was desired, either for use or show. The chimney was not the least singular portion of the castle, as Hurry made his companion observe, while he explained the process by which it had been made. The material was a stiff clay, properly worked, which had been put together in a mould of sticks, and suffered to harden, a foot or two at a time, commencing at the bottom. When the entire chimney had thus been raised, and had been properly bound in with outward props, a brisk fire was kindled, and kept going until it was burned to something like a brick-red. This had not been an easy operation, nor had it succeeded entirely; but by dint of filling the cracks with fresh clay, a safe fireplace and chimney had been obtained in the end. This part of the work stood on the log-floor, secured beneath by an extra pile.

"Old Tom is full of contrivances," added Hurry, "and he set his heart on the success of his chimney, which threatened more than once to give out altogether; but perseverance will even overcome smoke; and now he has a comfortable cabin of it, though it did promise, at one time, to be a chinky sort of a flue to carry flames and fire."

"You seem to know the whole history of the castle, Hurry, chimney and sides," said Deerslayer, smiling; "is love so overcoming that it causes a man to study his sweetheart's habitation?"



"Partly that, lad, and partly eyesight," returned the good-natured giant, laughing. "I ought to know it, for I raised no small part of the weight of them uprights with my own shoulders. There was a large gang of us at the lake the summer the old fellow built, and as we had often eaten at his hearth, we thought we would just house him comfortably, afore we went to Albany with our skins. Yes, many is the meal I've swallowed in Tom Hutter's cabin: and good ones, too, for whatever their weaknesses or follies, the girls have a wonderful particular way about a frying-pan or a gridiron!"

While the parties were thus discoursing, the canoe had been gradually drawing nearer, and was now so close as to require but a single stroke of a paddle to reach the landing. This was at a floored platform in front of the entrance, that might have been some twenty feet square.

"Old Tom calls this sort of a wharf his dooryard," observed Hurry, as he fastened the canoe, after he and his companion had left it; "and the gallants from the forts have named it the 'castle court,' though what a 'court' can have to do here is more than I can tell you, seeing that there is no law. 'T is as I supposed; not a soul within, but the whole family is off on a v'y'ge of discovery!"

While Hurry was bustling about the "dooryard," examining the fishing-spears, rods, and nets, Deerslayer entered the building. The interior, which was some twenty feet by forty, was subdivided into several small sleeping-rooms; the apartment into which he first entered serving equally for the ordinary uses of its inmates, and for a kitchen. The furniture was of a strange mixture.

Most of it was rude, and to the last degree rustic ; but there was a clock, with a handsome case of dark wood, in a corner, and two or three chairs, with a table and bureau, that had evidently come from some dwelling of more than usual pretension. There was also a dark, massive chest. The kitchen utensils were of the simplest kind, and far from numerous, but every article was in its place, and showed the nicest care in its condition.

After Deerslayer had cast a look about him in the outer room, he raised a wooden latch, and entered a narrow passage that divided the inner end of the house into two equal parts. Frontier usages being no way scrupulous, the young man now opened a door, and found himself in a bedroom. A single glance sufficed to show that the apartment belonged to females. The bed was of the feathers of wild geese, and filled nearly to overflowing ; but it lay in a rude bunk, raised only a foot from the floor. On one side of it were arranged, on pegs, various dresses, of a quality much superior to what one would expect to meet in such a place, with ribbons and other similar articles to correspond. Pretty shoes, with handsome silver buckles, were not wanting ; and no less than six fans, of gay colors, were placed half open. Even the pillow, on this side of the bed, was covered with finer linen than its companion, and it was ornamented with a small ruffle. On the opposite side of the bed everything was homely and uninviting, except through its perfect neatness. The few garments that were hanging from the pegs were of the coarsest materials, while nothing seemed made for show. Deerslayer did not fail to note this distinction between the two sides of the bed, and pondering on it in connection with

what he had heard of the characters of Hutter's two daughters, he returned slowly and thoughtfully towards the "dooryard," where Hurry Harry was still examining the borderer's traps and fishing poles.

## CHAPTER III

As soon as Hurry Harry had taken a sufficiently intimate survey of Floating Tom's implements, he summoned his companion to the canoe, that they might go down the lake in quest of the family. Previous to embarking, however, he carefully examined the whole of the northern end of the water with a ship's glass, that formed a part of Hutter's effects. In this scrutiny no part of the shore was overlooked; the bays and points in particular being subjected to a closer inquiry than the rest of the wooded boundary.

"'T is as I thought," said Hurry, laying aside the glass, "the old fellow is drifting about the south end this fine weather, and has left the castle to defend itself. Well, now we know that he is not up this-a-way, 't will be but a small matter to paddle down and hunt him up in his hiding-place."

"Does Master Hutter think it necessary to burrow on this lake?" inquired Deerslayer, stepping into the canoe; "to my eye it is such a solitude as one might open his whole soul in, and fear no one to disarrange his thoughts or his worship."

"You forget your friends, the Mingos, and all the French savages. Is there a spot on 'arth, Deerslayer, to which them disquiet rogues don't go? Where is the lake, that the blackguards don't find out; and, having found out, don't sooner or later discolor its water with blood?"

"I hear no good character of them, sartainly, friend Hurry, though I've never been called on, as yet, to meet them, or any other mortal, on the warpath. I dare to say that such a lovely spot as this would not be likely to be overlooked by such plunderers; for though I've not been in the way of quarreling with them tribes myself, the Delawares give me such an account of 'em that I've pretty much set 'em down, in my own mind, as thorough miscreants."

"You may do that with a safe conscience, or, for that matter, any other savage you may happen to meet."

Here Deerslayer protested, and as they went paddling down the lake a hot discussion was maintained concerning the respective merits of the palefaces and the redskins. Hurry had all the prejudices and antipathies of a white hunter, who generally regards the Indian as a sort of natural competitor, and not unfrequently as a natural enemy. As a matter of course, he was loud, clamorous, dogmatical, and not very argumentative. Deerslayer, on the other hand, manifested a very different temper; proving, by the moderation of his language, the fairness of his views, and the simplicity of his distinctions, that he possessed every disposition to hear reason, and a strong, innate desire to do justice. Hurry followed up the discussion with such animation that, in his eagerness to prove to his companion that Indians were not more than half human and deserved little more consideration than the wolves and deer with whom they shared the forests, he would have forgotten the purpose of their quest, had not Deerslayer interrupted his harangue with a remark in his accustomed calm and even tones. "Ah, well! 't is useless

talking, as each man will think for himself, and have his say agreeable to his thoughts. Let us keep a good lookout for your friend Floating Tom, lest we pass him as he lies hidden under this bushy shore."

Deerslayer had not named the borders of the lake amiss. Along their whole length, the smaller trees overhung the water, with their branches often dipping in the transparent element. The banks were steep, even from the narrow strand; and the points and bays, too, were sufficiently numerous to render the outline broken and diversified. As the canoe kept close along the western side of the lake, the expectations of the two adventurers were kept constantly on the stretch, as neither could foretell what the next turning of a point might reveal. Their progress was swift, the gigantic strength of Hurry enabling him to play with the light bark as if it had been a feather, while the skill of his companion almost equalized their usefulness, notwithstanding the disparity in natural means.

Each time the canoe passed a point, Hurry turned a look behind him, expecting to see the "ark" anchored, or beached in the bay. He was fated to be disappointed, however; and they had got within a mile of the southern end of the lake, or a distance of quite two leagues from the "castle," which was now hidden from view by half a dozen intervening projections of the land, when he suddenly ceased paddling, as if uncertain in what direction next to steer.

"It is possible that the old chap has dropped into the river," said Hurry, after looking carefully along the whole of the eastern shore, which was about a mile distant, and open to his scrutiny for more than half its length; "for

he has taken to trapping considerable, of late, and, barring flood-wood, he might drop down it a mile or so ; though he would have a most scratching time in getting back again ! ”

“ Where is this outlet ? ” asked Deerslayer ; “ I see no opening in the banks or the trees that looks as if it would let a river like the Susquehannah run through it . ”

“ You don't see the outlet, because it passes atween high, steep banks ; and the pines and hemlocks and bass-woods hang over it, as a roof hangs over a house. If old Tom is not in the ‘ Rat's Cove, ’ he must have burrowed in the river ; we 'll look for him first in the cove, and then we 'll cross to the outlet . ”

As they proceeded, Hurry explained that there was a shallow bay, formed by a long, low point, that had got the name of the “ Rat's Cove, ” from the circumstance of its being a favorite haunt of the muskrat ; and which offered so complete a cover for the “ ark ” that its owner was fond of lying in it, whenever he found it convenient.

“ As a man never knows who may be his visitors, in this part of the country, ” said Hurry, “ it 's a great advantage to get a good look at 'em before they come too near. Now it 's war, such caution is more than commonly useful, since a Canada man or a Mingo might get into his hut afore he invited 'em. But Hutter is a first-rate lookouter, and can pretty much scent danger, as a hound scents the deer. But here is Rat's Cove, ” continued Hurry, as the canoe glided round the extremity of the point, where the water was so deep as actually to appear black : “ and we shall soon see the ark, for Tom loves to burrow up among the rushes. We shall be in his nest in five minutes, although the old fellow may be off among the traps himself . ”

If concealment were Hutter's purpose, Hurry might well have felt almost certain of finding the ark in this bay, since, anchored behind the trees that covered the narrow strip of the point, it might have lain concealed from prying eyes an entire summer. So complete, indeed, was the cover, in this spot, that a boat hauled close to the beach, within the point, and near the bottom of the bay, could by possibility be seen from only one direction; and that was from a densely-wooded shore within the sweep of the water, where strangers would be little apt to go. But he proved a false prophet. The canoe completely doubled the point, so as to enable the two travellers to command a view of the whole cove or bay, — for it was more properly the last, — and no object but those that nature had placed there became visible. The placid water swept round in a graceful curve, the rushes bent gently towards its surface, and the trees overhung it as usual; but all lay in the soothing and sublime solitude of a wilderness.

The motion of the canoe had been attended with little or no noise, the frontier-men habitually getting accustomed to caution in most of their movements, and it now lay on the glassy water appearing to float in air, partaking of the breathing stillness that seemed to pervade the entire scene. At this instant a dry stick was heard cracking on the narrow strip of land that concealed the bay from the open lake. Both the adventurers started, and each extended a hand towards his rifle, the weapon never being out of reach of the arm.

"'Twas too heavy for any light creatur'," whispered Hurry, "and it sounded like the tread of a man!"

"Not so — not so," returned Deerslayer; "'t was, as

you say, too heavy for one, but it was too light for the other. Put your paddle in the water, and send the canoe in, to that log ; I'll land and cut off the creatur's retreat up the p'int, be it a Mingo, or be it only a muskrat."

As Hurry complied, Deerslayer was soon on the shore, advancing into the thicket with a moccasined foot, and a caution that prevented the least noise. In a minute he was in the centre of the narrow strip of land, and moving slowly down towards its end, the bushes rendering extreme watchfulness necessary. Just as he reached the centre of the thicket the dried twigs cracked again, and the noise was repeated at short intervals, as if some creature having life walked slowly towards the point. Hurry heard these sounds also, and pushing the canoe off into the bay he seized his rifle to watch the result. A breathless minute succeeded after which a noble buck walked out of the thicket, proceeded with a stately step to the sandy extremity of the point, and began to slake his thirst from the water of the lake. Hurry hesitated an instant ; then, raising his rifle hastily to his shoulder, he took sight and fired. The effect of this sudden interruption of the solemn stillness of such a scene was not its least striking peculiarity. The report of the weapon had the usual sharp, short sound of the rifle ; but when a few moments of silence had succeeded the sudden crack, during which the noise was floating in air across the water, it reached the rocks of the opposite mountain, where the vibrations accumulated, and were rolled from cavity to cavity for miles along the hills, seeming to awaken the sleeping thunders of the woods. The buck merely shook his head at the report of the rifle and the whistling of the bullet, for



never before had he come in contact with man ; but the echoes of the hills awakened his distrust, and leaping forward, with his four legs drawn under his body, he fell at once into deep water, and began to swim towards the foot of the lake. Hurry shouted and dashed forward in chase, and for one or two minutes the water foamed around the pursuer and the pursued. The former was dashing past the point, when Deerslayer appeared on the sand, and signed to him to return.

" 'T was inconsiderate to pull a trigger afore we had reconn'itered the shore, and made sartain that no inimies harbored near it," said the latter, as his companion slowly and reluctantly complied. " This much I have l'arned from the Delawares, in the way of schooling and traditions, even though I've never yet been on a warpath. And moreover, venison can hardly be called in season now, and we do not want for food. They call me Deerslayer, I'll own ; and perhaps I deserve the name, in the way of understanding the creatur's habits, as well as for sartainty in the aim ; but they can't accuse me of killing an animal when there is no occasion for the meat or the skin. I may be a slayer, it's true, but I'm no slaughterer."

" 'T was an awful mistake to miss that buck !" exclaimed Hurry ; " I've not done so onhandy a thing since I was fifteen."

" Never lament it ; the creatur's death could have done neither of us any good, and might have done us harm. Them echoes are more awful in my ears than your mistake, Hurry ; for they sound like the voice of natur' calling out agin a wasteful and onthinking action."

" You'll hear plenty of such calls, if you tarry long

in this quarter of the world, lad," returned the other, laughing. "The echoes repeat pretty much all that is said or done on the Glimmerglass, in this calm summer weather. If a paddle falls, you hear of it sometimes agin and agin, as if the hills were mocking your clumsiness; and a laugh or a whistle comes out of them pines, when they're in the humor to speak, in a way to make you believe they can raally converse."

"So much the more reason for being prudent and silent. I do not think the inimy can have found their way into these hills yet, for I don't know what they are to gain by it; but all the Delawares tell me that, as courage is a warrior's first vartue, so is prudence his second. One such call, from the mountains, is enough to let a whole tribe into the secret of our arrival."

"If it does no other good, it will warn old Tom to put the pot over, and let him know visitors are at hand. Come, lad; get into the canoe, and we will hunt the ark up while there is yet day."

Deerslayer complied, and the canoe left the spot. Its head was turned diagonally across the lake, pointing towards the southeastern curvature of the sheet. In that direction the distance to the shore, or to the termination of the lake, on the course the two were now steering, was not quite a mile, and their progress being always swift, it was fast lessening, under the skillful but easy sweeps of the paddles. When about halfway across, a slight noise drew the eyes of the men towards the nearest land, and they saw that the buck was just emerging from the lake, and wading towards the beach. In a minute the noble animal shook the water from his flanks, gazed upwards at

the covering of trees, and, bounding against the bank, plunged into the forest.

"That creatur' goes off with gratitude in his heart," said Deerslayer, "for natur' tells him he has escaped a great danger. You ought to have some of the same feelin's, Hurry, to think your eye was n't truer—that your hand was onsteady, when no good could come of a shot that was intended onmeaningly, rather than in reason."

"I deny the eye and the hand," cried March, with some heat. "You've got a little character, down among the Delawares, there, for quickness and sartainty at a deer; but I should like to see you behind one of them pines, and a full-painted Mingo behind another, each with a cocked rifle and a-striving for the chance! Them's the situations, Nathaniel, to try the sight and the hand, for they begin with trying the narves. I never look upon killing a creatur' as an explite; but killing a savage is. The time will come to try your hand, now we've got to blows agin, and we shall soon know what a ven'son reputation can do in the field. I deny that either hand or eye was onsteady; it was all a miscalculation of the buck, which stood still when he ought to have kept in motion, and so I shot ahead of him."

"Have it your own way, Hurry; all I contend for is, that it's lucky. I dare say I shall not pull upon a human mortal as steadily, or with as light a heart, as I pull upon a deer."

"Who's talking of mortals, or of human beings at all, Deerslayer? I put the matter to you on the supposition of an Injin. I dare say any man would have his feelin's

when it got to be life or death, agin another human mortal ; but there would be no such scruples in regard to an Injin ; nothing but the chance of his hitting you, or the chance of your hitting him."

"I look upon the red-men to be quite as human as we are ourselves, Hurry. They have their gifts, and their religion, it's true ; but that makes no difference in the end."

"Now look here, Deerslayer," cried Hurry, excitedly, "you're a boy, and misled and misconsaited by Delaware arts, and missionary ignorance. But this is what I call reason. Here's three colors on 'arth : white, black, and red. White is the highest color, and therefore the best man ; black comes next, and is put to live in the neighborhood of the white man, as tolerable, and fit to be made use of ; and red comes last, which shows that those that made 'em never expected an Indian to be accounted as more than half human."

"God made us all, white, black, and red ; that I'll gladly admit, and, no doubt, had his own wise intentions in coloring us differently. Still I *do* say He made us all men, and, in the main, much the same in feelin's ; though I'll not deny that He gave each race its gifts. A white man's gifts are Christianized, while a redskin's are more for the wilderness. Thus, it would be a great offense for a white man to scalp the dead ; whereas it's a signal var-tue in an Indian."

"That depends on your inimy. As for scalping, or even skinning a savage, I look upon them pretty much the same as cutting off the ears of wolves for the bounty, or stripping a bear of its hide. And then you're out

significantly, as to taking the poll of a redskin in hand, seeing that the very colony has offered a bounty for the job; all the same as it pays for wolves' ears and crows' heads."

"Aye, and a bad business it is, Hurry. Even the Indians themselves cry shame on it, seeing it's agin a white man's gifts. I do not pretend that all that white men do is properly Christianized, and according to the lights given them, for then they would be what they *ought* to be, which we know they are not; but I will maintain that tradition, and use, and color, and laws, make such a difference in races as to amount to gifts. In a state of lawful warfare, such as we have lately got into, it is a duty to keep down all compassionate feelin's, so far as life goes, agin either; but when it comes to scalps, it's a very different matter."

"Just hearken to reason, if you please, Deerslayer, and tell me if the colony can make an onlawful law? A law can no more be onlawful, than truth can be a lie."

"That *sounds* reasonable; but it has a most onreasonable bearing, Hurry. Laws don't all come from the same quarter. God has given us his'n, and some come from the colony, and others come from the king and parliament. When the colony's laws, or even the king's laws, run agin the laws of God, they get to be onlawful, and ought not to be obeyed. I hold to a white man's respecting white laws, so long as they do not cross the track of a law comin' from a higher authority; and for a red-man to obey his own redskin usages, under the same privileges. But when it comes to a white man's taking redskin usages, I say he don't understand his own gifts. And in the end each will be judged according to his deeds and his gifts."

“You may do as you please, and you may account yourself as a redskin’s brother if you like ; but *I* hold ’em all to be animals ; with nothing human about ’em but cunning. *That* they have, I’ll allow ; but so has a fox, or even a bear. I’m older than you, and have lived longer in the woods — or, for that matter, have lived always there, and am not to be told what an Injin is or what he is not.”

Deerslayer too well knew the uselessness of attempting to convince such a being of anything against his prejudices, to feel a desire to undertake the task ; and he was not sorry when the approach of the canoe to the south-eastern curve of the lake gave a new direction to his ideas. They were now, indeed, quite near the place that March had pointed out for the position of the outlet, and both began to look for it with a curiosity that was increased by the expectation of finding the ark.

It may strike the reader as a little singular, that the place where a stream of any size passed through banks that had an elevation of some twenty feet should be a matter of doubt with men who could not now have been more than two hundred yards distant from the precise spot. It will be recollected, however, that the trees and bushes here, as elsewhere, fairly overhung the water, making such a fringe to the lake as to conceal any little variations from its general outline.

“I’ve not been down at this end of the lake these two summers,” said Hurry, standing up in the canoe, the better to look about him. “Aye, there’s the rock, showing its chin above the water, and I know that the river begins in its neighborhood.”

The men now plied the paddles again, and they were

presently within a few yards of the rock, floating towards it, though their efforts were suspended. This rock was not large, being merely some five or six feet high, only half of which elevation rose above the lake. The incessant washing of the water for centuries had so rounded its summit, that it resembled a large beehive in shape, its form being more than usually regular and even. Hurry remarked, as they floated slowly past, that this rock was well known to all the Indians in that part of the country, and that they were in the practice of using it as a mark to designate the place of meeting, when separated by their hunts and marches.

“And here is the river, Deerslayer,” he continued, “though so shut in by trees and bushes as to look more like an ambush than the outlet of such a sheet as the Glimmerglass.”

Hurry had not badly described the place, which did truly seem to be a stream lying in ambush. The high banks might have been a hundred feet asunder; but, on the western side, a small bit of low land extended so far forward as to diminish the breadth of the stream to half that width. As the bushes hung in the water beneath, and pines that had the stature of church-steeple rose in tall columns above, all inclining towards the light until their branches intermingled, the eye, at a little distance, could not easily detect any opening in the shore, to mark the egress of the water. In the forest above, no traces of this outlet were to be seen from the lake, the whole presenting the same connected and seemingly interminable carpet of leaves. As the canoe slowly advanced, sucked in by the current, it entered beneath an arch of trees,

through which the light from the heavens struggled by casual openings, faintly relieving the gloom beneath.

"This is a nat'ral ambush," half whispered Hurry, as if he felt that the place was devoted to secrecy and watchfulness; "depend on it, old Tom has burrowed with the ark somewhere in this quarter. We will drop down with the current a short distance, and ferret him out."

"This seems no place for a vessel of any size," returned the other; "it appears to me that we shall have hardly room enough for the canoe."

Hurry laughed at the suggestion, and, as it soon appeared, with reason; for the fringe of bushes immediately on the shore of the lake was no sooner passed, than the adventurers found themselves in a narrow stream, of a sufficient depth of limpid water, with a strong current, and a canopy of leaves upheld by arches composed of the limbs of hoary trees. Bushes lined the shores, as usual, but they left sufficient space between them to admit the passage of anything that did not exceed twenty feet in width, and to allow of a perspective ahead of eight or ten times that distance.

Neither of our two adventurers used his paddle, except to keep the light bark in the centre of the current, but both watched each turning of the stream, of which there were two or three within the first hundred yards, with jealous vigilance. Turn after turn, however, was passed, and the canoe had dropped down with the current some little distance, when Hurry caught a bush, and arrested its movement so suddenly and silently as to denote some unusual motive for the act. Deerslayer laid his hand on the stock of his rifle as soon as he noted this proceeding,



but it was quite as much with a hunter's habit as from any feeling of alarm.

"There the old fellow is!" whispered Hurry, pointing with a finger, and laughing heartily, though he carefully avoided making a noise, "rattling it away, just as I supposed; up to his knees in the mud and water, looking to the traps and the bait. But for the life of me I can see nothing of the ark; though I'll bet every skin I take this season, Jude is n't trusting her pretty little feet in the neighborhood of that black mud. The gal's more likely to be braiding her hair by the side of some spring, where she can see her own good looks, and collect scornful feelings agin us men."

"You overjudge young women — yes, you do, Hurry — who as often bethink them of their failings as they do of their perfections. I dare to say this Judith, now, is no such admirer of herself, and no such scorner of our sex as you seem to think; and that she is quite as likely to be sarving her father in the house, wherever that may be, as he is to be sarving her among the traps."

"It's a pleasure to hear truth from a man's tongue, if it be only once in a girl's life," cried a pleasant, rich, and yet soft female voice, so near the canoe as to make both the listeners start. "As for you, Master Hurry, fair words are so apt to choke you, that I no longer expect to hear them from your mouth; the last you uttered sticking in your throat, and coming near to death. But I'm glad to see you keep better society than formerly, and that they who know how to esteem and treat women are not ashamed to journey in your company."

As this was said, a singularly handsome and youthful

female face was thrust through an opening in the leaves, within reach of Deerslayer's paddle. Its owner smiled graciously on the young man; and the frown that she cast on Hurry, though simulated and pettish, had the effect to render her beauty more striking, by exhibiting the play of an expressive but capricious countenance, — one that seemed to change from the soft to the severe, the mirthful to the reproving, with facility and indifference.

A second look explained the nature of the surprise. Unwittingly, the men had dropped alongside of the ark, which had been purposely concealed in bushes cut and arranged for the purpose; and Judith Hutter had merely pushed aside the leaves that lay before a window, in order to show her face, and speak to them.

#### CHAPTER IV

The ark, as the floating habitation of the Hutterers was generally called, was a very simple contrivance. A large flat, or scow, composed the buoyant part of the vessel; and in its centre, occupying the whole of its breadth and about two thirds of its length, stood a low fabric, resembling the castle in construction, though made of materials so light as barely to be bullet-proof. As the sides of the scow were a little higher than usual, and the interior of the cabin had no more elevation than was necessary for comfort, this unusual addition had neither a very clumsy nor a very obtrusive appearance. It was, in short, little more than a modern canal-boat, though more rudely constructed, of greater breadth than common, and bearing about it the signs of the wilderness, in its bark-covered

posts and roof. The scow, however, had been put together with some skill, being comparatively light for its strength, and sufficiently manageable. The cabin was divided into two apartments, one of which served for a parlor, and the sleeping-room of the father, and the other was appropriated to the uses of the daughters. A very simple arrangement sufficed for the kitchen, which was in one end of the scow; and removed from the cabin, standing in the open air; the ark being altogether a summer habitation.

As soon as the canoe could be got round to the proper opening, Hurry leaped on board, and in a minute was closely engaged in a gay discourse with Judith, apparently forgetful of the existence of all the rest of the world. Meanwhile Deerslayer entered the ark with a slow step, examining every arrangement with curious and scrutinizing eyes. Step by step did he look into the construction of this singular abode, and more than once his commendation escaped him in audible comments. The course of his investigation brought him ere long to the end of the scow opposite to that where he had left Hurry and Judith. Here he found the other sister, employed on some coarse needlework, seated beneath the leafy canopy of the cover.

Deerslayer had gathered from Hurry's remarks that Hetty was considered to have less intellect than ordinarily falls to the share of human beings; and his education among Indians had taught him to treat those who were thus afflicted by Providence with more than common tenderness. Nor was there anything in Hetty Hutter's appearance, as so often happens, to weaken the interest her situation excited. An idiot she could not properly be

termed, her mind being just enough enfeebled to lose most of those traits that are connected with the more artful qualities, and to retain its ingenuousness and love of truth. It had often been remarked of this girl, by the few who had seen her and who possessed sufficient knowledge to discriminate, that her perception of the right seemed almost intuitive, while her aversion to the wrong formed so distinctive a feature of her mind as to surround her with an atmosphere of pure morality; peculiarities that are not unfrequent with persons who are termed feeble-minded; as if God had forbidden the evil spirits to invade a precinct so defenseless, with the benign purpose of extending a direct protection to those who had been left without the usual aids of humanity. Her person, too, was agreeable, having a strong resemblance to that of her sister, of which it was a subdued and humble copy. If it had none of the brilliancy of Judith's, the calm, quiet, almost holy expression of her meek countenance seldom failed to win on the observer; and few noted it long that did not begin to feel a deep and lasting interest in the girl.

"You are Hetty Hutter," said Deerslayer gently. "Hurry Harry has told me of you."

"Yes, I'm Hetty Hutter," returned the girl, in a low, sweet voice,—"Judith Hutter's sister, and Thomas Hutter's youngest daughter. What's *your* name?"

"That's a question more easily asked than it is answered, young woman; seeing that I'm so young, and yet have borne more names than some of the greatest chiefs in all America."

"But you've *got* a name—you don't throw away one name before you come honestly by another?"

"I hope not, gal — I hope not. My names have come nat'rally ; and I suppose the one I bear now will be of no great lasting, since the Delawares seldom settle on a man's raal title, until such time as he has an opportunity of showing his true natur', in the council or on the warpath ; which has never behappened me ; seeing, firstly, because I'm not born a redskin, and have no right to sit in *their* councilings, and am much too humble to be called on for opinions from the great of my own color ; and, secondly, because this is the first war that has befallen in my time, and no inimy has yet inroaded far enough into the colony to be reached by an arm even longer than mine."

"Tell me all your names," added Hetty, looking up at him artlessly, "and, maybe, I'll tell you your character."

"There is some truth in that, I'll not deny, though it often fails. Well, I've no objection, and you shall hear them all. In the first place, then, I'm Christian, and white-born, like yourself, and my parents had a name that came down from father to son, as is a part of their gifts. My father was called Bumpo ; and I was named after him, of course, the given name being Nathaniel, or Natty, as most people saw fit to tarm it."

"Yes, yes — Natty — and Hetty" — interrupted the girl quickly, and looking up from her work again, with a smile : "you are Natty, and I'm Hetty — though you are Bumpo, and I'm Hutter. Bumpo is n't as pretty as Hutter, is it?"

"Why, that's as people fancy. Bumpo has no lofty sound, I admit ; and yet men have bumped through the world with it. I did not go by this name, hows'ever, very long ; for the Delawares soon found out, or thought they

found out, that I was not given to lying, and they called me, firstly, Straight-tongue."

"That's a *good* name," interrupted Hetty, earnestly, and in a positive manner; "don't tell me there's no virtue in names!"

"I do not say *that*, for perhaps I deserved to be so called, lies being no favorites with me, as they are with some. After a while they found out that I was quick of foot, and then they called me 'The Pigeon'; which, you know, has a swift wing, and flies in a direct line."

"*That* was a *pretty* name!" exclaimed Hetty; "pigeons are pretty birds!"

"Then from carrying messages, and striking blind trails, I got at last to following the hunters, when it was thought I was quicker and surer at finding the game than most lads, and then they called me the 'Lap-ear'; as, they said, I partook of the sagacity of a hound."

"That's not so pretty," answered Hetty; "I hope you did n't keep *that* name long."

"Not after I was rich enough to buy a rifle," returned the other, betraying a little pride through his usually quiet and subdued manner; "*then* it was seen I could keep a wigwam in ven'son; and in time I got the name of 'Deerslayer,' which is that I now bear; homely as some will think it, who set more value on the scalp of a fellow-mortal than on the horns of a buck."

"Well, Deerslayer, I'm not one of them," answered Hetty, simply; "Judith likes soldiers, and flary coats, and fine feathers; but they make me shudder, for their business is to kill their fellow-creatures. I like your calling better; and your last name is a very good one."

An interruption was put to this conversation by the sudden appearance of the canoe of the ark's owner. Hutter's reception of Hurry Harry was such as to denote pleasure, mingled with a little disappointment at his not having made his appearance some days sooner.

"I looked for you last week," he said, in a half-grumbling, half-welcoming manner; "and was disappointed uncommonly that you did n't arrive. There came a runner through, to warn all the trappers and hunters that the colony and the Canadas were again in trouble; and I felt lonesome, up in these mountains, with three scalps to see to, and only one pair of hands to protect them."

"That's reasonable," returned March; "and 't was feeling like a parent. No doubt, if I had two such darters as Judith and Hetty, my exper'ence would tell the same story, though in gin'ral I am just as well satisfied with having the nearest neighbor fifty miles off, as when he is within call."

"Notwithstanding, you did n't choose to come into the wilderness alone, now you knew that the Canada savages are likely to be stirring," returned Hutter, giving a sort of distrustful, and at the same time inquiring glance at Deerslayer.

"Why should I? They say a bad companion, on a journey, helps to shorten the path; and this young man I account to be a reasonably good one. This is Deerslayer, old Tom, a noted hunter among the Delawares, Christian-born, and Christian-edicated, too. Should we have occasion to defend our traps, and the territory, he'll be useful in feeding us all; for he's a reg'lar dealer in ven'son."

"Young man, you are welcome," growled Tom, thrusting a hard, bony hand towards the youth, as a pledge of his sincerity; "in such times, a white face is a friend's, and I count on you as a support. Children sometimes make a stout heart feeble, and these two daughters of mine give me more concern than all my traps, and skins, and rights in the country."

"That's nat'ral!" cried Hurry. "Yes, Deerslayer, you and I don't know it yet by experience; but, on the whole, I consider that as nat'ral. If we *had* darters, it's more than probable we should have some such feelin's, and I honor the man that owns 'em. As for Judith, old man, I enlist at once as her soldier, and here is Deerslayer to help you to take care of Hetty."

"Many thanks to you, Master March," returned the beauty, in a full, rich voice, "many thanks to you; but Judith Hutter has the spirit and the experience that will make her depend more on herself than on good-looking rovers like you. Should there be need to face the savages, do you land with my father, instead of burrowing in the huts, under the show of defending us females, and —"

"Girl — girl," interrupted the father, "quiet that glib tongue of thine, and hear the truth. There are savages on the lake shore already, and no man can say how near to us they may be at this very moment, or when we may hear more from them!"

"If this be true, Master Hutter," said Hurry, whose change of countenance denoted how serious he deemed the information, "your ark is in a most misfortunate position, for, though the cover did deceive Deerslayer and myself,



it would hardly be overlooked by a full-blooded Injin, who was out seriously in s'arch of scalps!"

"I think as you do, Hurry, and wish, with all my heart, we lay anywhere else, at this moment, than in this narrow, crooked stream, which has many advantages to hide in, but which is almost fatal to them that are discovered. The savages are near us, moreover, and the difficulty is, to get out of the river without being shot down like deer standing at a lick!"

"Are you sartain, Master Hutter, that the redskins you dread are raal Canadas?" asked Deerslayer, in a modest but earnest manner. "Have you seen any, and can you describe their paint?"

"I have fallen in with the signs of their being in the neighborhood, but have seen none of 'em. I was down stream a mile or so, looking to my traps, when I struck a fresh trail, crossing the corner of a swamp, and moving northward. The man had not passed an hour; and I know'd it for an Indian footstep, by the size of the foot, and the intoe, even before I found a worn moccasin, which its owner had dropped as useless. For that matter, I found the spot where he halted to make a new one, which was only a few yards from the place where he had dropped the old one."

"That does n't look much like a redskin on the war-path!" returned the other, shaking his head. "An exper'enced warrior, at least, would have burned, or buried, or sunk in the river such signs of his passage; and your trail is, quite likely, a peaceable trail. But the moccasin may greatly relieve my mind, if you bethought you of bringing it off. I've come here to meet a young chief myself; and

his course would be much in the direction you've mentioned. The trail may have been his'n."

"Hurry Harry, you're well acquainted with this young man, I hope, who has meetings with savages in a part of the country where he has never been before?" demanded Hutter, in a tone and in a manner that sufficiently indicated the motive of the question. "Treachery is an Indian virtue; and the whites, that live much in their tribes, soon catch their ways and practices."

"True — true as the Gospel, old Tom; but not personable to Deerslayer, who's a young man of truth, if he has no other ricommend. I'll answer for his *honesty*, whatever I may do for his valor in battle."

"I should like to know his errand in this strange quarter of the country."

"That is soon told, Master Hutter," said the young man calmly. "I think, moreover, you've a *right* to ask it. The father of two such darters, who occupies a lake, after your fashion, has a right to inquire into a stranger's business in his neighborhood, especially in times as serious as these. So here it is, and soon and honestly told. I'm a young man, and, as yet, have never been on a warpath; but no sooner did the news come among the Delawares that wampum and a hatchet were about to be sent in to the tribe, than they wished me to go out among the people of my own color, and get the exact state of things for 'em. This I did, and, after delivering my talk to the chiefs, on my return I met an officer of the crown on the Schoharie, who had moneys to send to some of the friendly tribes that live further west. This was thought a good occasion for Chingachgook, a young

chief who had never struck a foe, and myself, to go on our first warpath in company; and an app'ntment was made for us, by an old Delaware, to meet at the rock near the foot of this lake. I'll not deny that Chingachgook has *another* object in view, but it has no consarn with any here, and is his secret, and not mine; therefore I'll say no more about it. Chingachgook is to meet me at the rock an hour afore sunset to-morrow evening, after which we shall go our way together, molesting none but the king's inimies, who are lawfully our own. Knowing Hurry of old, who once trapped in our hunting-grounds, and falling in with him on the Schoharie, just as he was on the p'int of starting for his summer ha'nts, we agreed to journey in company; not so much from fear of the Min-gos as from good fellowship, and, as he says, to shorten a long road."

"And you think the trail I saw may have been that of your friend, ahead of his time?" said Hutter.

"That's my idee; which may be wrong, but which may be right. If I saw the moccasin, however, I could tell in a minute whether it is made in the Delaware fashion or not."

"Here it is, then," said the quick-witted Judith, who had already gone to the canoe in quest of it; "tell us what it says; friend or enemy. You look honest; and I believe all you say, whatever father may think."

"That's the way with you, Jude; forever finding out friends, where I distrust foes," grumbled Tom; "but, speak out, young man, and tell us what you think of the moccasin."

"That's not Delaware-made," returned Deerslayer,

examining the worn and rejected covering for the foot with a cautious eye; "I'm too young on a warpath to be positive, but I should say that moccasin has a northern look, and comes from beyond the great lakes."

"If such is the case, we ought not to lie here a minute longer than is necessary," said Hutter, glancing through the leaves of his cover, as if he already distrusted the presence of an enemy on the opposite shore of the narrow and sinuous stream. "It wants but an hour or so of night, and to move in the dark will be impossible, without making a noise that would betray us. Did you hear the echo of a piece in the mountains, half-an-hour since?"

"Yes, old man, and heard the piece itself," answered Hurry, who now felt the indiscretion of which he had been guilty, "for the last was fired from my own shoulder."

"I feared it came from the French Indians; still it may put them on the lookout, and be a means of discovering us. You did wrong to fire in war time, unless there was good occasion."

"So I begin to think myself, Uncle Tom; and yet, if a man can't trust himself to let off his rifle in a wilderness that is a thousand miles square, lest some inimy should hear it, where's the use in carrying one?"

Hutter now held a long consultation with his two guests, in which the parties came to a true understanding of their situation. He explained the difficulty that would exist in attempting to get the ark out of so swift and narrow a stream, in the dark, without making a noise that could not fail to attract Indian ears.

“I never drop down into this cover, which is handy to my traps, and safer than the lake, from curious eyes, without providing the means of getting out agin,” he continued; “and that is easier done by a pull than a push. My anchor is now lying above the suction, in the open lake; and here is a line, you see, to haul us up to it. Without some such help, a single pair of hands would make heavy work in forcing a scow like this up stream. I have a sort of a crab, too, that lightens the pull, on occasion. Jude can use the oar astarn as well as myself; and when we fear no enemy, to get out of the river gives us but little trouble.”

“Well, old Tom,” cried Hurry, “if we are to move, the sooner we make a beginning, the sooner we shall know whether we are to have our scalps for nightcaps, or not.”

The three men now set about their preparations to move the ark. The slight fastenings were quickly loosened; and, by hauling on the line, the heavy craft slowly emerged from the cover. It was no sooner free from the incumbrance of the branches, than it swung into the stream, — sheering quite close to the western shore, by the force of the current. Not a soul on board heard the rustling of the branches, as the cabin came against the bushes and trees of the western bank, without a feeling of uneasiness; for no one knew at what moment, or in what place, a secret and murderous enemy might unmask himself. Perhaps the gloomy light that still struggled through the impending canopy of leaves, or found its way through the narrow, ribbon-like opening, which seemed to mark in the air above the course of the river that flowed beneath, aided in augmenting the appearance of the danger; for it was little more than sufficient

to render objects visible, without giving up all their outlines at a glance.

No interruption followed the movement, however, and, as the men continued to haul on the line, the ark passed steadily ahead, the great breadth of the scow preventing its sinking into the water, and from offering much resistance to the progress of the swift element beneath its bottom. Hutter, too, had adopted a precaution suggested by experience, which might have done credit to a seaman, and which completely prevented any of the annoyances and obstacles which otherwise would have attended the short turns of the river. As the ark descended, heavy stones, attached to the line, were dropped in the centre of the stream, forming local anchors, each of which was kept from dragging by the assistance of those above it, until the uppermost of all was reached, which got its "backing" from the anchor that lay well out in the lake. In consequence of this expedient, the ark floated clear of the incumbrances of the shore, against which it would otherwise have been unavoidably hauled at every turn, producing embarrassments that Hutter, single-handed, would have found it very difficult to overcome.

At every turn in the stream a stone was raised from the bottom, when the direction of the scow changed to one that pointed towards the stone that lay above. In this manner did Hutter move forward with fair rapidity, — occasionally urging his friends, in a low and guarded voice, to increase their exertions, and then, as occasions offered, warning them against efforts that might, at particular moments, endanger all by too much zeal. In spite of their long familiarity with the woods, the gloomy character of

the shaded river added to the uneasiness that each felt ; and when the ark reached the first bend in the Susquehannah, and the eye caught a glimpse of the broader expanse of the lake, all felt a relief that perhaps none would have been willing to confess. Here the last stone was raised from the bottom, and the line led directly towards the grapnel, which, as Hutter had explained, was dropped above the suction of the current.

“ Thank God ! ” ejaculated Hurry, “ *there* is daylight, and we shall soon have a chance of *seeing* our inimies, if we are to *feel* ’em.”

“ That is more than you or any man can say,” growled Hutter. “ There is no spot so likely to harbor a party as the shore around the outlet ; and the moment we clear these trees and get into open water will be the most trying time, since it will leave the enemy a cover, while it puts us out of one. Judith, girl, do you and Hetty leave the oar to take care of itself, and go within the cabin ; and be mindful not to show your faces at a window ; for they who will look at them won’t stop to praise their beauty. And now, Hurry, we’ll step into this outer room ourselves, and haul through the door, where we shall all be safe, from a surprise, at least. Friend Deerslayer, as the current is lighter, and the line has all the strain on it that is prudent, do you keep moving from window to window, taking care not to let your head be seen, if you set any value on life. No one knows when or where we shall hear from our neighbors.”

As Deerslayer took his stand at a window, the ark was just passing through the narrowest part of the stream, a point where the water first entered what was properly

termed the river, and where the trees fairly interlocked overhead. It had reached the last curve of this leafy entrance when, having examined all that could be seen of the eastern bank of the river, he crossed the room to look from the opposite window, at the western. His arrival at this aperture was most opportune, for he had no sooner placed his eye at a crack than a sight met his eye that might well have alarmed a sentinel. At this point a sapling overhung the water in nearly a half circle, and on this branch no less than six Indians had already appeared, others standing ready to follow them as they left room; each evidently bent on running out on the trunk, and dropping on the roof of the ark as it passed beneath. This would have been an exploit of no great difficulty, for the curve of the tree was such as to make the fall trifling. When Deerslayer first saw this party, his knowledge of Indian habits told him at once that they were all in war-paint, and belonged to a hostile tribe.

"Pull, Hurry," he cried; "pull for your life! Pull, man, pull!"

This call was made to one that the young man knew had the strength of a giant. It was so earnest that both Hutter and March felt it was not idly given, and they applied all their force to the line. The scow redoubled its motion, and seemed to glide from under the tree as if conscious of the danger that was impending overhead. Perceiving that they were discovered, the Indians uttered a fearful war-whoop, and running forward on the tree, leaped desperately toward their fancied prize. There were six on the tree, and each made the effort. All but their leader fell into the river more or less distant from the



ark, when they came to their turn at the leaping-place. The chief, however, who was farthest out on the tree, and therefore first to leap, struck the scow just within the stern. For a moment he lay, slightly stunned by the fall, and in this brief interval, Judith rushed from the cabin, and, throwing all her strength into the effort, she pushed the intruder over the edge of the scow headlong into the river. All this occupied less than a minute, when the arm of Deerslayer was thrown around her waist, and she was dragged swiftly within the protection of the cabin. This retreat was not effected too soon. Scarcely were the two in safety, when the forest was filled with yells, and bullets began to patter against the logs.

The ark being in swift motion all this while, it was already beyond danger of pursuit. Hutter and March now got out two small sweeps, and covered by the cabin, they soon urged it far enough from the shore to be entirely safe from exposure to rifle bullets, the only means which, without a boat, their enemies had of injuring them.

#### CHAPTER V

As soon as they were fairly out in the open lake a consultation took place in the forward part of the scow. All were now convinced that enemies were, in considerable force, on the shores of the lake, and that no practicable means of accomplishing their own destruction would be neglected. As a matter of course, Hutter felt these truths the deepest, his daughters having an habitual reliance on his resources, and knowing too little to appreciate fully all the risks they ran; while his male companions were at liberty to quit him at any moment they saw fit.

"We've a great advantage over the Iroquois, or the enemy, whoever they are, in being afloat," he began. "There's not a canoe on the lake that I don't know where it's hid; and now yours is here, Hurry, there are but three more on the land, and they're so snug in hollow logs that I don't believe the Indians could find them, let them try ever so long."

"There's no telling that — no one can say that," put in Deerslayer; "a hound is not more certain on the scent than a redskin, when he expects to get anything by it. Let this party see scalps afore 'em, or plunder, and 't will be a tight log that hides a canoe from their eyes."

"You're right, Deerslayer," cried Harry March; "you're downright Gospel in this matter, and I rejoice that my bunch of bark is safe enough here, within reach of my arm. I calculate they'll be at all the rest of the canoes afore to-morrow night, if they are in real 'arnest to smoke you out, old Tom, and we may as well overhaul our paddles for a pull."

Hutter made no immediate reply. He looked about him in silence for quite a minute, examining the sky, the lake, and the belt of forest which inclosed it like one consulting their signs. Nor did he find any alarming symptoms. The boundless woods were sleeping in the deep repose of nature, the heavens were placid, but still luminous with the light of the retreating sun, while the lake looked more lovely and calm than it had before done that day.

"Judith," called out the father, when he had taken this close but short survey of the omens, "night is at hand; find our friends food; a long march gives a sharp appetite."

"We're not starving, Master Hutter," March observed, "for we filled up just as we reached the lake, and for one, I prefer the company of Jude even to her supper."

"Natur' is natur'," objected Hutter, "and must be fed. Judith, see to the meal, and take your sister to help you. I've a little discourse to hold with you, friends," he continued, as soon as his daughters were out of hearing, "and wish the girls away. You see my situation, and I should like to hear your opinions concerning what is best to be done. Three times have I been burnt out already, but that was on the shore; and I've considered myself as pretty safe ever since I got the castle built, and the ark afloat. My other accidents, however, happened in peaceable times, being nothing more than such flurries as a man must meet with, in the woods; but this matter looks serious, and your ideas would greatly relieve my mind."

"It's my notion, old Tom, that you, and your huts, and your traps, and your whole possessions, hereaway, are in desperate jippardy," returned the matter-of-fact Hurry, who saw no use in concealment. "Accordin' to my ideas of valie, they're altogether not worth half as much to-day as they was yesterday, nor would I give more for 'em, taking the pay in skins."

"I see, Harry March, I can only count on you as a fair-weather friend; and I suppose that your companion will be of the same way of thinking," returned the other, with a slight show of pride, that was not altogether without dignity; "well, I must depend on Providence, which will not turn a deaf ear, perhaps, to a father's prayers."

"If you've understood Hurry, here, to mean that he intends to desart you," said Deerslayer, with an earnest

simplicity that gave double assurance of its truth, "I *think* you do him injustice, as I *know* you do me, in supposing I would follow him was he so ontrue-hearted as to leave a family of his own color in such a strait as this. I've come on this lake, Master Hutter, to rende'vous a fri'nd, and I only wish he was here himself, as I make no doubt he will be at sunset to-morrow, when you'd have another rifle to aid you; an inexper'enced one, I'll allow, like my own, but one that has proved true so often agin the game, big and little, that I'll answer for its sarvice agin mortals."

"May I depend on *you* to stand by me and my daughters, then, Deerslayer?" demanded the old man.

"That may you, Floating Tom, if that's your name; in this strait you may count on me, through all advarsities; and I think Hurry does discredit to his natur' and wishes, if you can't count on him."

"Not he," cried Judith, thrusting her handsome face out of the door; "his nature is hurry, as well as his name, and he'll hurry off, as soon as he thinks his fine figure in danger. Neither 'old Tom,' nor his 'gals,' will depend much on Master March, now they know him, but *you* they will rely on, Deerslayer; for your honest face and honest heart tell us that what you promise you will perform."

This was said, as much, perhaps, in affected scorn for Hurry, as in sincerity. Still, it was not said without feeling.

"Leave us, Judith," Hutter ordered sternly, before either of the young men could reply; "leave us; and do not return until you come with the venison and fish. The girl has been spoilt by the flattery of the officers, who

sometimes find their way up here, Master March, and you 'll not think any harm of her silly words."

"You never said truer syllable, old Tom," retorted Hurry, who smarted under Judith's observations; "the devil-tongued youngsters of the garrison have proved her undoing! I scarce know Jude any longer. But no matter; Deerslayer has not misconceived me, when he told you I should be found at my post. I 'll not quit *you*, Uncle Tom, just now, whatever may be my feelin's and intentions respecting your eldest darter."

Hurry had a respectable reputation for prowess among his associates, and Hutter heard this pledge with a satisfaction that was not concealed. Even the great personal strength of such an aid became of moment, in moving the ark, as well as in the species of hand-to-hand conflicts that were not unfrequent in the woods. A minute before, Hutter would have been well content to compromise his danger, by entering into a compact to act only on the defensive; but no sooner did he feel some security on this point, than the restlessness of man induced him to think of the means of carrying the war into the enemy's country.

"High prices are offered for scalps on both sides," he observed, with a grim smile. "It is n't right, perhaps, to take gold for human blood; and yet, when mankind is busy in killing one another, there can be no great harm in adding a little bit of skin to the plunder. What's your sentiments, Hurry, touching these p'int's?"

"That you've made a vast mistake, old man, in calling savage blood human blood, at all. I think no more of a redskin's scalp than I do of a pair of wolf's ears; and would just as lief finger money for the one as for the

other. With *white* people 't is different, for they've a nat'ral aversion to being scalped; whereas your Indian shaves his head in readiness for the knife, and leaves a lock of hair by way of braggadocio, that one can lay hold of in the bargain."

"That's manly, however, and I felt from the first that we had only to get you on our side, to have you heart and hand," returned Tom, losing all his reserve, as he gained a renewed confidence in the disposition of his companion. "Something more may turn up from this inroad of the redskins than they bargained for. Deerslayer, I conclude you're of Hurry's way of thinking, and look upon money 'arned in this way as being as likely to pass as money 'arned in trapping or hunting."

"I've no such feelin', nor any wish to harbor it, not I," returned the other. "My gifts are not scalpers' gifts, but such as belong to my religion and color. I'll stand by you, old man, in the ark or in the castle, the canoe or the woods, but I'll not unhumanize my natur' by falling into ways that God intended for another race. If you and Hurry have got any thoughts that lean towards the colony's gold, go by yourselves in s'arch of it, and leave the females to my care."

"The young man is right, Hurry," replied Tom; "and we can leave the children in his care. Now, my idea is just this; and I think you'll agree that it is rational and correct. There's a large party of these savages on the shore, and, though I did n't tell it before the girls, for they're womanish, and apt to be troublesome when anything like real work is to be done, there's women among 'em. This I know from moccasin prints; and 't is likely they are

hunters, after all, who have been out so long that they know nothing of the war, or of the bounties."

"In which case, old Tom, why was their first salute an attempt to cut all our throats?"

"We don't know that their design was so bloody. It's natural and easy for an Indian to fall into ambushes and surprises, — and, no doubt, they wished to get on board the ark first, and to make their conditions afterwards. That a disap'inted savage should fire at us is in rule; and I think nothing of that. Besides, how often have they burned me out, and robbed my traps — aye, and pulled trigger on me, in the most peaceful times?"

"The blackguards will do such things, I must allow; and we pay 'em off pretty much in their own coin. Women would not be on the warpath, sartainly; and, so far, there's reason in your idee."

"Nor would a hunter be in his war-paint," returned Deerslayer. "I saw the Mingos, and *know* that they are out on the trail of mortal men; and not for beaver or deer."

"There you have it agin, old fellow," said Hurry. "In the way of an eye, now, I'd as soon trust this young man, as trust the oldest settler in the colony; if he says paint, why paint it was."

"Then a hunting-party and a war-party have met, for women must have been with 'em. It's only a few days since the runner went through with the tidings of the troubles; and it may be that warriors have come out to call in their women and children, to get an early blow."

"That would stand the courts, and is just the truth," cried Hurry; "you've got it now, old Tom, and I should like to hear what you mean to make out of it."

"The bounty," returned the other, in a cool, sullen manner. "If there's women, there's children; and big and little have scalps; the colony pays for all alike."

"More shame to it, that it should do so," interrupted Deerslayer; "more shame to it, that it don't understand its gifts, and pay greater attention to the will of God."

"You must fight a man with his own we'pons, Deerslayer," shouted Hurry; "if he's fierce, you must be fiercer, and there's an end of it."

The disdainful manner of Hurry prevented a reply, and he and the old man resumed the discussion of their plans in a more quiet and confidential manner. This confidence lasted until Judith appeared, bearing the simple but savory supper, of which all partook with hearty satisfaction.

An hour later the scene had greatly changed. The lake was still placid and glassy, but the gloom of the hour had succeeded to the soft twilight of a summer evening, and all within the dark setting of the woods lay in the quiet repose of night. The forests gave up no song, or cry, or even murmur, but looked down from the hills on the lovely basin they encircled, in solemn stillness; and the only sound that was audible was the regular dip of the sweeps, at which Hurry and Deerslayer lazily pushed, impelling the ark towards the castle. Hutter had withdrawn to the stern of the scow, in order to steer, but, finding that the young men kept even strokes and held the desired course by their own skill, he permitted the oar to drag in the water, took a seat on the end of the vessel and lighted his pipe. He had not been thus placed many minutes, ere Hetty came out of the cabin, and placed herself



at his feet, on a little bench that she brought with her. The old man welcomed her by an affectionate gesture, placing his hand kindly on her head; an act that she received in meek silence.

After a pause of several minutes, Hetty began to sing. Her voice was low and tremulous, but it was earnest and solemn. The words and the time were of the simplest form, the first being a hymn that she had been taught by her mother, and the last one of those natural melodies that find favor with all classes, in every age, coming from and being addressed to the feelings. Hutter never listened to this simple strain without finding his heart and manner softened; facts that his daughter well knew, and by which she had often profited, through the sort of holy instinct that enlightens the weak of mind, more especially in their aims toward good.

Hetty's low sweet tones had not been raised many moments, when the dip of the oars ceased, and the holy strain arose singly on the breathing silence of the wilderness. As if she gathered courage with the theme, her powers appeared to increase as she proceeded; and though nothing vulgar or noisy mingled in her melody, its strength and melancholy tenderness grew on the ear, until the air was filled with this simple homage of a soul that seemed almost spotless. That the men forward were not indifferent to this touching interruption was proved by their inaction; nor did their oars again dip until the last of the sweet sounds had actually died among the remarkable shores, which, at that witching hour, would waft even the lowest modulations of the human voice more than a mile. Hutter was much affected; for rude as he was by early

habits, and even ruthless as he had got to be by long exposure to the practices of the wilderness, his nature was of that fearful mixture of good and evil that so generally enters into the moral composition of man.

"You are sad to-night, child," said the father, who always spoke gently to this afflicted child of his, "we have just escaped from enemies, and ought rather to rejoice."

"You can never do it, father!" said Hetty, in a low, remonstrating manner, taking his hard, knotty hand into both her own; "you have talked long with Harry March; but neither of you have the heart to do it!"

"This is going beyond your means, foolish child; you must have been naughty enough to have listened, or you could know nothing of our talk."

"Why should you and Hurry kill people — especially women and children?"

"Peace, girl, peace; we are at war, and we kill our enemies in war lest they should kill us. One side or the other must begin; and they that begin first are most apt to get the victory. You know nothing about these things, poor Hetty, and had best say nothing."

"*Judith* says it is wrong, father; and *Judith* has sense, though I have none."

"*Jude* understands better than to talk to me of these matters; for she has sense, as you say, and knows I'll not bear it. Which would you prefer, Hetty; to have your own scalp taken, and sold to the French, or that we should kill our enemies, and keep them from harming us?"

"That's not it, father! Don't kill them, nor let them kill us. Sell your skins, and get more, if you can; but don't sell human blood."

“Come, come, child; let us talk of matters you understand. Your heart is good, child, and fitter for the settlements than for the woods; while your reason is fitter for the woods than for the settlements.”

“Why has Judith more reason than I, father?”

“Heaven help thee, child: this is more than I can answer. God gives sense, and appearance, and all these things; and he grants them as he seeth fit. Dost thou wish for more sense?”

“Not I. The little I have troubles me; for when I think the hardest, then I feel the unhappiest. I don’t believe thinking is good for me, though I do wish I was as handsome as Judith!”

“Why so, poor child? Thy sister’s beauty may cause her trouble, as it caused her mother before her. It’s no advantage, Hetty, to be so marked for anything as to become an object of envy, or to be sought after more than others.”

“Mother was good, if she *was* handsome,” returned the girl, the tears starting to her eyes, as usually happened when she adverted to her deceased parent.

Old Hutter, if not equally affected, was moody and silent at this allusion to his wife. He continued smoking, without appearing disposed to make any answer, until his simple-minded daughter repeated her remark, in a way to show that she felt uneasiness lest he might be inclined to deny her assertion. Then he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and laying his hand in a sort of rough kindness on the girl’s head, he made a reply.

“Thy mother was too good for this world,” he said; “though others might not think so. Her good looks did

not befriend her ; and you have no occasion to mourn that you are not as much like her as your sister. Think less of beauty, child, and more of your duty, and you 'll be as happy on this lake as you could be in the king's palace."

" I know it, father ; but Hurry is so handsome and he says beauty is everything in a young woman."

Hutter made an ejaculation expressive of dissatisfaction, and went forward, passing through the house in order to do so. Hetty's simple betrayal, both by word and even more plainly by look, of her weakness in behalf of March gave him uneasiness on a subject concerning which he had never felt before, and he determined to come to an explanation at once with his visitor regarding his intentions concerning the older sister, for whose hand he appeared at times to be an ardent suitor ; for directness of speech and decision in conduct were two of the best qualities of this rude being, in whom the seeds of a better education seemed to be constantly struggling upwards, to be choked by the fruits of a life in which his hard struggles for subsistence and security had steeled his feelings and hardened his nature. When he reached the forward end of the scow, he manifested an intention to relieve Deerslayer at the oar, directing the latter to take his own place aft. By these changes the old man and Hurry were again left alone, while the young hunter was transferred to the other end of the ark.

Hetty had disappeared when Deerslayer reached his new post, and for some little time he directed the course of the slow-moving craft by himself. It was not long, however, before Judith came out of the cabin, as if disposed to do

the honors of the place to a stranger engaged in the service of her family. The starlight was sufficient to permit objects to be plainly distinguished when near at hand, and the bright eyes of the girl had an expression of kindness in them, when they met those of the youth, that the latter was easily enabled to discover. Her rich hair shaded her spirited and yet soft countenance, even at that hour rendering it the more beautiful — as the rose is loveliest when reposing amid the shadows and contrasts of its native foliage.

“I thought I should have killed myself with laughing, Deerslayer,” the beauty abruptly, but coquettishly commenced, “when I saw that Indian dive into the river! He was a good-looking savage, too,” — the girl always dwelt on personal beauty as a sort of merit, — “and yet one could n’t stop to consider whether his paint would stand water!”

“And I thought they would have killed you with their we’pons, Judith,” returned Deerslayer; “it was an awful risk for a female to run in the face of a dozen Mingos!”

“Did *that* make *you* come out of the cabin, in spite of their rifles, too?” asked the girl, with more real interest than she would have cared to betray, though with an assumed indifference of manner.

“Men are n’t apt to see females in danger, and not come to their assistance. Even a Mingo knows that.”

This sentiment was uttered with as much simplicity of manner as of feeling, and Judith rewarded it with a smile so sweet that even Deerslayer, who had imbibed a prejudice against the girl in consequence of Hurry’s suspicions of her levity, felt its charm, notwithstanding half its winning

influence was lost in the feeble light. It at once created a sort of confidence between them, and the discourse was continued on the part of the hunter, without the lively consciousness of the character of this coquette of the wilderness, with which it had certainly commenced.

“You are a man of deeds, and not of words, I see plainly, Deerslayer,” continued the beauty, taking her seat near the spot where the other stood, “and I foresee we shall be very good friends. Hurry Harry has a tongue, and, giant as he is, he talks more than he performs.”

“March is your fri'nd, Judith; and fri'nds should be tender of each other, when apart.”

“We all know what Hurry's friendship comes to! Let him have his own way in everything, and he's the best fellow in the colony; but 'head him off,' as you say of the deer, and he is master of everything near him but himself. Hurry is no favorite of mine, Deerslayer; and I dare say, if the truth was known, and his conversation about me repeated, it would be found that he thinks no better of me than I own I do of him.”

“March has his say of all things in natur', whether of fri'nd or foe,” slowly and cautiously rejoined the hunter. “He's one of them that speak as they feel while the tongue's a-going, and that's sometimes different from what they'd speak if they took time to consider. Give me a Delaware, Judith, for one that reflects and ruminates on his ideas! Inmity has made him thoughtful, and a loose tongue is no ricommand at their council fires.”

“I dare say March's tongue goes free enough when it gets on the subject of Judith Hutter and her sister,” said the girl, rousing herself as if in careless disdain. “Young

women's good names are a pleasant matter of discourse with some that would n't dare to be so open-mouthed if there was a brother in the way. Master March may find it pleasant to traduce us, but sooner or later he 'll repent!"

"Nay, Judith, this is taking the matter up too much in 'arnest. Hurry has never whispered a syllable agin the good name of Hetty, to begin with" —

"I see how it is — I see how it is," impetuously interrupted Judith. "*I* am the one he sees fit to scorch with his withering tongue! Hetty, indeed! Poor Hetty!" she continued, her voice sinking into low, husky tones, that seemed nearly to stifle her in the utterance; "*she* is beyond and above his slanderous malice! Poor Hetty! If God has created her feeble-minded, the weakness lies altogether on the side of errors of which she seems to know nothing. The earth never held a purer being than Hetty Hutter, Deerslayer."

"I can believe it — yes, I can believe *that*, Judith, and I hope 'arnestly that the same can be said of her handsome sister."

There was a soothing sincerity in the voice of Deerslayer, which touched the girl's feelings; nor did the allusion to her beauty lessen the effect with one who only knew too well the power of her personal charms. Nevertheless, the still, small voice of conscience was not hushed, and it prompted the answer which she made after giving herself time to reflect.

"I dare say Hurry had some of his vile hints about the people of the garrisons," she added. "He knows they are gentlemen, and can never forgive any one for being what he feels he can never become himself."

“Not in the sense of a king’s officer, Judith, sartainly, for March has no turn that-a-way ; but in the sense of reality, why may not a beaver-hunter be as respectable as a governor ? Since you speak of it yourself, I ’ll not deny that he *did* complain of one as humble as you being so much in the company of scarlet coats and silken sashes. But ’t was jealousy that brought it out of him, and I do think he mourned over it as any good man must.”

Perhaps Deerslayer was not aware of the full meaning that his earnest language conveyed. It is certain that he did not see the color that crimsoned the whole of Judith’s fine face, nor detect the uncontrollable distress that immediately after changed its hue to deadly paleness. A minute or two elapsed in profound stillness, the splash of the water seeming to occupy all the avenues of sound ; and then Judith arose, and grasped the hand of the hunter, almost convulsively, with one of her own.

“Deerslayer,” she said, hurriedly, “I ’m glad’ the ice is broken between us. They say that sudden friendships lead to long enmities, but I do not believe it will turn out so with us. I know not how it is — but you are the first man I ever met who did not seem to wish to flatter — to wish my ruin — to be an enemy in disguise — never mind ; say nothing to Hurry, and another time we ’ll talk together again.”

As the girl released her grasp, she vanished in the house, leaving the astonished young man standing at the steering-oar, as motionless as one of the pines on the hills. So abstracted, indeed, had his thoughts become, that he was hailed by Hutter to keep the scow’s head in the right direction, before he remembered his actual situation.



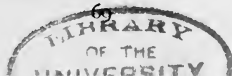
## PART II. THE CAPTURE

### CHAPTER I

Shortly after the disappearance of Judith, a light southerly air arose, and Hutter set a large square-sail. The effect on the ark was such as to supersede the necessity of rowing; and in about two hours the castle was seen, in the darkness, rising out of the water, at the distance of a hundred yards. The sail was then lowered, and by slow degrees the scow drifted up to the building and was secured.

The place was found in the quiet of midnight. No one had visited it since Hurry and his companion left it. As an enemy was known to be near, Hutter directed his daughters to abstain from the use of lights, lest they might prove beacons to direct their foes where they might be found.

"In open daylight," he explained, "I should n't fear a host of savages, when I was behind these stout logs, and they were without any cover to skulk into, for I've three or four trusty weapons always loaded, and Kill-deer, in particular, is a piece that never misses. But it's a different thing at night. A canoe may get upon us unseen in the dark; and the savages have so many cunning ways of attacking, that I look upon it as bad enough to deal with 'em under a bright sun. I built this dwelling in order to



have 'em at arm's length, in case we should ever get to blows again. Some people think it's too open and exposed, but I'm for anchoring out here, clear of underbrush and thickets, as the surest means of making a safe berth."

"You were once a sailor, they tell me, old Tom?" said Hurry, in his abrupt manner, struck by one or two expressions that the other had just used, "and some people believe you could give us strange accounts of inimies and shipwrecks, if you'd a mind to come out with all you know?"

"There are people in this world, Hurry," returned the other evasively, "who live on other men's thoughts; and some such often find their way into the woods. What I've been, or what I've seen in youth, is of less matter now than what the savages are. It's of more account to find out what will happen in the next twenty-four hours than to talk over what happened twenty-four years since."

"That's judgment," replied Hurry, good-naturedly; "yes, that's sound judgment. Here's Judith and Hetty to take care of, to say nothing of our own topknots; let's hear your plan."

In response the old man invited his two companions to follow him again into the scow, and here he opened his project, keeping back the portion that he had reserved for execution by Hurry and himself.

"The great object for people posted like ourselves is to command the water," he commenced. "So long as there is no other craft on the lake, a bark canoe is as good as a man-of-war, since the castle will not be easily taken by swimming. Now, there are but five canoes remaining in these parts, two of which are mine, and one is Hurry's."

These three we have with us here ; one being fastened in the canoe-dock beneath the house, and the other two being alongside the scow. The other canoes are housed on the shore in hollow logs, and the savages, who are such venomous enemies, will leave no likely place unexamined in the morning, if they 're serious in s'arch of bounties"—

"Now, friend Hutter," interrupted Hurry, "the Indian don't live that can find a canoe that is suitably wintered. I've done something at this business before now, and Deerslayer here knows that I am one that can hide a craft in such a way that I can't find it myself."

"Very true, Hurry," put in the person to whom the appeal had been made, "but you overlook the sarcumstance that if you could n't see the trail of the man who did the job, *I could*. I'm of Master Hutter's mind—that it's far wiser to mistrust a savage's ingenuity than to build any great expectations on his want of eyesight. If these two canoes can be got off to the castle, therefore, the sooner it's done the better."

"Will you be of the party that's to do it?" demanded Hutter, in a way to show that the proposal both surprised and pleased him.

"Sartain. I'm ready to enlist in any enterprise that's not agin a white man's lawful gifts. Natur' orders us to defend our lives, and the lives of others, too, when there's occasion and opportunity. I'll follow you, Floating Tom, into the Mingo camp, on such an arr'nd, and will strive to do my duty, should we come to blows; though, never having been tried in battle, I don't like to promise more than I may be able to perform. We all know our wishes, but none know their might till put to the proof."

"That's modest and suitable, lad," exclaimed Hurry. "You've never yet heard the crack of an angry rifle; and, let me tell you, 't is as different from the persuasion of one of your venison speeches, as the laugh of Judith Hutter, in her best humor, is from the scolding of a Dutch housekeeper on the Mohawk. I don't expect you 'll prove much of a warrior, Deerslayer, though your equal with the bucks and the does don't exist in all these parts. As for the raal sarvice, however, you 'll turn out rather rearward, according to my consait."

"We 'll see, Hurry, we 'll see," returned the other cheerfully; "having never been tried, I 'll wait to know, before I form any opinion of myself; and then there 'll be sartainty, instead of bragging. I 've heard of them that was valiant afore the fight, who did little in it; and of them that waited to know their own tempers, and found that they were n't as bad as some expected, when put to the proof."

"At any rate, we know you can use a paddle, young man," said Hutter, "and that's all we shall ask of you to-night. Let us waste no more time, but get into the canoe, and *do*, in place of talking."

Hutter led the way, and the boat was soon ready, with Hurry and Deerslayer at the paddles. Before the old man embarked himself, however, he held a conference of several minutes with Judith, entering the house for that purpose; then, returning, he took his place in the canoe, which left the side of the ark at the next instant.

It was midnight when the party set forth. The darkness had increased, though the night was still clear, and the light of the stars sufficed for all the purposes of the

adventurers. Hutter alone knew the places where the canoes were hid, and he directed the course, while his two athletic companions raised and dipped their paddles with proper caution, lest the sound should be carried to the ears of their enemies, across that sheet of placid water, in the stillness of deep night. But the bark was too light to require any extraordinary efforts, and skill supplying the place of strength, in about half an hour they were approaching the shore at a point near a league from the castle.

“Lay on your paddles, men,” said Hutter, in a low voice, “and let us look about us for a moment. We must now be all eyes and ears, for these vermin have noses like bloodhounds.”

The shores of the lake were examined closely, in order to discover any glimmering of light that might have been left in a camp; and the men strained their eyes, in the obscurity, to see if some thread of smoke was not still stealing along the mountain-side, as it arose from the dying embers of a fire. Nothing unusual could be traced; and as the position was at some distance from the outlet, or the spot where the savages had been met, it was thought safe to land. The paddles were plied again, and the bows of the canoe ground upon the gravelly beach with a gentle motion and a sound barely audible. Hutter and Hurry immediately landed, the former carrying his own and his friend's rifle,—leaving Deerslayer in charge of the canoe. The hollow log lay a little distance up the side of the mountain, and the old man led the way towards it, using so much caution as to stop at every third or fourth step, to listen if any tread betrayed the presence of a foe. The

same death-like stillness, however, reigned on the midnight scene, and the desired place was reached without an occurrence to induce alarm.

"This is it," whispered Hutter, laying a foot on the trunk of a fallen linden; "hand me the paddles first, and draw the boat out with care, for the wretches may have left it for a bait, after all."

"Keep my rifle handy, but towards me, old fellow," answered March. "If they attack me loaded, I shall want to unload the piece at 'em, at least. And feel if the pan is full."

"All's right," muttered the other; "move slow, when you get your load, and let me lead the way."

The canoe was drawn out of the log with the utmost care, raised by Hurry to his shoulder, and the two began to return to the shore, moving but a step at a time, lest they should tumble down the steep declivity. The distance was not great, but the descent was extremely difficult; and, towards the end of their little journey, Deerslayer was obliged to land and meet them, in order to aid in lifting the canoe through the bushes. With his assistance the task was successfully accomplished, and the light craft soon floated by the side of the other canoe. This was no sooner done than all three turned anxiously towards the forest and the mountain, expecting an enemy to break out of the one, or to come rushing down the other. Still the silence was unbroken, and they all embarked with the caution that had been used in coming ashore.

Hutter now steered broad off towards the centre of the lake. Having got a sufficient distance from the shore, he cast his prize loose, knowing that it would drift slowly up

the lake before the light southerly air, and intending to find it on his return. Thus relieved of his tow, the old man held his way down the lake, steering towards the very point where Hurry had made his fruitless attempt on the life of the deer. As the distance from this point to the outlet was less than a mile, it was like entering an enemy's country; and redoubled caution became necessary. They reached the extremity of the point, however, and landed in safety on the little gravelly beach already mentioned. Unlike the last place at which they had gone ashore, here was no acclivity to ascend — the mountains looming up in the darkness quite a quarter of a mile further west, leaving a margin of level ground between them and the strand. The point itself, though long, and covered with tall trees, was nearly flat, and for some distance only a few yards in width. Hutter and Hurry landed as before, leaving their companion in charge of the boat.

In this instance, the dead tree that contained the canoe of which they had come in quest lay about halfway between the extremity of the narrow slip of land and the place where it joined the main shore; and knowing that there was water so near him on his left, the old man led the way along the eastern side of the belt with some confidence, walking boldly, though still with caution. He had landed at the point expressly to get a glimpse into the bay, and to make certain that the coast was clear; otherwise he would have come ashore directly abreast of the hollow tree. There was no difficulty in finding the latter, from which the canoe was drawn as before, and instead of carrying it down to the place where Deerslayer lay, it was launched at the nearest favorable spot. As soon as it was

in the water, Hurry entered it, and paddled round to the point, whither Hutter also proceeded, following the beach. As the three men had now in their possession all the boats on the lake, their confidence was greatly increased, and there was no longer the same feverish desire to quit the shore, or the same necessity for extreme caution. Their position on the extremity of the long, narrow bit of land added to the feeling of security, as it permitted an enemy to approach in only one direction : that in their front, and under circumstances that would render discovery, with their habitual vigilance, almost certain. The three now landed together, and stood grouped in consultation on the gravelly point.

"We've fairly treed the scamps," said Hurry, chuckling at their success ; "if they wish to visit the castle, let 'em wade or swim ! Old Tom, that idee of your'n, in burrowing out in the lake, was high proof, and carries a fine bead. There be men who would think the land safer than the water ; but, after all, reason shows it is n't ; the beaver, and rats, and other l'arned creatur's taking to the last when hard pressed. I call our position now entrenched, and set the Canadas at defiance."

"Let us paddle along this south shore," said Hutter, "and see if there's no sign of an encampment ; but first let me have a better look into the bay, for no one has been far enough round the inner shore of the point to make sure of that quarter yet."

As Hutter ceased speaking, all three moved in the direction he had named. Scarce had they fairly opened the bottom of the bay, when a general start proved that their eyes had lighted on a common object at the same instant.



It was no more than a dying brand, giving out its flickering and failing light ; but at that hour, and in that place, it left not a shadow of doubt that this fire had been kindled at an encampment of the Indians. The situation, sheltered from observation on all sides but one, and even on that except for a very short distance, proved that more care had been taken to conceal the spot than would be used for ordinary purposes, and Hutter, who knew that a spring was near at hand, as well as one of the best fishing-stations on the lake, immediately inferred that this encampment contained the women and children of the party.

“ That ’s not a warrior’s encampment,” he growled to Hurry ; “ and there ’s bounty enough sleeping round that fire to make a heavy division of head-money. Send the lad to the canoes, for there ’ll come no good of him in such an onset, and let us take the matter in hand at once, like men.”

“ There ’s judgment in your notion, old Tom, and I like it to the back-bone. Deerslayer, do you get into the canoe, lad, and paddle off into the lake with the spare one, and set it adrift, as we did with the other ; after which you can float along shore, as near as you can get to the head of the bay, keeping outside the point, hows’ever, and outside the rushes, too. You can hear us when we want you ; and if there ’s any delay, I ’ll call like a loon—yes, that ’ll do it—the call of a loon shall be the signal. If you hear rifles, and feel like sogering, why, you may close in, and see if you can make the same hand with the savages that you do with the deer.”

“ If my wishes could be followed, this matter would not be undertaken, Hurry ”—

“ Quite true — nobody denies it, boy ; but your wishes

*can't* be followed; and that ends the matter. So just canoe yourself off into the middle of the lake, and by the time you get back there 'll be movements in that camp!"

The young man set about complying with great reluctance and a heavy heart. He knew the prejudices of the frontier-men too well, however, to attempt a remonstrance. He paddled the canoe, therefore, silently, and with the former caution, to a spot near the centre of the placid sheet of water, and set the boat just recovered adrift, to float towards the castle, before the light southerly air. This expedient had been adopted, in both cases, under the certainty that the drift could not carry the light barks more than a league or two, before the return of light, when they might easily be overtaken. In order to prevent any wandering savage from using them, by swimming off and getting possession,—a possible, but scarcely a probable event,—all the paddles were retained.

No sooner had he set the recovered canoe adrift, than Deerslayer turned the bows of his own towards the point on the shore that had been indicated by Hurry. So light was the movement of the little craft, and so steady the sweep of its master's arm, that ten minutes had not elapsed ere it was again approaching the land, having, in that brief time, passed over fully half a mile of distance. As soon as Deerslayer's eye caught a glimpse of the rushes, of which there were many growing in the water a hundred feet from the shore, he arrested the motion of the canoe, and anchored his boat by holding fast to the delicate but tenacious stem of one of the drooping plants. Here he remained, awaiting, with an intensity of suspense that can be easily imagined, the result of the hazardous enterprise.

## CHAPTER II

It would be difficult to convey to the minds of those who have never witnessed it the sublimity that characterizes the silence of a solitude as deep as that which now reigned over the Glimmerglass. In the present instance this sublimity was increased by the gloom of night, which threw its shadowy and fantastic forms around the lake, the forest, and the hills. Once as Deerslayer sat in his solitary canoe, endeavoring to catch the smallest sound that might denote the course of things on shore, he thought he heard the cracking of a dried twig, but expectation was so intense it might mislead him. In this manner minute after minute passed, until the whole time since he left his companions was extended to quite an hour and a half. Then there came a sound that filled him equally with concern and surprise. The quavering call of a loon arose from the opposite side of the lake, evidently at no great distance from its outlet. There was no mistaking the note; shrill, tremulous, loud, and sufficiently prolonged, it seems the very cry of warning. It is often raised, also, at night — an exception to the habits of most of the other feathered inmates of the wilderness; a circumstance which had induced Hurry to select it as his own signal. There had been sufficient time, certainly, for the two adventurers to make their way by land from the point where they had been left to that whence the call had come, but it was not probable that they would adopt such a course. Had the camp been deserted they would have summoned Deerslayer to the shore, and, did it prove to be peopled, there could be no sufficient motive for circling it, in order to reëmbark at so

great a distance. Should he obey the signal, and be drawn away from the landing, the lives of those who depended on him might be the forfeit — and, should he neglect the call, on the supposition that it had been really made, the consequences might be equally disastrous, though from a different cause. In this indecision he waited, — trusting that the call, whether feigned or natural, would be speedily renewed. Nor was he mistaken. A very few minutes elapsed before the same shrill warning cry was repeated, and from the same part of the lake. This time, being on the alert, his senses were not deceived. Although he had often heard admirable imitations of this bird, and was no mean adept himself in raising its notes, he felt satisfied that Hurry, to whose efforts in that way he had attended, could never so completely and closely follow nature. He determined, therefore, to disregard that cry, and to wait for one less perfect and nearer at hand.

Deerslayer had hardly come to this determination, when the profound stillness of night and solitude was broken by a cry so startling, as to drive all recollection of the more melancholy call of the loon from the listener's mind. It was a shriek of agony, that came either from one of the female sex, or from a boy so young as not yet to have attained a manly voice. This appeal could not be mistaken. Heart-rending terror — if not writhing agony — was in the sounds, and the anguish that had awakened them was as sudden as it was fearful. The young man released his hold of the rush, and dashed his paddle into the water ; to do he knew not what — to steer he knew not whither. A very few moments, however, removed his indecision. The breaking of branches, the cracking of dried sticks, and the

fall of feet were distinctly audible ; the sounds appearing to approach the water, though in a direction that led diagonally towards the shore, and a little further north than the spot that Deerslayer had been ordered to keep near. Following this clue, the young man urged the canoe ahead, paying but little attention to the manner in which he might betray its presence. He had reached a part of the shore, where its immediate bank was tolerably high and quite steep. Men were evidently threshing through the bushes and trees on the summit of this bank, following the line of the shore, as if those who fled sought a favorable place for descending. Just at this instant five or six rifles flashed, and the opposite hills gave back, as usual, the sharp reports in prolonged rolling echoes. One or two shrieks, like those which escape the bravest when suddenly overcome by unexpected anguish and alarm, followed ; and then the threshing among the bushes was renewed, in a way to show that man was grappling with man.

“Slippery devil !” shouted Hurry with the fury of disappointment — “his skin’s greased ! I shan’t grapple ! — Take *that* for your cunning !”

The words were followed by the fall of some heavy object among the smaller trees that fringed the bank, appearing to Deerslayer as if his gigantic associate had hurled an enemy from him in this unceremonious manner. Again the flight and pursuit were renewed, and then the young man saw a human form break down the hill ; and rush several yards into the water. At this critical moment the canoe was just near enough to the spot to allow this movement, which was accompanied by no little noise, to be seen, and feeling that there he must take in his companion,

if anywhere, Deerslayer urged the canoe forward to the rescue. His paddle had not been raised twice, when the voice of Hurry was heard filling the air with imprecations, and he rolled on the narrow beach, literally loaded down with enemies. While prostrate, and almost smothered with his foes, the athletic frontier-man gave his loon call, in a manner that would have excited laughter under circumstances less terrific. The figure in the water seemed suddenly to repent his own flight, and rushed to the shore to aid his companion, but was met and immediately overpowered by half a dozen fresh pursuers, who just then came leaping down the bank.

“Let up, you painted riptyles — let up!” cried Hurry, too hard pressed to be particular about the terms he used; “is n’t it enough that I am withed like a saw-log that ye must choke too!”

This speech satisfied Deerslayer that his friends were prisoners, and that to land would be to share their fate. He was already within a hundred feet of the shore, when a few timely strokes of the paddle not only arrested his advance, but forced him off to six or eight times that distance from his enemies. Luckily for him, all of the Indians had dropped their rifles in the pursuit, or this retreat might not have been effected with impunity; though no one had noted the canoe in the first confusion of the *mêlée*.

“Keep off the land, lad,” called out Hutter; “the girls depend only on you, now; you will want all your caution to escape these savages. Keep off, and trust to the castle; and God prosper you, as you aid my children!”

There was little sympathy in general between Hutter and the young man, but the bodily and mental anguish

with which this appeal was made served at the moment to conceal from the latter the former's faults. He saw only the father in his sufferings, and resolved at once to give a pledge of fidelity to his interests, and to be faithful to his word.

"Put your heart at ease, Master Hutter," he called out; "the gals shall be looked to, as well as the castle. The inimy has got the shore, 't is no use to deny, but he has n't got the water. Providence has the charge of all, and no one can say what will come of it; but, if good-will can sarve you and your'n, depend on that much. My exper'ence is small, but my will is good."

"Aye, aye, Deerslayer," returned Hurry, in his stentorian voice, which was losing some of its heartiness, notwithstanding, — "you *mean* well enough, but what can you *do*? If there 's one savage on this lake shore, there 's forty. 'T won't be four-and-twenty hours, old fellow, afore these foxes will be rafting off to storm your castle. As for old Tom and myself, whether they 'll scalp us to-night, keep us for the torture by fire, or carry us to Canada, is more than any one knows but the devil that advises them how to act. It 's quite likely they 'll indivor to get two scalps off it, for the bounty is a tempting thing, or old Tom and I would n't be in this scrape. These savages are making signs, Deer-slayer, for me to encourage you to come ashore with the canoe; but do you keep off where you are, and after day-light on no account come within two hundred yards" —

This injunction of Hurry's was stopped by a hand being rudely slapped against his mouth, the certain sign that some one in the party sufficiently understood English to have at length detected the drift of his discourse. Immediately

after, the whole group entered the forest, Hutter and Hurry apparently making no resistance to the movement. Just as the sounds of the cracking bushes were ceasing, however, the voice of the father was again heard.

“As you’re true to my children, God prosper you, young man!” were the words that reached Deerslayer’s ears; after which he found himself left to follow the dictates of his own discretion.

Several minutes elapsed, in death-like stillness, when the party on the shore had disappeared in the woods. Owing to the distance — rather more than two hundred yards — and the obscurity, Deerslayer had been able barely to distinguish the group, and to see it retiring; but even this dim connection with human forms gave an animation to the scene that was strongly in contrast to the absolute solitude that remained. Although the young man leaned forward to listen, holding his breath and condensing every faculty in the single sense of hearing, not another sound reached his ears to denote the vicinity of human beings. It seemed as if a silence that had never been broken reigned on the spot again.

Deerslayer paused only for an instant. Then dropping his paddle into the water, he turned the head of the canoe, and proceeded slowly towards the centre of the lake. When he believed himself to have reached a point in a line with that where he had set the last canoe adrift, he changed his direction northward, keeping the light air as nearly on his back as possible. After paddling a quarter of a mile in this direction, a dark object became visible on the lake, a little to the right; and turning on one side for the purpose, he had soon secured his lost prize to his own



boat. Deerslayer now examined the heavens, the course of the air, and the position of the two canoes. Finding nothing in either to induce a change of plan, he lay down and prepared to catch a few hours' sleep, that the morrow might find him equal to its exigencies.

Although the hardy and the tired sleep profoundly, even in scenes of danger, it was some time before Deerslayer lost his recollection. His mind dwelt on what had passed, and his half-conscious faculties kept figuring the events of the night, in a sort of waking dream. Suddenly he was up and alert, for he fancied he heard the preconcerted signal of Hurry summoning him to the shore. But all was still as the grave again. The canoes were slowly drifting northward, the thoughtful stars were glimmering in their mild glory over his head, and the forest-bound sheet of water lay embedded between its mountains, as calm and melancholy as if never troubled by the winds, or brightened by a noonday sun. Once more the loon raised his tremulous cry, near the foot of the lake, and the mystery of the alarm was explained. Deerslayer adjusted his hard pillow, stretched his form in the bottom of the canoe, and slept.

### CHAPTER III

Day had fairly dawned before the young man, whom we have left in the situation described in the last chapter, again opened his eyes. This was no sooner done than he started up, and looked about him with the eagerness of one who suddenly felt the importance of accurately ascertaining his precise position. His rest had been deep and undisturbed, — and when he awoke, it was with a clearness of intellect

and a readiness of resources that were much needed at that particular moment. The sun had not risen, it is true, but the vault of heaven was rich with the winning softness that "brings and shuts the day," while the whole air was filled with the carols of birds. These sounds first told Deerslayer the risks he ran. The air, for wind it could scarce be called, was still light, it is true, but it had increased a little in the course of the night, and as the canoes were mere feathers on the water, they had drifted twice the expected distance; and, what was still more dangerous, had approached so near the base of the mountain that here rose precipitously from the eastern shore as to render the carols of the birds plainly audible. This was not the worst. The third canoe had taken the same direction, and was slowly drifting towards a point where it must inevitably touch, unless turned aside by a shift of wind, or human hands. It was already quite near the point, and a very few strokes of the paddle sufficed to tell him that it must touch before he could possibly overtake it. Just at this moment, too, the wind inopportunately freshened, rendering the drift of the light craft much more rapid than certain. Feeling the impossibility of preventing a contact with the land, the young man wisely determined not to heat himself with unnecessary exertions; but first looking to the priming of his piece, he proceeded slowly and warily towards the point, taking care to make a little circuit, that he might be exposed on only one side, as he approached.

The canoe adrift being directed by no such intelligence, pursued its proper way, and grounded on a small sunken rock at the distance of three or four yards from the shore. Just at that moment, Deerslayer had got abreast of the

point, and turned the bows of his own boat to the land ; first casting loose his tow, that his movements might be unencumbered. The canoe hung an instant on the rock ; then it rose a hair's breadth on an almost imperceptible swell of the water, swung round, floated clear, and reached the strand. All this the young man noted, but it neither quickened his pulses nor hastened his hand. If any one had been lying in wait for the arrival of the waif, he must be seen, and the utmost caution in approaching the shore became indispensable ; if no one was in ambush, hurry was unnecessary. The point being nearly diagonally opposite to the Indian encampment, he hoped the last, though the former was not only possible, but probable ; for the savages had quite likely many scouts searching the shores for craft to carry them off to the castle, and there was little hope that either of the canoes would pass unseen. Indian sagacity, too, needed no instruction to tell which way a boat or a log would drift, when the direction of the wind was known. As Deerslayer drew nearer and nearer to the land, the stroke of his paddle grew slower, his eye became more watchful, and his ears and nostrils almost dilated with the effort to detect any lurking danger.

When about a hundred yards from the shore, Deerslayer rose in the canoe, gave three or four vigorous strokes with the paddle, sufficient of themselves to impel the bark to land ; and then, quickly laying aside the instrument of labor, he seized that of war. He was in the very act of raising the rifle, when a sharp report was followed by the buzz of a bullet, that passed so near his body as to cause him involuntarily to start. The next instant Deerslayer staggered, and fell his whole length in the bottom of the

canoe. A yell — it came from a single voice — followed, and an Indian leaped from the bushes upon the open area of the point, bounding towards the canoe. This was the moment the young man desired. He rose on the instant, and leveled his own rifle at his uncovered foe ; but his finger hesitated about pulling the trigger on one whom he held at such a disadvantage. This little delay, probably, saved the life of the Indian, who bounded back into the cover as swiftly as he had broken out of it. In the meantime Deerslayer had been swiftly approaching the land, and his own canoe reached the point just as his enemy disappeared. As its movements had not been directed, it touched the shore a few yards from the other boat ; and though the rifle of his foe had to be loaded, there was not time to secure his prize, and to carry it beyond danger, before he would be exposed to another shot. Under the circumstances, therefore, he did not pause an instant, but dashed into the woods and sought a cover.

On the immediate point there was a small open area, partly in native grass, and partly beach, but a dense fringe of bushes lined its upper side, where a man might easily conceal himself. Deerslayer knew that his adversary must be employed in reloading, unless he had fled. The former proved to be the case, for the young man had no sooner placed himself behind a tree, than he caught a glimpse of the arm of the Indian, his body being concealed by an oak, in the very act of forcing the leathered bullet home. Nothing would have been easier than to spring forward, and decide the affair by a close assault on his unprepared foe, but every feeling of Deerslayer revolted at such a step, although his own life had just been attempted from a cover.

He was y<sup>ct</sup> unpracticed in the ruthless expedients of savage warfare, and it struck him as an unfair advantage to assail an unarmed foe. His color had heightened, his eye frowned, his lips were compressed, and all his energies were collected and ready ; but, instead of advancing to fire, he dropped his rifle to the usual position of a sportsman in readiness to catch his aim, and muttered to himself, unconscious that he was speaking —

“ No, no — that may be redskin warfare, but it’s not a Christian’s gifts. Let the miscreant charge, and then we’ll take it out like men ; for the canoe he *must* not, and *shall* not have. No, no ; let him have time to load, and God will take care of the right ! ”

All this time the Indian had been so intent on his own movements that he was even ignorant that his enemy was in the wood. His only apprehension was that the canoe would be recovered and carried away before he might be in readiness to prevent it. He had sought the cover from habit, but was within a few feet of the fringe of bushes, and could be at the margin of the forest in readiness to fire in a moment. The distance between him and his enemy was about fifty yards, and the trees were so arranged by nature that the line of sight was not interrupted, except by the particular trees behind which each party stood.

His rifle was no sooner loaded, than the savage glanced around him, and advanced incautiously as regarded the real, but stealthily as respected the fancied, position of his enemy, until he was fairly exposed. Then Deerslayer stepped from behind his own cover, and hailed him.

“ This-a-way, redskin ; this-a-way, if you’re looking for me,” he called out. “ I’m young in war, but not so young

as to stand on an open beach to be shot down like an owl by daylight. It rests on yourself whether it's peace or war atween us ; for my gifts are white gifts, and I'm not one of them that thinks it valiant to slay human mortals, singly, in the woods."

The savage was a good deal startled by this sudden discovery of the danger he ran. He had a little knowledge of English, however, and caught the drift of the other's meaning. He was also too well schooled to betray alarm, but, dropping the butt of his rifle to the earth, with an air of confidence, he made a gesture of lofty courtesy. All this was done with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to consider no man his superior. In the midst of this consummate acting, however, the volcano that raged within caused his eyes to glare, and his nostrils to dilate, like those of some wild beast that is suddenly prevented from taking the fatal leap.

"Two canoes," he said, in the deep guttural tones of his race, holding up the number of fingers he mentioned, by way of preventing mistakes ; "one for you — one for me."

"No, no, Mingo, that will never do. You own neither ; and neither shall you have, as long as I can prevent it. I know it's war atween your people and mine, but that's no reason why human mortals should slay each other, like savage creatur's that meet in the woods ; go your way, then, and leave me to go mine. The world is large enough for us both ; and when we meet fairly in battle, why, the Lord will order the fate of each of us."

"Good !" exclaimed the Indian ; "my brother missionary — great talk ; all about Manitou."

"Not so — not so, warrior. I'm only a hunter, as yet, though afore the peace is made 't is like enough there'll be occasion to strike a blow at some of your people. Still, I wish it to be done in fair fight."

"Good! My brother very young — but he is very wise. Little warrior — great talker. Chief, sometimes, in council. Good!"

As the Indian uttered his favorite exclamation of "Good!" they walked side by side, towards the shore. There was no apparent distrust in the manner of either, the Indian moving in advance, as if he wished to show his companion that he did not fear turning his back to him. When they reached the open ground, the former pointed towards the boats, saying once more,

"Two canoes — one for me, one for you. All have his own."

"Not so fast, my friend," replied Deerslayer. "You're mistaken in thinking that canoe's your own, and while we're about it, I'll just shove the canoe out of reach at once, as the quickest way of settling difficulties."

While Deerslayer was speaking, he put a foot against the end of the light boat, and giving a vigorous shove, he sent it out into the lake a hundred feet or more, where, taking the true current, it would necessarily float past the point, and be in no further danger of coming ashore. The savage started at this ready and decided expedient, and his companion saw that he cast a hurried and fierce glance at his own canoe, or that which contained the paddles. The change of manner, however, was but momentary, and then the Iroquois resumed his air of friendliness, and a smile of satisfaction.

“ Good ! ” he repeated, with stronger emphasis than ever. “ Young head, old mind. Know how to settle quarrel. Farewell, brother. He go to house in water — muskrat house — Injin go to camp ; tell chiefs no find canoe.”

Deerslayer was not sorry to hear this proposal, and he took the offered hand of the Indian very willingly. The parting words were friendly, and while the red man walked calmly towards the wood, with the rifle in the hollow of his arm, without once looking back in uneasiness or distrust, the white man moved towards the remaining canoe, carrying his piece in the same pacific manner, it is true, but keeping his eyes fastened on the movements of the other. This distrust, however, seemed to be altogether uncalled for, and as if ashamed to have entertained it, the young man averted his look, and stepped carelessly up to his boat. Here he began to push the canoe from the shore, and to make his other preparations for departing. He might have been thus employed a minute, when, happening to turn his face towards the land, his quick and certain eye told him at a glance the imminent jeopardy in which his life was placed. The black, ferocious eyes of the savage were glancing on him, like those of a crouching tiger, through a small opening in the bushes, and the muzzle of his rifle seemed already to be opening in a line with his own body.

Then, indeed, the long practice of Deerslayer, as a hunter, did him good service. Accustomed to fire with the deer on the bound, and often when the precise position of the animal's body had in a manner to be guessed at, he used the same expedients here. To cock and poise his rifle were the acts of a single moment and a single motion ;



then aiming almost without sighting, he fired into the bushes where he knew a body ought to be, in order to sustain the appalling countenance which alone was visible. There was no time to raise the piece any higher, or to take a more deliberate aim. So rapid were his movements that both parties discharged their pieces at the same instant, the concussions mingling in one report. The mountains, indeed, gave back but a single echo. Deerslayer dropped his piece, and stood with head erect, steady as one of the pines in the calm of a June morning, watching the result; while the savage gave an appalling yell, leaped through the bushes, and came bounding across the open ground, flourishing a tomahawk. Still Deerslayer moved not, but stood with his unloaded rifle fallen against his shoulders, while, with a hunter's habits, his hands were mechanically feeling for the powder-horn and charger. When about forty feet from his enemy, the savage hurled his keen weapon; but it was with an eye so vacant, and a hand so unsteady and feeble, that the young man caught it by the handle as it was flying past him. At that instant the Indian staggered and fell his whole length on the ground.

"I know'd it—I know'd it!" exclaimed Deerslayer, who was already preparing to force a fresh bullet into his rifle; "I know'd it must come to this, as soon as I had got the range from the creatur's eyes. A man sights suddenly, and fires quick when his own life's in danger; yes, I know'd it would come to this. I was about the hundredth part of a second too quick for him, or it might have been bad for me! The riptyle's bullet has just grazed my side—but say what you will for or agin 'em, a redskin is by no means as sartain with powder and ball as a white man. Their gifts

don't seem to lie that-a-way. Even Chingachgook, great as he is in other matters, is n't downright deadly with the rifle."

By this time the piece was reloaded, and Deerslayer, after tossing the tomahawk into the canoe, advanced to his victim, and stood over him, leaning on his rifle, in melancholy attention. It was the first fellow-creature against whom he had ever seriously raised his own hand; and regret mingled with his triumph. The Indian was not dead, though shot directly through the body. He lay on his back motionless, but his eyes, now full of consciousness, watched each action of his victor—as the fallen bird regards the fowler—jealous of every movement. The man probably expected the fatal blow which was to precede the loss of his scalp; or perhaps he anticipated that this latter act of cruelty would precede his death. Deerslayer read his thoughts; and he found a melancholy satisfaction in relieving the apprehensions of the helpless savage.

"No, no, redskin," he said; "you've nothing more to fear from me. I am of a Christian stock, and scalping is not of my gifts. I'll just make sartain of your rifle, and then come back and do you what sarvice I can. Though here I can't stay much longer, as the crack of three rifles will be apt to bring some of your devils down upon me."

The piece was found where its owner had dropped it, and was immediately put into the canoe. Laying his own rifle at its side, Deerslayer then returned and stood over the Indian again.

"Water!" ejaculated the unfortunate creature, "give poor Injin water."

"Aye, water you shall have. I'll just carry you down



THE DYING INDIAN



to the lake that you may take your fill. This is the way, they tell me, with all wounded people — water is their greatest comfort and delight.”

So saying, Deerslayer raised the Indian in his arms, and carried him to the lake. Here he first helped him to take an attitude in which he could appease his burning thirst ; after which he seated himself on a stone, and took the head of his wounded adversary in his own lap, and endeavored to soothe his anguish in the best manner he could.

With a last effort the Indian warrior roused himself, endeavoring to express his thankfulness for the other's kindnesses.

“ Good ! ” he repeated, for this was an English word much used by the savages, “ good ! young head ; young *heart*, too. *Old heart* tough ; no shed tear — what he call him ? ”

“ Deerslayer is the name I bear now, though the Delawares have said that when I get back from this warpath, I shall have a more manly title, provided I can 'arn one.”

“ That good name for boy — poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear *there*,” — the savage had strength sufficient, under the strong excitement he felt, to raise a hand and tap the young man on his breast, — “ eye sartain — finger lightning — aim, death — great warrior soon. No Deerslayer — Hawkeye — Hawkeye — Hawkeye. Shake hand.”

Deerslayer — or Hawkeye, as the youth was then first named, for in after years he bore the appellation throughout all that region — Deerslayer took the hand of the savage, whose last breath was drawn in that attitude.

manly

"His spirit has fled!" said Deerslayer, in a suppressed, melancholy voice. "Ah's me! Well, to this we must all come, sooner or later; and he is happiest, let his skin be of what color it may, who is best fitted to meet it. Here lies the body of no doubt a brave warrior, and the soul is already flying towards its heaven or hell, whether that be a happy hunting-ground, or a place scant of game, regions of glory, according to Christian doctrine, or flames of fire!"

Deerslayer arose as soon as he had spoken. Then he placed the body of the dead man in a sitting posture, with its back against the little rock, taking the necessary care to prevent it from falling or in any way settling into an attitude that might be thought unseemly by the sensitive, though wild notions of a savage.

"No, no, warrior," he murmured, "hand of mine shall never molest your scalp, and so your soul may rest in peace on the p'int of making a decent appearance when the body comes to join it, in your own land of spirits."

• When this duty was performed, the young man stood gazing at the grim countenance of his fallen foe.

"I did n't wish your life, redskin," he said, "but you left me no choice atween killing or being killed. Each party acted according to his gifts, I suppose. You were treacherous, according to your natur' in war, and I was a little oversightful, as I'm apt to be in trusting others. Well, this is my first battle with a human mortal, though it's not likely to be the last. I have fou't most of the creatur's of the forest, such as bears, wolves, panthers, and catamounts, but this is the beginning with the redskins.

Hawkeye ! That 's not a bad name for a warrior, sounding more manful and valiant than Deerslayer ! 'T would n't be a bad title to begin with, and it has been fairly 'arned. If 't was Chingachgook, now, he might go home and boast of his deeds, and the chiefs would name him Hawkeye in a minute ; but it don't become white blood to brag, and 't is n't easy to see how the matter can be known unless I do. Well, well, — everything is in the hands of Providence : — still, I *should* like Chingachgook to know that I have n't discredited the Delawares, or my training ! ”

Soliloquy and reflection received a startling interruption, however, by the sudden appearance of a second Indian on the lake shore, a few hundred yards from the point. This man, as soon as he saw himself discovered by Deerslayer, gave a loud yell, which was answered by a dozen voices from different parts of the mountain-side. There was no longer any time for delay ; in another minute the boat was quitting the shore under long and steady sweeps of the paddle.

The dead Indian lay in grim quiet where Deerslayer had left him, the warrior who had shown himself from the forest had already vanished, and the woods themselves were as silent and seemingly deserted as the day they came fresh from the hands of their great Creator. This profound stillness, broken only by the sound of the hunter's paddle-strokes, lasted, however, but a moment. When time had been given to the scouts of the enemy to reconnoitre, they burst out of the thicket upon the naked point, filling the air with yells of fury at discovering the death of their companion. These cries were immediately succeeded by

shouts of delight when they reached the body and clustered eagerly around it. Deerslayer was a sufficient adept in the usages of the natives to understand the reason of the change. The yell was the customary lamentation at the loss of a warrior, the shout a sign of rejoicing that the conqueror had not been able to secure his scalp ; the trophy without which a victory is never considered complete. The distance at which the canoes lay prevented any attempts to injure the conqueror.

As soon as Deerslayer believed himself to be at a safe distance, he ceased his efforts, permitting the little bark to drift, while he took a survey of the state of things. The canoe first sent adrift was floating before the air, quite a quarter of a mile above him, and a little nearer to the shore than he wished, now that he knew more of the savages were so near at hand. The canoe shoved from the point was within a few yards of him, he having directed his own course towards it on quitting the land. This nearest one was soon in tow, when he proceeded in quest of the other, which was all this time floating up the lake. The eye of Deerslayer was no sooner fastened on this last boat, than it struck him that it was nearer to the shore than it would have been had it merely followed the course of the gentle current of air. He began to suspect the influence of some unseen current in the water, and he quickened his exertions, in order to regain possession of it before it could drift in to a dangerous proximity to the woods. On getting nearer, he thought that the canoe had a perceptible motion through the water, and, as it lay broadside to the air, that this motion was taking it towards the land. A



few vigorous strokes of the paddle carried him still nearer, when the mystery was explained. Something was evidently in motion on the off-side of the canoe, or that which was furthest from himself, and closer scrutiny showed that it was a naked human arm. An Indian was lying in the bottom of the canoe, and was propelling it slowly but certainly to the shore, using his hand as a paddle. Deerslayer understood the whole artifice at a glance. A savage had swum off to the boat while he was occupied with his enemy on the point, got possession, and was using these means to urge it to the shore.

Satisfied that the man in the canoe could have no arms, Deerslayer did not hesitate to dash close alongside of the retiring boat, without deeming it necessary to raise his own rifle. As soon as the wash of the water, which he made in approaching, became audible to the prostrate savage, the latter sprang to his feet, and uttered a yell, and the next instant his naked body disappeared in the water. When he rose to take breath, it was at the distance of several yards from the canoe, and the hasty glance he threw behind him denoted how much he feared the arrival of a fatal messenger from the rifle of his foe. But the young man made no indication of any hostile intention. Deliberately securing the canoe to the others, he began to paddle from the shore; and by the time the Indian reached the land, and had shaken himself, like a spaniel on quitting the water, his dreaded enemy was already beyond rifle-shot on his way to the castle, paddling as fast as his tows would allow him.

By this time the sun had not only risen, but it had

appeared over the eastern mountains and was shedding a flood of glorious light on the lake, and bringing to Deerslayer's attention anew the picturesque appearance of the castle with its rude, massive logs covered with their rough bark, and the projecting roof. As he drew nearer to the building he saw that Judith and Hetty stood on the platform, awaiting his approach with manifest anxiety.

## PART III. THE RANSOM

### CHAPTER I

Neither of the girls spoke as Deerslayer stood before them alone, his countenance betraying all the apprehension he felt on account of two absent members of their party.

"Father!" Judith at length exclaimed, succeeding in uttering the word, as it might be by a desperate effort.

"He's met with misfortune, and there's no use in concealing it," answered Deerslayer, in his direct and simple-minded manner. "He and Hurry are in Mingo hands, and Heaven only knows what's to be the termination. I've got the canoes safe, and that's a consolation, since the vagabonds will have to swim for it, or raft off, to come near this place. At sunset we'll be reinforced by Chingachgook, if I can manage to get him into a canoe; and then, I think, we two can answer for the ark and the castle, till some of the officers in the garrisons hear of this warpath, which sooner or later must be the case, when we may look for succor from that quarter, if from no other."

"The officers!" exclaimed Judith, impatiently, her color deepening. "Who thinks or speaks of the heartless gallants now? We are sufficient of ourselves to defend the castle. But what of my father, and of poor Hurry Harry?"

Deerslayer then commenced a succinct but clear narrative of all that occurred during the night, in no manner

concealing what had befallen his two companions, or his own opinion of what might prove to be the consequences. The girls listened with profound attention, but little was said by either, and as soon as the recital was done, they busied themselves in making the preparations for the morning meal, of which all were in need, and especially Deerslayer after the exertions of the night. The meal was nearly ended before a syllable was uttered; then Judith spoke.

“Father would have relished this fish!” she exclaimed; “he says the salmon of the lakes is almost as good as the salmon of the sea.”

“Your father has been acquainted with the sea, they tell me, Judith,” returned the young man. “Hurry Harry tells me he was once a sailor.”

Judith first looked perplexed; then, with an impulse towards confidence, she became suddenly communicative.

“If Hurry knows anything of father’s history, I would he had told it to me!” she cried. “Sometimes I think, too, he was once a sailor, and then again I think he was not. If that chest were open, or if it could speak, it might let us into his whole history. But its fastenings are too strong to be broken like pack-thread.”

Deerslayer turned to the chest in question, and examined it closely. Although discolored, and bearing proofs of having received much ill-treatment, he saw that it was of materials and workmanship altogether superior to anything of the same sort he had ever before beheld. The wood was dark, rich, and had once been highly polished, though the treatment it had received left little gloss on its surface, and various scratches and indentations proved the rough collisions that it had encountered with substances still

harder than itself. The corners were firmly bound with steel, elaborately and richly wrought, while the locks, of which it had no less than three, and the hinges, were of a fashion and workmanship that would have attracted attention even in a warehouse of curious furniture. This chest was quite large; and when Deerslayer arose, and endeavored to raise an end by its massive handle, he found that the weight fully corresponded with the external appearance.

"Did you never see that chest opened, Judith?" the young man demanded.

"Never. No one here has ever seen its lid raised, unless it be father; nor do I even know that he has ever seen it."

"Now, you're wrong, Judith," Hetty quietly answered. "Father *has* raised the lid, and *I've* seen him do it."

A feeling of manliness kept the mouth of Deerslayer shut; for, while he would not have hesitated about going far beyond what would be thought the bounds of propriety, in questioning the elder sister, he had just scruples about taking what might be thought an advantage of the feeble intellect of the younger. Judith, being under no such restraint, however, turned quickly to the last speaker and continued the discourse.

"When and where did you ever see that chest opened, Hetty?"

"Here, and again and again. Father often opens it when *you* are away, though he don't in the least mind my being by, and seeing all he does, as well as hearing all he says."

"And what is it that he does, and what does he say?"

"That I cannot tell *you*, Judith," returned the other in

a low but resolute voice. "*Father's* secrets are not *my* secrets."

"Secrets! This is stranger still, Deerslayer, — that father should tell them to Hetty, and not tell them to me!"

"There's good reason for that, Judith, though you're not to know it. Father's not here to answer for himself, and I'll say no more about it."

Judith and Deerslayer looked surprised, and for a minute the first seemed pained. But, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned away from her sister, as if in pity for her weakness, and addressed the young man.

"You've told but half your story," she said, earnestly. "We heard rifles under the eastern mountain; the echoes were full and long, and came so soon after the reports, that the pieces must have been fired on or quite near to the shore. Our ears are used to these signs, and are not to be deceived."

"They've done their duty, gal, this time; yes, they've done their duty. Rifles have been sighted this morning, aye, and triggers pulled, too, though not as often as they might have been. One warrior has gone to his happy hunting-grounds, and that's the whole of it. A man of white blood and white gifts is not to be expected to boast of his exploits, and to flourish scalps."

"You have been fighting the savages, Deerslayer, singly and by yourself!" she said. "In your wish to take care of us — of Hetty — of me, perhaps, you've fought the enemy!"

"I've fou't, Judith; yes, I *have* fou't the inimy, and that, too, for the first time in my life. However, what has yet been done is no great matter, but should Chingachgook

come to the rock this evening, as is agreed atween us, and I get him off it unbeknown to the savages, or, if known to them, agin their wishes and designs, then may we all look to something like warfare, afore the Mingos shall get possession of either the castle, or the ark, or yourselves."

"Tell me more of this Chingachgook. Is it to-night that you meet him and why does he come here?"

"Aye, this evening at sunset at the meeting-rock at the foot of the lake. As to why he comes here, I see no harm in telling you and Hetty his errand. You must know that Chingachgook is a comely Injin, and is much looked upon and admired by the young women of his tribe, both on account of his family, and on account of himself. Now there is a chief that has a daughter called Wah-ta-Wah, which is intarpreted into Hist-oh-Hist, in the English tongue, the rarest gal among the Delawares, and the one most sought a'ter and craved for a wife by all the young warriors of the nation. Well, Chingachgook, among others, took a fancy to Wah-ta-Wah, and Wah-ta-Wah took a fancy to him. Two moons ago, Wah-ta-Wah went with her father and mother to fish for salmon on the western streams, and while thus empl'yed the gal vanished. For several weeks we could get no tidings of her; but here, ten days since, a runner brought word that she had been stolen by the inimy, who had adopted her, and wanted her to marry a young Mingo. The message said that the party intended to hunt and forage through this region for a month or two, afore it went back into the Canadas, and that if we could contrive to get on a scent in this quarter, something might turn up that would lead to our getting

the maiden off. So that is why we chose this particular meeting-place, and now we must plan how to get him off safely."

As the hour when Chingachgook was expected still remained distant, Deerslayer had time enough to examine into the state of the defenses, and to make such additional arrangements as the exigency of the moment seemed to require. The experience and foresight of Hutter had left, however, little to be done in these particulars; and Judith was sufficiently well acquainted with her father's schemes of defense to be able to explain all the details to the young man, and thus save him much time and trouble in his preparations.

Little was to be apprehended during the day. They knew that since they were in possession of all the canoes and of the ark, no other vessel was to be found on the lake. Nevertheless, Deerslayer was well aware that a vessel was soon made from the dead trees which were to be found in abundance near the water, did the savages deem it expedient to expose themselves to the risks of an open assault; and this danger made him wish ardently for the presence and succor of his Mohican friend.

## CHAPTER II

At length the hour arrived when it became necessary to proceed to the appointed place of meeting. Judith and Hetty entered one of the canoes,—the other two had been floated into a locked enclosure where they were hidden and secure,—and Deerslayer, after making all fast inside the dwelling with bolt and bar, appeared at a trap,



from which he descended into the canoe. This done, he fastened this door by which he had come out with a massive staple and stout padlock. The three were now fastened out of the dwelling, which could only be entered by violence, or by following the course taken by the young man in quitting it.

He next took a careful survey with the glass of the entire shore of the lake, as far as his own position would allow. Not a living thing was visible, a few birds excepted, and even the last fluttered about in the shade of the trees, as if unwilling to encounter the heat of a sultry afternoon.

“Nothing is stirring, hows’ever,” exclaimed Deerslayer, as he finally lowered the glass, and prepared to enter the ark. “If the vagabonds do harbor mischief in their minds, they are too cunning to let it be seen; it’s true a raft may be in preparation in the woods, but it has not yet been brought down to the lake. They can’t guess that we are about to quit the castle, and, if they did, they’ve no means of knowing where we intend to go. Still, they’ve eyes and legs, and will see in what direction we steer, and will be sartain to follow us. I shall strive to baffle ’em, hows’ever, by heading the scow in all manner of ways—first in one quarter and then in another—until they get to be a-leg-weary, and tired of tramping a’ter us.”

There was a gentle breeze from the north, and the sun lay above the western hills, at an elevation that promised rather more than two hours of day. The sailing of the ark was never very swift, but a few minutes satisfied Deerslayer that it was moving at the rate of some three or four miles an hour, which if the wind held good would bring them easily to the rock, a distance of a little more than two

leagues from the castle. In the guidance of the craft he was as good as his word. By sheering it first to one side of the lake, and then to the other, he endeavored to create an uncertainty as to his object, so that the savages, who were unquestionably watching his movements, would be at a loss to know in which direction to hasten to meet him.

Until he came near the end of the lake, Deerslayer stood as near the western shore as possible, with a view to aiding this deception. Then causing Judith and Hetty to enter the cabin, he suddenly threw the head of the scow round, and began to make the best of his way towards the outlet, where only twenty-four hours before he and his companion had come in search of this same craft. When distant some two hundred yards from the shore, he took in his sail, and dropped his anchor, suffering the vessel, however, to drift until the stern was within fifteen or eighteen feet of the rock. He did not, however, venture so near the shore without taking every precaution to effect a retreat in haste. He held the anchor-line in his hand, and Judith was stationed at a loophole on the side of the cabin next the shore, where she could watch the beach and the rocks, and give timely notice of the approach of either friend or foe.

The sun had not quite disappeared from the lake and valley, and Deerslayer knew Indian punctuality too well to anticipate any unmanly haste in his friend. The great question was whether, surrounded by enemies as he was known to be, he had escaped their toils. The occurrences of the last twenty-four hours must be a secret to him, and, like himself, Chingachgook was yet young on a warpath. It was true, he came prepared to encounter the party that withheld

his promised bride, but he had no means of ascertaining the extent of the danger he ran, or the precise positions occupied by either friends or foes.

"Is the rock empty, Judith?" inquired Deerslayer, as soon as he had checked the drift of the ark, deeming it imprudent to venture unnecessarily near the shore. "Is anything to be seen of the Delaware chief?"

"Nothing, Deerslayer. Neither rock, shore, tree, nor lake seems to have ever held a human form."

"Keep close, Judith — keep close, Hetty — a rifle has a prying eye, a nimble foot, and a desperate fatal tongue. Keep close, then, but keep up active looks, and —"

Deerslayer was interrupted by an exclamation from Judith.

"What is 't? — what is 't, Judith?" he hastily demanded. "Is anything to be seen?"

"There is a man on the rock! — an Indian warrior in his paint, and armed!"

"Where does he wear his hawk's feather?" eagerly added Deerslayer, relaxing his hold of the line, in readiness to drift nearer the place of rendezvous. "Is it fast to the warlock, or does he carry it above the left ear?"

"'T is as you say, above the left ear; he smiles, too, and mutters the word 'Mohican.'"

"God be praised, 't is the Sarpent at last!" exclaimed the young man, suffering the line to slip through his hands, until hearing a light bound, in the other end of the craft, he instantly checked the rope, and began to haul it in again, under the assurance that his object was effected.

At that moment the door of the cabin was opened hastily, and the Indian who had stood on the rock, darting

through the little room, stood at Deerslayer's side, simply uttering the exclamation "Hugh!" At the next instant Judith and Hetty shrieked, and the air was filled with the yell of twenty savages, who came leaping through the branches down the bank, some actually falling headlong into the water in their haste.

"Pull, Deerslayer!" cried Judith, "pull for life and death — the lake is full of savages wading after us!"

The young men — for Chingachgook immediately came to his friend's assistance — needed no second bidding; but applied themselves to their task with all their strength.

"What now, Judith? — what next? Do the Mingos still follow, or are we quit of 'em for the present?" demanded Deerslayer, when he felt the rope yielding, as if the scow was going ahead.

"The scow moves! and now the water deepens to the armpits of the foremost; still they rush forward, and will seize the ark!"

A slight scream, and then a joyous laugh followed from the girl; the first produced by a desperate effort of their pursuers, and the last by its failure; the scow, which had now got fairly in motion, gliding ahead into deep water out of the reach of the enemy.

"They have vanished! — one, the last, is just burying himself in the bushes of the bank — there, he has disappeared in the shadows of the trees! You have got your friend, and we are all safe!"

The two men did not cease their exertions until the anchor was pulled in, and the ark was well out in the open lake again. Then Deerslayer turned to his friend, Chingachgook, a tall, handsome, and athletic young warrior,

who had cast observant glances at the strange habitation and at the two girls; still he spoke not, and most of all did he avoid the betrayal of any curiosity.

"Judith and Hetty," said Deerslayer, with an untaught, natural courtesy, "this is the Mohican chief of whom you've heard me speak; Chingachgook, as he is called, which signifies the Big Serpent — so named for his wisdom, and prudence, and cunning; my 'arliest and latest friend."

Although Chingachgook both understood and spoke English, he was not fluent in its use; and when he had met Judith's cordial shake of the hand, and Hetty's milder welcome in the courteous manner that became a chief, he turned away, apparently to await the moment when it might suit his friend to enter into an explanation of his future intentions, and to give a narrative of what had passed since their separation. The other understood his meaning, and acted accordingly.

"This wind will soon die away altogether, now the sun is down," he said, "and there is no need of rowing agin it. In half an hour or so, it will either be a flat calm or the air will come off from the south shore, when we will begin our journey back agin to the castle; in the meanwhile, the Delaware and I will talk over matters, and get correct ideas of each other's notions consarnin the course we ought to take."

The girls withdrew into the cabin to prepare the evening meal, while the two young men took their seats on the head of the scow, and began to converse in the language of the Delawares. Deerslayer gave a brief narrative of the events which had taken place since his arrival on the lake,

abstaining, however, from saying anything about his encounter with, and victory over, the Iroquois; but when he had finished his friend asked searchingly, "And is that all that the young paleface hunter has done on the lake?"

The gaze that the Indian fastened on his companion was so keen that it seemed to mock the gathering darkness of the night. As the other furtively returned his look, he saw the two black eyes glistening on him, like the balls of the panther, or those of the penned wolf. He understood the meaning of this glowing gaze, and answered evasively, as he fancied would best become the modesty of a white man's gifts.

"'T is as you suspect, Sarpent; yes, 't is somewhat that-a-way. I *have* fell in with the inimy, and I suppose it may be said I 've fou't them, too."

An exclamation of delight and exultation escaped the Indian; and then, laying his hand eagerly on the arm of his friend, he asked if there were any scalps taken.

"That I *will* maintain, in the face of all the Delaware tribe, old Tamenund, and your father, the great Uncas, as well as the rest, is agin white gifts! *My* scalp is on my head, as you can see, Sarpent, and that was the only scalp that was in danger, when one side was altogether Christian and white."

"Did no warrior fall?—Deerslayer did not get his name by being slow of sight, or clumsy with the rifle!"

"In that particular, chief, you're nearer reason, and therefore nearer being right. I may say one Mingo fell."

"A chief!" demanded the other, with startling vehemence.

"Nay, that's more than I know or can say. He was artful, and treacherous, and stout-hearted, and may well have gained popularity enough with his people to be named to that rank. The man fou't well, though his eye was n't quick enough for one who had had his schooling in your company, Delaware."

"My brother and friend struck the body?"

"That was uncalled for, seeing that the Mingo died in my arms. The truth may as well be said at once; he fou't like a man of red gifts, and I fou't like a man with gifts of my own color. God gave me the victory; I could n't fly in the face of his providence by forgetting my birth and natur'. White He made me, and white I shall live and die."

"Good! Deerslayer is a paleface, and has paleface hands. A Delaware will look for the scalp, and hang it on a pole, and sing a song in his honor, when we go back to our people. The honor belongs to the tribe; it must not be lost."

"This is easy talking, but 't will not be as easy doing. The Mingo's body is in the hands of his fri'nds, and, no doubt, is hid in some hole, where Delaware cunning will never be able to get at the scalp."

The young man then gave his friend a succinct, but clear account of the event of the morning, concealing only, with a careful attention to avoid the Indian habit of boasting, all mention of the new name bestowed on him by the dying warrior. Chingachgook again expressed his satisfaction at the honor won by his friend, and then took up the narrative in his turn. His account was clear and short, beginning with the history of his departure from the villages of his people, and his arrival in the valley of the Susquehannah. On reaching the latter, which was at a point

only half a mile south of the outlet, he had soon struck a trail, which gave him notice of the probable vicinity of enemies. Yet although the Delaware — as we shall call him, since the Mohican tribe of which he was a chief had become for the time being part of the greater Delaware nation — had been closely watching his enemies for hours, their sudden and close pursuit, as he reached the scow, was as much a matter of surprise to himself as it had been to his friend. He could only account for it by the fact of their being more numerous than he had at first supposed, and by their having out parties, of the existence of which he was ignorant. He had seen and watched the ark from the moment it hove in sight, though he was necessarily ignorant of the presence of his friend upon it. The uncertainty of its movements, and the fact that it was unquestionably managed by white men, led him to conjecture the truth, however, and he held himself in readiness to get on board whenever a suitable occasion might offer. As the sun drew near the horizon he repaired to the rock, where, on emerging from the forest, he was gratified to find the ark lying apparently in readiness to receive him.

“ Well, Sarpent,” — asked Deerslayer, when the other had ended his narrative, “ as you ’ve been scouting around these Mingos, have you anything to tell us of their captives; the father of these young women and another, who, I conclude, is the lover of one of ’em ? ”

“ Chingachgook has seen them. An old man and a young warrior, — the falling hemlock and the tall pine.”

“ You ’re not so much out, Delaware ; you ’re not so much out. Old Hutter is decaying of a sartainty, though many solid blocks might be hewn out of his trunk yet ;



and, as for Hurry Harry, so far as height, and strength, and comeliness go, he may be called the pride of the human forest. Were the men bound, or in any manner suffering torture?"

"It is not so, Deerslayer. The Mingos are too many to cage their game. Some watch, some sleep, some scout, some hunt. The palefaces are treated like brothers to-day; to-morrow they will lose their scalps."

"Yes, that's red natur', and must be submitted to! Judith and Hetty, here's comforting tidings for you, the Delaware telling me that neither your father nor Hurry Harry is in suffering; but, bating the loss of liberty, as well off as we are ourselves. Of course they are kept in the camp; otherwise they do much as they please."

"I rejoice to hear this, Deerslayer," returned Judith, "and now we are joined by your friend, I make no manner of question that we shall find an opportunity to ransom the prisoners. If there are any women in the camp, I have articles of dress that will catch their eyes; and, should the worst come to the worst, we can open the good chest, which, I think, will be found to hold things that may tempt the chiefs."

"Would the savages let father go, if Judith and I gave them all our best things?" demanded Hetty, in her innocent, mild manner.

"Their women might interfere, good Hetty; yes, their women might interfere with such an ind in view. But tell me, Sarpent, how it is as to squaws among the knaves; have they many of their own women in the camp?"

"Six," replied the Indian, holding up all the fingers of one hand, and the thumb of the other; "besides *this*." The

last number denoted his betrothed ; whom, with the poetry and truth of nature, he described by laying his hand on his own heart.

“ Did you see her, chief — did you get a glimpse of her pleasant countenance, or come close enough to her ear to sing in it the song she loves to hear ? ”

“ No, Deerslayer, — the trees were too many, and leaves covered their boughs, like clouds hiding the heavens in a storm. But, ” — and the young warrior turned his dark face towards his friend, with a smile on it that illuminated its fierce-looking paint and naturally stern lineaments with a bright gleam of human feeling, — “ Chingachgook heard the laugh of Wah-ta-Wah ; he knew it from the laugh of the women of the Iroquois. It sounded in his ears like the chirp of the wren. ”

“ Aye, trust a lover’s ear for that ; and a Delaware’s ear for all sounds that are ever heard in the woods. I know not why it is so, Judith, but when young men — and I dare to say it may be all the same with young women too — but when they get to have kind feelin’s towards each other, it’s wonderful how pleasant the laugh or the speech becomes to the other person. I’ve seen grim warriors listening to the chattering and the laughing of young gals as if it was church music. ”

“ And *you*, Deerslayer, ” said Judith quickly ; “ have *you* never felt how pleasant it is to listen to the laugh of the girl you love ? ”

“ Lord bless you, gal ! — why I’ve never lived enough among my own color to drop into them sort of feelin’s, — no, never ! I dare to say, they are nat’ral and right ; but to me there’s no music so sweet as the sighing of the wind

in the tree-tops, and the rippling of a stream from a full, sparkling, natyve fountain of pure fresh water ; unless, indeed," he continued, dropping his head for an instant in a thoughtful manner, " unless, indeed, it be the open mouth of a sartain hound, when I 'm on the track of a fat buck. No, Judith, my sweetheart is in the forest, hanging from the boughs of the trees, in a soft rain — in the dew on the open grass — the clouds that float about in the blue heavens — the birds that sing in the woods — the sweet springs where I slake my thirst — and in all the other glorious gifts that come from God's providence ! "

Both men now arose, the hour having arrived when it became prudent to move the ark further from the land. It was quite dark ; the heavens having become clouded and the stars hid. The north wind had ceased, as was usual, with the setting of the sun, and a light air arose from the south. This change favoring the design of Deerslayer, he lifted his anchor, and the scow immediately and quite perceptibly began to drift more into the lake. The sail was set, when the motion of the craft increased to a rate not much less than two miles in the hour. As this superseded the necessity of rowing, Deerslayer, Chingachgook, and Judith seated themselves in the stern of the scow, where the first governed its movements by holding the oar. Here they discoursed on their future movements, and on the means that ought to be used in order to effect the liberation of their friends.

In this manner half an hour passed, during which time the ark had been slowly stealing over the water, the darkness thickening around it; though it was easy to see that the gloom of the forest at the southern end of the lake was

getting to be distant, while the mountains that lined the sides of the beautiful basin were overshadowing it, nearly from side to side. There was, indeed, a narrow stripe of water, in the centre of the lake, where the dim light that was still shed from the heavens fell upon its surface, in a line extending north and south; and along this faint tract—a sort of inverted milky-way, in which the obscurity was not quite as dense as in other places—the scow held her course, he who steered well knowing that it led in the direction he wished to go. The peculiarities at length caught the attention of Judith and the Deerslayer, and the conversation ceased, to allow each to gaze at the solemn stillness and deep repose of nature.

“’T is a gloomy night,” observed the girl, after a pause of several minutes. “I hope we may be able to find the castle.”

“Little fear of our missing *that*, if we keep this path, in the middle of the lake,” returned the young man. “Natur’ has made us a road here, and, dim as it is, there’ll be little difficulty in following it.”

“Do you hear nothing, Deerslayer? It seemed as if the water was stirring quite near us!”

“Sartainly something *did* move the water, uncommon like; it must have been a fish. Ha! *that* sounds like a paddle, used with more than common caution!”

At this moment the Delaware bent forward and pointed significantly into the boundary of gloom, as if some object had suddenly caught his eye. Both Deerslayer and Judith followed the direction of his gesture, and each got a view of a canoe at the same instant. The glimpse of this startling neighbor was dim, and, to eyes less practiced, it might

have been uncertain ; though to those in the ark the object was evidently a canoe, with a single individual in it ; the latter standing erect and paddling. How many lay concealed in its bottom, of course could not be known. Flight, by means of oars, from a bark canoe impelled by vigorous and skillful hands, was utterly impracticable, and each of the men seized his rifle in expectation of a conflict.

“ I can easily bring down the paddler,” whispered Deerslayer, “ but we ’ll first hail him and ask his arr ’nd.” Then raising his voice, he continued in a solemn manner, “ Hold ! If you come nearer I must fire, though contrary to my wishes, and then sartain death will follow. Stop paddling, and answer ! ”

“ Fire, and slay a poor defenseless girl,” returned a soft, tremulous female voice, “ and God will never forgive you ! Go your way, Deerslayer, and let me go mine.”

“ Hetty ! ” exclaimed the young man and Judith in a breath ; and the former sprang instantly to the spot where he had left the canoe they had been towing. It was gone, and he understood the whole affair. As for the fugitive, frightened at the menace, she ceased paddling, and remained dimly visible, resembling a spectral outline of a human form standing on the water.

“ What can this mean, Judith ? ” demanded Deerslayer. “ Why has your sister taken the canoe, and left us ? ”

“ You know she is feeble-minded, poor girl ! and she has her own ideas of what ought to be done. She loves her father more than most children love their parents — and then ” —

“ Then what, girl ? This is a trying moment ; one in which truth must be spoken ! ”

Judith felt a generous and womanly regret at betraying her sister, and she hesitated ere she spoke again. But once more urged by Deerslayer, and conscious herself of all the risks the whole party was running by the indiscretion of Hetty, she could refrain no longer.

"Then I fear poor, weak-minded Hetty has not been altogether able to see the vanity, and madness, and folly that lie hid behind the handsome face and fine form of Hurry Harry. She talks of him in her sleep, and sometimes betrays the inclination in her waking moments."

"You think, Judith, that your sister is now bent on some mad scheme to serve her father and Hurry, which will, in all likelihood, give them riptyles, the Mingos, the master-ship of a canoe?"

"Such, I fear, will turn out to be the fact, Deerslayer. Poor Hetty has hardly sufficient cunning to outwit a savage."

All this while the canoe, with the form of Hetty erect in one end of it, was dimly perceptible; though the greater drift of the ark rendered it at each instant less and less distinct. It was evident no time was to be lost, lest it should altogether disappear. The rifles were now laid aside as useless; the two men seizing the oars, and sweeping the head of the scow round in the direction of the canoe. Judith, accustomed to the office, flew to the other end of the ark and placed herself at what might be called the helm. Hetty took the alarm at these preparations, which could not be made without noise, and started off like a bird that had been suddenly put up by the approach of unexpected danger.

As Deerslayer and his companion rowed with the energy of those who felt the necessity of straining every nerve, and Hetty's strength was impaired by a nervous desire to escape, the chase would have quickly terminated in the capture of the fugitive had not the girl made several short and unlooked-for deviations in her course. These turnings gave her time, and they had also the effect of gradually bringing both canoe and ark within the deeper gloom cast by the shadows from the hills. They also gradually increased the distance between the fugitive and her pursuers, until Judith called out to her companions to cease rowing, for she had completely lost sight of the canoe.

When this mortifying announcement was made, Hetty was actually so near as to understand every syllable her sister uttered ; though the latter had used the precaution of speaking as low as circumstances would allow her to do, and make herself heard. Hetty stopped paddling at the same moment, and waited the result with an impatience that was breathless, equally from her late exertions and her desire to land. A dead silence immediately fell on the lake ; during which the three in the ark were using their senses differently in order to detect the position of the canoe. Judith leant forward to listen, in the hope of catching some sound that might betray the direction in which her sister was stealing away ; while her two companions brought their eyes as near as possible to a level with the water, in order to detect any object that might be floating on its surface. All was vain, however, for neither sound nor sight rewarded their efforts. All this

time Hetty, who had not the cunning to sink into the canoe, stood erect, a finger pressed on her lips, gazing in the direction in which the voices had been heard, resembling a statue of profound and timid attention. Her ingenuity had barely sufficed to enable her to seize the canoe and to quit the ark in the noiseless manner related; and then it appeared to be momentarily exhausted. Even the doubling of the canoe had been as much the consequence of an uncertain hand, and of nervous agitation, as of any craftiness or calculation.

The pause continued several minutes, during which Deerslayer and the Delaware conferred together in the language of the latter. Then the oars dipped again, and the ark moved away, rowing with as little noise as possible. It steered westward, a little southerly, or in the direction of the encampment of the enemy. Having reached a point at no great distance from the shore, and where the obscurity was intense on account of the proximity of the land, it lay there near an hour, in waiting for the expected approach of Hetty, who, it was thought, would make the best of her way to that spot as soon as she believed herself relieved from the danger of pursuit. No success rewarded this little blockade, however; neither appearance nor sound denoting the passage of the canoe. Disappointed at this failure, and conscious of the importance of getting possession of the fortress before it could be seized by the enemy, Deerslayer now took his way towards the castle, with the apprehension that all his foresight in securing the canoes would be defeated by this unguarded and alarming movement on the part of the feeble-minded Hetty.



## CHAPTER III

Fear, as much as calculation, had induced Hetty to cease paddling, when she found that her pursuers did not know in which direction to proceed. She remained stationary, until the ark had pulled in near the encampment, when she resumed the paddle, and with cautious strokes made the best of her way towards the western shore. Yet feeble-minded as she was, she had worked out, partly through instinctive caution, and partly through long familiarity with the lake, a plan that would have done credit to a wiser brain. She was perfectly aware of the importance of keeping the canoes from falling into the hands of the Iroquois, and had hit upon the expedient of landing at a long gravelly point which thrust itself into the lake, about a league below the outlet. From this point a canoe, if set adrift with a southerly air, would float clear of the land, and drift towards the castle, or at any rate towards the northern end of the lake where Deerslayer could see it from the castle.

The girl was quite an hour finding her way to the point ; but she was no sooner on the gravelly beach than she prepared to set the canoe adrift. While in the act of pushing it from her, she heard low voices that seemed to come from among the trees behind her. Startled at this unexpected danger, Hetty was on the point of springing into the canoe again, in order to seek safety in flight, when she thought she recognized the tones of Judith's melodious voice. Bending forward so as to catch the sounds more directly, they evidently came from the water ; and then she understood that the ark was approaching, and so close

to the western shore as necessarily to cause it to pass the point within twenty yards of the spot where she stood. Here, then, was all she could desire ; the canoe was shoved off into the lake, leaving its late occupant alone on the narrow strand.

When this act of self-devotion was performed, Hetty did not retire. Flight at any moment was perfectly easy, as twenty steps would bury her in the forest. But in the darkness it was impossible to see anything at a distance of a few feet. She remained, therefore, watching with intense anxiety the result of her expedient, intending to call the attention of the others to the canoe with her voice, should they appear to pass without observing it. The ark approached under its sail again on its way to the castle, as its occupants had given up hope of finding Hetty. Deerslayer was standing in its bow, with Judith near him, and the Delaware at the helm.

It was Deerslayer who first saw the empty canoe.

"Judith, there's a canoe!" he whispered.

"It must be that in which Hetty fled," she replied. "She must have landed and set it adrift."

"Keep the scow straight, Delaware," commanded Deerslayer ; "steer as straight as your bullet flies when sent agin a buck ; there, — I have it."

The canoe was seized, and immediately secured again to the side of the ark. At the next moment the sail was lowered, and the motion of the ark arrested, by means of the oars.

"Hetty!" called out Judith, concern and affection betraying itself in her tones ; "are you within hearing, sister? — for God's sake answer, and let me hear the sound of your voice again ! Hetty ! — dear Hetty !"

"I'm here, Judith — here on the shore, where it will be useless to follow me, as I will hide in the woods."

"Oh! Hetty, what is 't you do! Remember 't is drawing near midnight, and that the woods are filled with savages and wild beasts!"

"Neither will harm a poor half-witted girl, Judith. God is as much with me here as He would be in the ark, or in the hut. I am going to help my father and Hurry Harry, who will be tortured and slain, unless some one cares for them."

"We all care for them, and intend to-morrow to send them a flag of truce to buy their ransom. Come back then, sister; trust to us, who have better heads than you, and who will do all we can for father."

"I know your head is better than mine, Judith, for mine is very weak, to be sure; but I must go to father and Hurry. Do you and Deerslayer keep the castle, sister; leave me in the hands of God."

"God is with us all, Hetty — in the castle, or on the shore — father as well as ourselves; and it is sinful not to trust to His goodness. You can do nothing in the dark; will lose your way in the forest, and perish for want of food."

"God will not let that happen to a poor child that goes to serve her father, sister. I must try and find the savages."

"Come back, for this night only; in the morning we will put you ashore, and leave you to do as you may think right."

"You *say* so, Judith, and you *think* so; but you would not. Your heart would soften, and you'd see tomahawks and scalping-knives in the air. Besides, I've got a thing

to tell the Indian chief that will answer all our wishes ; and I 'm afraid I may forget it if I don't tell it to him at once. You 'll see that he will let father go as soon as he hears it ! ”

“ Poor Hetty ! What can *you* say to a ferocious savage, that will be likely to change his bloody purpose ! ”

“ That which will frighten him, and make him let father go,” returned the simple-minded girl, positively. “ You 'll see, sister ; you 'll see how soon it will bring him to, like a gentle child ! ”

“ Will you tell *me*, Hetty, what you intend to say ? ” asked Deerslayer ; “ I know the savages well, and can form some idee how far fair words will be likely, or not, to work on their bloody natur's.”

“ Well, then,” answered Hetty, dropping her voice to a low, confidential tone ; for the stillness of the night and the nearness of the ark permitted her to do this, and still to be heard, — “ well, then, Deerslayer, as you seem a good and honest young man, I will tell *you*. I mean not to say a word to any of the savages until I get face to face with their head chief, let them plague me with as many questions as they please ; no — I 'll answer none of them, unless it be to tell them to lead me to their wisest man. Then, Deerslayer, I 'll tell him that God will not forgive murder and thefts ; and that if father and Hurry did go after the scalps of the Iroquois, he must return good for evil, for so the Bible commands, else he will go into everlasting punishment. When he hears this, and feels it to be true, as feel it he must, how long will it be before he sends father and Hurry and me to the shore, opposite the castle, telling us all three to go our way in peace ? ”

The last question was put in a triumphant manner ; and then the simple minded girl laughed at the impression she never doubted that her project had made on her auditors. Deerslayer was dumfounded at this proof of guileless feebleness of mind. For a moment all were silent with surprise. Then Judith called her sister by name once more. But no answer was given to the call.

By the snapping of twigs, and the rustling of leaves, Hetty had evidently quitted the shore, and was already burying herself in the forest. To follow would have been useless. After a short and melancholy discussion, the sail was again set, and the party reached the castle in less than an hour. Here all was found as it had been left. Judith occupied a solitary bed that night, bedewing the pillow with her tears, as she thought with many bitter regrets of the innocent girl who had been her companion from childhood, but who was now wandering alone in the forest.

#### CHAPTER IV

When Hetty left the shore, she took her way unhesitatingly into the woods with a nervous apprehension of being followed. Luckily, this course was the best she could have hit on, since it was the only one that led her from the point. The night was so intensely dark, beneath the branches of the trees, that her progress was very slow, and the direction she went altogether a matter of chance, after the first few yards. The formation of the ground, however, did not permit her to deviate far from the line in which she desired to proceed. On one hand, it was soon bounded by the acclivity of the hill ; while the lake

on the other served as a guide. For two hours did this single-hearted and simple-minded girl toil through the mazes of the forest; sometimes finding herself on the brow of the bank that bounded the water, and at others struggling up an ascent that warned her to go no further in that direction, since it necessarily ran at right angles to the course on which she wished to proceed. Her feet often slid from beneath her, and she got many falls, though none to do her injury; but, by the end of the period mentioned, she had become so weary as to want strength to go any further. Rest was indispensable; and she set about preparing a bed, with the readiness and coolness of one to whom the wilderness presented no unnecessary terrors, because of its familiarity and the freedom from apprehension which went with her simplicity.

As soon as Hetty had collected a sufficient number of the dried leaves to protect her person from the damps of the ground, she kneeled beside the humble pile, clasped her raised hands in an attitude of deep devotion, and in a soft, low, but audible voice, repeated the Lord's prayer.

This duty done, she wrapped about her a heavy, coarse mantle, lay down, and disposed herself to sleep. In a few moments she dropped asleep, and lay hour after hour in a tranquillity as undisturbed and a rest as sweet as if watched over by the guardian care of that mother who had so recently been taken from her. Not once did her soft eyes open, until the gray of the dawn came struggling through the tops of the trees, falling on their lids, and, united to the freshness of a summer's morning, giving the usual summons to awake. The girl murmured in her sleep,

threw an arm forward, smiled as gently as an infant in its cradle, but still slumbered. In making this unconscious gesture, her hand fell on some object that was warm, and, in the half-unconscious state in which she lay, she connected the circumstance with her habits. At the next moment, a rude attack was made on her side, as if a rooting animal were thrusting its snout beneath, with a desire to force her position; and then, uttering the name of "Judith," she awoke. As the startled girl arose to a sitting attitude, she perceived that some dark object sprang from her, scattering the leaves and snapping the fallen twigs in its haste. Opening her eyes, and recovering from the first confusion and astonishment of her situation, Hetty perceived a cub of the common brown bear, balancing itself on its hinder legs and still looking towards her, as if doubtful whether it would be safe to trust itself near her person again. The first impulse of Hetty, who had been mistress of several of these cubs, was to run and seize the little creature as a prize, but a loud growl warned her of the danger of such a procedure. Recoiling a few steps, the girl looked hurriedly round, and perceived the dam with two more cubs watching her movements, with fiery eyes, at no great distance. Much as she longed to catch the little animal up in her arms and play with it, she had self-command enough to refrain; and recollecting her errand, she tore herself away from the group and, after kneeling and offering a short prayer, proceeded on her course along the margin of the lake, of which she now caught glimpses again through the trees. To her surprise, though not to her alarm, the family of bears arose and followed her steps, keeping a short distance behind her,

apparently watching every movement as if they had a near interest in all she did.

In this manner, escorted by the dam and cubs, the girl proceeded nearly a mile, thrice the distance she had been able to achieve in the darkness during the same period of time. She then reached a brook that had dug a channel for itself into the earth, and went brawling into the lake, between steep and high banks, covered with trees. Here Hetty performed her ablutions; then drinking of the pure mountain water, she went her way, refreshed and lighter of heart, still attended by her singular companions. Her course now lay along a broad and nearly level terrace, which stretched from the top of the bank that bounded the water, and Hetty knew by this circumstance that she was getting near to the encampment; had she not, the bears would have given her warning of the vicinity of human beings. Snuffing the air, the dam refused to follow any further, though the girl looked back and invited her to come by signs, and even by direct appeals made in her own sweet voice. It was while making her way slowly through some bushes, in this manner, with averted face and eyes riveted on the immovable animals, that the girl suddenly found her steps arrested by a human hand, that was laid lightly on her shoulder.

"Where go?" said a soft female voice, speaking hurriedly, and in concern. "Indian — red-man — savage — wicked warrior — that-a-way."

This unexpected salutation alarmed the girl no more than the presence of the fierce inhabitants of the woods. It took her a little by surprise, it is true, but the Indian woman who had stopped her was little likely to excite



terror. It was a girl not much older than herself, whose smile was sunny as Judith's in her brightest moments, and whose voice was melody itself. She was dressed in a calico mantle, that effectually protected all the upper part of her person, while a short petticoat of blue cloth edged with gold lace, that fell no lower than her knees, leggings of the same, and moccasins of deerskin, completed her attire. Her hair fell in long dark braids down her shoulders and back, and was parted above a low smooth forehead, in a way to soften the expression of eyes that were full of archness and natural feeling. Her face was oval, with delicate features; the teeth were even and white; while her voice, as has been already intimated, was soft as the sighing of the night air, a characteristic of the females of her race, but which was so conspicuous in herself as to have procured for her the name of Wah-ta-Wah.

In a word, this was the betrothed of Chingachgook; who, having succeeded in lulling their suspicions, was permitted to wander around the encampment of her captors. This indulgence was in accordance with the general policy of the red-man, who well knew, moreover, that her trail could have been followed, in the event of flight. It will also be remembered that the Iroquois, or Hurons, as it would be better to call them, were entirely ignorant of the proximity of her lover; a fact, indeed, that she did not know herself.

"Where go?" repeated Wah-ta-Wah, returning the smile of Hetty, in her own gentle, winning manner; "*wicked* warrior that-a-way — *good* warrior far off."

"What's your name?" asked Hetty, with the simplicity of a child.

“Wah-ta-Wah, that say Hist-oh-Hist in your tongue. I no Mingo — good Delaware — Yengeese friend. Mingo cruel, and love scalp for blood — Delaware love him for honor. Come here, where no eyes.”

Wah-ta-Wah now led her companion towards the lake, descending the bank so as to place its overhanging trees and bushes between them and any probable observers; nor did she stop until they were both seated, side by side, on a fallen log, one end of which actually lay buried in the water.

“*Why* you come for?” the young Indian eagerly inquired; “*where* you come from?”

Hetty told her tale in her own simple and truth-loving manner. She explained the situation of her father, and stated her desire to serve him, and, if possible, to procure his release.

“Why your father come to Mingo camp in night?” asked the Indian girl, with a directness, which, if not borrowed from the other, partook largely of its sincerity. “He know it war-time, and he no boy — he no want beard — no want to be told Iroquois carry tomahawk, and knife, and rifle. Why he come night time, seize *me* by hair, and try to scalp Delaware girl?”

“You!” said Hetty, almost sickening with horror; did he seize *you* — did he try to scalp *you*?”

“Why no? Delaware scalp sell for much as Mingo scalp. Governor no tell difference. Wicked t’ing for paleface to scalp. No his gifts, as the good Deerslayer always tell me.”

“And do *you* know the Deerslayer?” said Hetty, coloring with delight and surprise, forgetting her regrets at the moment, in the influence of this new feeling. “I know

him, too. He is now in the ark, with Judith, and a Delaware who is called the Big Serpent. A bold and handsome warrior is this Serpent, too !”

Spite of the rich deep color that nature had bestowed on the Indian beauty, the tell-tale blood deepened on her cheeks, until the blush gave new animation and intelligence to her jet-black eyes. Raising a finger in an attitude of warning, she dropped her voice, already so soft and sweet, nearly to a whisper, as she continued the discourse.

“Chingachgook !” returned the Delaware girl, sighing out the harsh name, in sounds so softly guttural as to cause it to reach the ear in melody. “His father, Uncas — great chief of the Mohicans — next to old Tamenund ! More as warrior, not so much gray hair, and less at council-fire. *You* know Serpent ?”

“He joined us last evening, and was in the ark with me for two or three hours before I left it. I’m afraid he has come after scalps as well as my poor father and Hurry Harry !”

“Why he should n’t, ha ? Chingachgook red warrior, very red — scalp make his honor — be sure he take him.”

“Then,” said Hetty, earnestly, “he will be as wicked as any other. God will not pardon in a red man what he will not pardon in a white man.”

“No true,” returned the Delaware girl, with a warmth that nearly amounted to passion, — “no true, I tell you ! The Manitou smile and please when he see young warrior come back from the warpath, with two, ten, hundred scalp on a pole ! Chingachgook father take scalp, grandfather take scalp — all old chief take scalp ; and Chingachgook take as many scalp as he can carry, himself !”

"Then, Hist, his sleep of nights must be terrible to think of! No one can be cruel and hope to be forgiven."

"No cruel — plenty forgiven," returned Wah-ta-Wah, stamping her little foot on the stony strand, and shaking her head in a way to show how completely feminine feeling, in one of its aspects, had got the better of feminine feeling in another. "I tell you, Serpent brave; he go home this time with four, yes, *two* scalp."

"And is that his errand here? Did he really come all this distance, across mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes, to torment his fellow-creatures, and do so wicked a thing?"

This question at once appeased the growing ire of the half-offended Indian beauty. At first she looked around her suspiciously, as if distrusting eavesdroppers; then she gazed wistfully into the face of her attentive companion, whose simplicity and guilelessness made her countenance rarely winning. Then yielding to an impulse of tenderness she threw her arms around Hetty, and embraced her with an outpouring emotion so natural that it was only equaled by its warmth.

"*You* good," whispered the young Indian; "you good, I know; it's so long since Wah-ta-Wah have a friend — a sister — anybody to speak her heart to! You Hist friend: don't I say *trut'*?"

"I never had a friend," answered Hetty, returning the warm embrace with unfeigned earnestness; "I've a sister, but no friend. Judith loves me, and I love Judith; but that's natural, and as we are taught in the Bible; but I *should* like to have a *friend*! I'll be your friend, with all my heart; for I like your voice, and your smile, and your way of thinking in everything except about the scalps" —

"No t'ink more of him — no say more of scalp," interrupted Hist, soothingly; "you paleface, I redskin; we bring up different fashion. Deerslayer and Chingachgook great friend, and no the same color. My name Waha-Wah I told you; what your name, pretty paleface?"

"I am called Hetty, though Judith says my real name is Esther. I don't understand why Esther and Hetty are the same, but Judith says it's in the Bible so; and I'm not full-witted, so I don't expect to understand everything."

Hist gazed at the gentle, simple girl for quite a minute, without speaking; when the truth appeared to flash all at once on the mind of the young Indian maid. Pity, reverence, and tenderness seemed struggling together in her breast; then, rising suddenly, she indicated a wish to her companion that she would accompany her to the camp, which was situated at no great distance. This unexpected change, from the precaution that Hist had previously manifested a desire to use in order to prevent being seen, to an open exposure of the person of her friend, arose from the perfect conviction that no Indian would harm a being whom the Great Spirit had disarmed, by depriving it of its strongest defense, reason.

Hetty accompanied her new friend without apprehension or reluctance. It was her wish to reach the camp; and, sustained by her motives, she felt no more concern for the consequences than did her companion herself, now the latter was apprised of the character of the protection that the paleface maiden carried with her. Still, as they proceeded slowly along a shore that was tangled with overhanging bushes, Hist endeavored to caution her new-found friend, who she now feared would in her simplicity relate too much.

"Hist prisoner, and Mingo got big ear. No speak of Chingachgook when they by. Promise Hist that, good Hetty."

"I know — I know," returned Hetty, half-whispering in her eagerness to let the other see she understood the necessity of caution. "I know — Deerslayer and the Serpent mean to get you away from the Iroquois; and you wish me not to tell the secret."

"How you know?" said Hist, hastily, vexed at the moment that the other was not even more feeble-minded than was actually the case. "How you know? Better not talk of any but fader and Hurry; Mingo understand *dat*; he no understand *t'udder*. Promise you no talk about what you no understand."

"But I *do* understand this, Hist; and so I *must* talk about it. Deerslayer as good as told father all about it, in my presence; and as nobody told me not to listen, I overheard it all, as I did Hurry and father's discourse about the scalps."

"Very bad for paleface to talk about scalps, and very bad for young woman to hear! Now you love Hist, I know, Hetty, and so, among Injins, when love hardest never talk most."

"That's not the way among white people, who talk most about them they love best. I suppose it's because I'm only half-witted that I don't see the reason why it should be so different among red people."

"That what Deerslayer call gift. One gift to talk, t'udder gift to hold tongue. Hold-tongue your gift, among Mingos. If Serpent want to see Hist, so Hetty want to see Hurry. Good girl never tell secret of friend."

Hetty understood this appeal; and she promised the Delaware girl not to make any allusion to the presence of Chingachgook, or to the motive of his visit to the lake.

"Maybe he get off Hurry and fader, as well as Hist, if let him have his way," whispered Wah-ta-Wah to her companion, in a confiding, flattering way, just as they got near enough to the encampment to hear the voices of several of their own sex, who were apparently occupied in the usual toils of women of their class. "T'ink of dat, Hetty, and put two, twenty finger on mouth. No get friends free without Serpent do it."

A better expedient could not have been adopted to secure the silence and discretion of Hetty than that which was now presented to her mind. As the liberation of her father and the young frontier-man was the great object of her adventure, she felt the connection between it and the services of the Delaware; and with an innocent laugh, she nodded her head, and in the same suppressed manner promised a due attention to the wishes of her friend. Thus assured, Hist tarried no longer, but immediately and openly led the way into the encampment of her captors.

## CHAPTER V

That the party to which Hist compulsorily belonged was not one that was regularly on the warpath was evident by the presence of females. It was a small fragment of a tribe that had been hunting and fishing within the English limits, where it was found by the commencement of hostilities between the English and the French — a struggle that would involve all tribes allied with either side. These Indians

had therefore passed the winter and spring living within the territory of their enemies. When the runner arrived with the news that war had broken out, they adopted a plan which showed deep Indian sagacity. To have fled in a direct line for the Canadas would have exposed them to the dangers of a direct pursuit : and the chiefs had determined to adopt the expedient of penetrating deeper into a region that had now become dangerous, in the hope of being able to retire in the rear of their pursuers instead of having them on their trail. The presence of the women had induced the attempt at this ruse, the strength of these feebler members of the party being unequal to the effort of escaping from the pursuit of warriors. When the reader remembers the vast extent of the American wilderness at that early day, he will perceive that it was possible for even a tribe to remain months undiscovered in particular portions of it ; nor was there great danger of encountering a foe, the usual precautions being observed.

The encampment to which Hist was leading her new friend was therefore only temporary, as the party was continually on the move. One fire, that had been kindled against the roots of a living oak, sufficed for the whole party, the weather being too mild to require it for any purpose but cooking. Scattered around this centre of attraction were some fifteen or twenty low huts — perhaps kennels would be a better word — into which their different owners crept at night, and which were also intended to meet the exigencies of a storm. These little huts were made of the branches of trees, put together with some ingenuity, and they were uniformly topped with bark that had been stripped from fallen trees, of which every virgin forest



possesses hundreds, in all stages of decay. Of furniture they had next to none. Cooking utensils of the simplest sort were lying near the fire; a few articles of clothing were to be seen in or around the huts; rifles, horns, and pouches leaned against the trees, or were suspended from the lower branches; and the carcasses of two or three deer were stretched to view on the same natural shambles.

As the encampment was in the midst of a dense wood, the eye could not take in the whole effect at a glance; but hut after hut started out of the gloomy picture, as one gazed about him in quest of objects. There was no centre, unless the fire might be so considered—no open area where the possessors of this rude village might congregate; but all was dark, covert, and cunning, like its owners. A few children strayed from hut to hut, giving the spot a little the air of domestic life; and the suppressed laugh and low voices of the women occasionally broke in upon the deep stillness of the sombre forest. As for the men, they either ate, slept, or examined their arms. They conversed but little, and then usually apart, or in groups withdrawn from the females; whilst an air of untiring, innate watchfulness and apprehension of danger seemed to be blended even with their slumbers.

As the two girls came near the encampment, Hetty uttered a slight exclamation on catching a view of the person of her father. He was seated on the ground with his back to a tree, and Hurry stood near him, indolently whittling a twig. Apparently, they were as much at liberty as any others in or about the camp; and one unaccustomed to Indian usage would have mistaken them for visitors,

instead of supposing them to be captives. Wah-ta-Wah led her new friend quite near them, and then modestly withdrew, that her own presence might be no restraint on her feelings. But Hetty was not sufficiently familiar with caresses or outward demonstrations of fondness, to indulge in any outbrealking of feeling. She merely approached and stood at her father's side without speaking. The old man expressed neither alarm nor surprise at her sudden appearance. In these particulars he had caught the stoicism of the Indians ; well knowing that there was no more certain mode of securing their respect than by imitating their self-command. Nor did the savages themselves betray the least sign of surprise at this sudden appearance of a stranger among them. Still, a few warriors collected, and it was evident, by the manner in which they glanced at Hetty as they conversed together, that she was the subject of their discourse.

Hutter was inwardly much moved by the conduct of Hetty, though he affected so much indifference of manner. He recollected her gentle appeal to him before he left the ark, and knowing the simple, single-hearted fidelity of his child, he understood why she had come.

"This is not well, Hetty," he said. "You should not have come hither ; these are fierce Iroquois and they will not understand your nature or your intentions !"

"Tell me, father," returned the girl, looking furtively about her, as if fearful of being overheard, "did God let you do the cruel errand on which you came? I want much to know this, that I may speak to the Indians plainly if He did not. Did you and Hurry get any scalps, father?"

“ If that will set your mind at peace, child, I can answer you, no. I had caught the young creatur’ who came here with you, but her screeches soon brought down upon me a troop of the wild-cats that was too much for any single Christian to withstand. If that will do you any good, we are as innocent of having taken a scalp this time as I make no doubt we shall also be innocent of receiving the bounty.”

“ Thank you for that, father! Now I can speak boldly to the Iroquois, and with an easy conscience. I hope Hurry, too, has not been able to harm any of the Indians?”

“ Why, as to that matter, Hetty,” returned the individual in question, “ you’ve put it pretty much in the natyve character of the religious truth. Hurry has not been *able*, and that is the long and short of it.”

“ It’s best so, Hurry,” she said. “ It is best father and you should be quiet and peaceable till I have spoken to the Iroquois, when all will be well and happy. I don’t wish either of you to follow, but leave me to myself. As soon as all is settled, and you are at liberty to go back to the castle, I will come and let you know it.”

Hetty spoke with so much simple earnestness and seemed so confident of success, that both the listeners felt more disposed to attach an importance to her mediation than might otherwise have happened. When she manifested an intention to quit them, therefore, and join the group of chiefs, they offered no obstacle.

When Hist — for so we love best to call her — quitted her companion, she strayed near one or two of the elder warriors, who had shown her most kindness in her captivity — the principal man of whom had even offered to adopt her as his child, if she would consent to become a

Huron. In taking this direction the shrewd girl did so to invite inquiry. She was too well trained in the habits of her people to obtrude the opinions of one of her sex and years on men and warriors ; but Hetty had hardly reached the side of her father before the Delaware girl was brought within the circle of the warriors by a secret but significant gesture. Here she was questioned as to the presence of her companion, and the motives that had brought her to the camp. This was all that Hist desired. She explained the manner in which she had detected the weakness of Hetty's reason, rather exaggerating than lessening the deficiency in her intellect ; and then she related in general terms the object of the girl in venturing among her enemies. The effect was all that the speaker expected ; her account investing the person and character of their visitor with a sacredness and respect that she well knew would prove her protection. As soon as her own purpose was attained Hist withdrew to a distance, though she did not for a moment relax her watchfulness.

As Hetty approached the chiefs they opened their little circle with an ease and deference of manner that would have done credit to men of more courtly origin. A fallen tree lay near, and the oldest of the warriors made a quiet sign for the girl to be seated on it, taking his place at her side with the gentleness of a father. The others arranged themselves around the two with grave dignity ; and then the girl, who had sufficient observation to perceive that such a course was expected of her, began to reveal the object of her visit. The moment she opened her mouth to speak, however, the old chief gave a gentle sign for her to forbear, said a few words to one of his juniors, and then

waited in silent patience until the latter had summoned Hist to act as interpreter, a rôle which she was only too glad to be allowed to take, as she hoped to be able, by artifice if need be, to shelter Hetty and to conceal the fact of the presence of her betrothed, should Hetty forget herself and betray too much. But Hetty's errand was of a very different nature.

As soon as Hist was seated by the side of Hetty, the old chief desired her to ask "the fair young paleface" what had brought her among the Iroquois, and what they could do to serve her.

"Tell them, Hist, who I am — Thomas Hutter's youngest daughter; Thomas Hutter, the oldest of their two prisoners; he who owns the castle and the ark, and who has the best right to be thought the owner of these hills and that lake, since he has dwelt so long, and trapped so long, and fished so long among them. They'll know whom you mean by Thomas Hutter, if you tell them *that*. And then tell them that I've come here to convince them they ought not to harm father and Hurry, but let them go in peace, and to treat them as brothers, rather than as enemies. Now tell them all this plainly, Hist, and fear nothing for yourself or me; God will protect us."

Wah-ta-Wah did as the other desired, taking care to render the words of her friend as literally as possible into the Iroquois tongue, a language she used with a readiness almost equal to that with which she spoke her own. The chiefs heard this opening explanation with grave decorum; the two who had a little knowledge of English intimating their satisfaction with the interpreter by furtive but significant glances of the eyes.

“And now, Hist,” continued Hetty, as soon as it was intimated to her that she might proceed; “and now, Hist, I wish you to tell these red-men, word for word, what I am about to say. Tell them first, that father and Hurry came here with an intention to take as many scalps as they could; for the wicked governor and the province have offered money for scalps, whether of warriors or women, men or children; and the love of gold was too strong for their hearts to withstand it. Tell them this, dear Hist, just as you have heard it from me, word for word.”

Wah-ta-Wah hesitated about rendering this speech as literally as had been desired; but detecting the intelligence of those who understood English, she was compelled to comply. This admission of the errand of their prisoners produced, however, no visible effect on the countenances of the listeners.

“And now, Hist,” resumed Hetty, “you can tell them more. They know that father and Hurry did not succeed; and therefore they can bear them no grudge for any harm that has been done. If they had slain their children and wives, it would not alter the matter; and I’m not certain that what I am about to tell them would not have more weight had there been mischief done. But ask them first, Hist, if they know there is a God who reigns over the whole earth and is ruler and chief of all who live, let them be red or white, or what color they may.”

Wah-ta-Wah looked a little surprised at this question; for the idea of the Great Spirit is seldom long absent from the mind of an Indian girl. She put the question, however, and received a grave answer in the affirmative.

“This is right,” continued Hetty, “and my duty will

now be light. This Great Spirit, as you call our God, has caused a book to be written, that we call a Bible ; and in this book have been set down all his commandments, and his holy will and pleasure, and the rules by which all men are to live, and directions how to govern the thoughts even, and the wishes, and the will. Here, this is one of these holy books, and you must tell the chiefs what I am about to read to them from its sacred pages."

As Hetty concluded, she reverently unrolled a small English Bible from its envelope of coarse calico ; treating the volume with the sort of external respect that a Romanist would be apt to show to a religious relic. As she slowly proceeded in her task, the grim warriors watched each movement with riveted eyes ; and when they saw the little volume appear, a slight expression of surprise escaped one or two of them. But Hetty held it out towards them in triumph, as if she expected the sight would produce a visible miracle ; and then she turned eagerly to her new friend, in order to renew the discourse.

"This is the sacred volume, Hist," she said, "and these words and lines, and verses and chapters, all came from God."

"Why Great Spirit no send book to Injin, too?" demanded Hist.

"Why?" answered Hetty, a little bewildered by a question so unexpected. "Why? Ah! you know the Indians don't know how to read."

If Hist was not satisfied with the explanation, she did not deem the point of sufficient importance to be pressed, but sat patiently awaiting the further arguments of the paleface enthusiast.

"You can tell these chiefs, that throughout this book, men are ordered to forgive their enemies; to treat them as they would brethren; and never to injure their fellow-creatures, more especially on account of revenge, or any evil passion. Do you think you can tell them this, so that they will understand it, Hist?"

"Tell him well enough; but he no very easy to understand."

"I will now read to the warriors some of the verses that it is good for them to know," continued the girl, whose manner grew more solemn and earnest as she proceeded; "and they will remember that they are the words of the Great Spirit. First, then, ye are commanded to '*Love thy neighbor as thyself.*' Tell them *that*, dear Hist."

"Neighbor for Injin no mean paleface," answered the Delaware girl, with more decision than she had hitherto thought it necessary to use. "Neighbor mean Iroquois for Iroquois, Mohican for Mohican, paleface for paleface. No need tell chief anything else."

"You forget, Hist, these are the words of the Great Spirit, and the chiefs must obey them as well as others. Here is another commandment: '*Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*'"

"What that mean?" demanded Hist, with the quickness of lightning.

Hetty explained that it was an order not to resent injuries, but rather to submit to receive fresh wrongs from the offender.

"And hear this too, Hist," she added, "'*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*'"



By this time Hetty had become excited. Her eye gleamed with the earnestness of her feelings, her cheeks flushed, and her voice, usually so low and modulated, became stronger and more impressive. With the Bible she had been early made familiar by her mother; and she now turned from passage to passage with surprising rapidity, taking care to cull such verses as taught the sublime lessons of Christian charity and Christian forgiveness. To translate half she said, in her pious earnestness, Wah-ta-Wah would have found impracticable, had she made the effort; but she gave a brief translation of the substance of what had been both read and said.

It will be scarcely necessary to tell the reader the effect that such novel duties would be likely to produce among a group of Indian warriors, with whom it was a species of religious principle never to forget a benefit or to forgive an injury. Fortunately, the previous explanations of Hist had prepared the minds of the Hurons for something extravagant; and there were one or two old men who had heard similar doctrines from the missionaries.

"This is the Good Book of the palefaces," observed one of these chiefs, taking the volume from the unresisting hand of Hetty, who gazed anxiously at his face, while he turned the leaves, as if she expected to witness some visible results from the circumstance. "This is the law by which my white brethren profess to live?"

Hist, to whom this question was addressed, answered simply in the affirmative.

"Tell my young sister," said the Huron, looking directly at Hist, "that my name is Rivenoak, and that I will open my mouth and say a few words."

"The Iroquois chief Rivenoak go to speak—my paleface friend listen," said Hist.

"I rejoice to hear it!" exclaimed Hetty. "God has touched his heart, and he will let father and Hurry go!"

"This is the paleface law," resumed the chief. "It tells him to do good to them that hurt him; when his brother asks him for his rifle, to give him the powderhorn too. Such is the paleface law?"

"Not so—not so," answered Hetty earnestly, when these words had been interpreted. "There is not a word about rifles in the whole book; and powder and bullets give offense to the Great Spirit."

"Why, then, does the paleface use them? If he is ordered to *give* double to him that asks only for one thing, why does he *take* double from the poor Indians, who ask for *no* thing? He comes from beyond the rising sun, with his book in his hand, and he teaches the red-man to read it; but why does he forget himself all it says? When the Indian gives, he is never satisfied; and now he offers gold for the scalps of our women and children, though he calls us beasts if we take the scalp of a warrior killed in open war."

When Hetty had got this formidable question fairly presented to her mind in the translation, and Hist did her duty with more than usual readiness on this occasion, it scarcely need be said that she was sorely perplexed.

"What shall I tell them, Hist?" she asked, imploringly; "I *know* that all I have read from the book is true; and yet it would n't seem so, would it, by the conduct of those to whom the book was given?"

"Give 'em paleface reason," returned Hist, ironically,—  
"that always good for one side; though he bad for t' other."

"No, no, Hist, there can't be two sides to truth — and yet it does seem strange! I'm certain I have read the verses right, and no one would be so wicked as to print the word of God wrong. *That* can never be, Hist."

"Well, to poor Injin girl it seem everything *can* be to palefaces," returned the other coolly. "One time 'ey say white, and one time 'ey say black. Why, *never can be?*"

Hetty was more and more embarrassed, until, overcome with the apprehension that she had failed in her object, and that the lives of her father and Hurry would be the forfeit of some blunder of her own, she burst into tears. From that moment the manner of Hist lost all its irony and cool indifference, and she became the fond caressing friend again. Throwing her arms around the afflicted girl, she attempted to soothe her sorrows by the scarcely ever failing remedy of female sympathy.

"Stop cry — no cry," she said, wiping the tears from the face of Hetty, as she would have performed the same office for a child, and stopping to press her, occasionally, to her own warm bosom with the affection of a sister; "why you so trouble? You no make he book, if he be wrong; and you no make he paleface, if he be wicked. There wicked red man, and wicked white man — no color all good — no color all wicked. Chiefs know *that* well enough."

Hetty soon recovered from this sudden burst of grief, and then her mind reverted to the purpose of her visit, with its single-hearted earnestness. Perceiving that the grim-looking chiefs were still standing around her, in grave attention, she hoped that another effort to convince them of the right might be successful.

"Listen, Hist," she said, struggling to suppress her sobs, and to speak distinctly; "tell the chiefs that it matters not what the wicked do — right is right — the words of the Great Spirit are the words of the Great Spirit — and no one can go harmless for doing an evil act because another has done it before him! '*Render good for evil,*' says this book; and that is the law for the red man as well as for the white man."

"Never hear such law among Delaware, or among Iroquois," answered Hist, soothingly. "No good to tell chiefs any such law as *dat*. Tell 'em somet'ing they believe."

Hist was about to proceed, notwithstanding, when a tap on the shoulder, from the finger of the oldest chief, and a gesture in the direction of her hut indicated to her that, for the time being at least, the girls were to withdraw from the council.

## CHAPTER VI

We left the occupants of the castle and the ark buried in sleep. Once or twice in the course of the night, it is true, Deerslayer or the Delaware arose and looked out upon the tranquil lake, when, finding all safe, each returned to his pallet. At the first signs of the dawn, the former arose, however, and ere the sun had shown himself over the eastern hills, all three were up and afoot. The meeting at the morning meal was silent, grave, and thoughtful. Judith showed by her looks that she had passed an unquiet night, while the two men had the future before them, with its unseen and unknown events. A few words of courtesy passed between Deerslayer and the girl in the course of the breakfast, but no allusion was

made to their situation. At length Judith introduced the subject.

"It would be dreadful, Deerslayer," the girl abruptly exclaimed, "should anything serious befall my father and Hetty! We cannot remain quietly here and leave them in the hands of the Iroquois, without bethinking us of some means of serving them."

"I'm ready, Judith, to sarve them, could the way to do it be pointed out.) It's no trifling matter to fall into red-skin hands, when men set out on an arr'nd like that which took Hutter and Hurry ashore; that I know as well as another, and I would n't wish my worst inimy in such a strait, much less them with whom I've journeyed and eat and slept. Have you any scheme that you would like to have the Sarpent and me indivor to carry out?"

"I know of no other means to release the prisoners than by bribing the Iroquois. They are not proof against presents; and we might offer enough, perhaps, to make them think it better to carry away what to them will be rich gifts than to carry away poor prisoners; if, indeed, they should carry them away at all!"

"This is well enough, Judith; yes, it's well enough, if the inimy is to be bought, and we can find articles to make the purchase with. Your father has a convenient lodge, and it is most cunningly placed; though it does n't seem overstocked with riches that will be likely to buy his ransom. There's the piece he calls Killdeer might count for something, and I understand there's a keg of powder about, which might be a make-weight, sartain; and yet two able-bodied men are not to be bought off for a trifle — the price of two scalps would purchase a keg of powder and a rifle;

though I 'll not say one of the latter altogether as good as Killdeer there, which your father va'nts as oncommon, and onequaled-like. But fair powder, and a pretty sartain rifle ; and the red-men are not expart enough in fire-arms to know the difference."

"But you overlook my own clothes, Deerslayer ; and they, I think, might go far with the women of the Iroquois."

"No doubt they would ; no doubt they would, Judith," returned the other, looking at her keenly, as if he would ascertain whether she were really capable of making such a sacrifice. "But are you sartain, gal, you could find it in your heart to part with your own finery for such a purpose ? You 're handsome — oncommon in that way, one might observe, and do no harm to the truth ; and they that have beauty like to have that which will adorn it. Are you sartain you could find it in your heart to part with your finery ?"

"You must keep all your favorable opinions for the Delaware girls, Deerslayer, if you seriously think thus of those of your own color," she said, with flashing eye, and a flush that mounted to her temples. "*Try* me ; if you find that I regret either ribbon or feather, silk or muslin, then may you think what you please of my heart, and say what you think. But 't is as you say, Deerslayer ; the Indians will not be likely to give up their prisoners without a heavier bribe than my clothes can offer, and father's rifle and powder. There is the chest."

"Aye, there is the chist, as you say, Judith ; and when the question gets to be between a secret and a scalp, I should think most men would prefer keeping the last. Did your father ever give you any downright command consarning that chist ?"

"Never."

"'T is a rare chist, and altogether of curious build," returned Deerslayer, rising and approaching the thing in question, on which he seated himself, with a view to examine it with greater ease. "Chingachgook, this is no wood that comes of any forest that you or I have ever trailed through! 'T is n't the black walnut; and yet it's quite as comely, if not more so, did the smoke and the treatment give it fair play."

The Delaware drew near, felt of the wood, examined its grain, endeavored to indent the surface with a nail, and passed his hand curiously over the steel bands, the heavy padlocks, and the other novel peculiarities of the massive box.

"No — nothing like this grows in these regions," resumed Deerslayer; "I've seen all the oaks, both the maples, the elms, the bass-wood, all the walnuts, the butternuts, and every tree that has a substance and color, wrought into some form or other; but never have I before seen such a wood as this! Judith, the chist itself would buy your father's freedom, or Iroquois cur'osity is n't as strong as redskin cur'osity, in general; especially in the matter of woods."

"The purchase might be cheaper made, perhaps, Deerslayer. The chest is full, and it would be better to part with half than to part with the whole. Besides, father — I know not why — but father values that chest highly."

"He would seem to prize what it holds more than the chist itself, judging by the manner in which he treats the outside and secures the inside. Here are three locks, Judith; is there no key?"

"I've never seen one; and yet key there must be, since Hetty told us *she* had often seen the chest opened."

"Keys no more lie in the air, or float on the water, than humans, gal; if there is a key, there must be a place in which it is kept."

"That is true, and it might not be difficult to find it, did we dare to search!"

"This is for you, Judith; it is altogether for you. If the chist has articles for ransom, it seems to me they would be wisely used in redeeming their owner's life, or even in saving his scalp; but that is a matter for your judgment, and not for our'n. When the lawful owner of a trap, or a buck, or a canoe, is n't present, his next of kin becomes his rip-sentatyve, by all the laws of the woods. We therefore leave you to say whether the chist shall or shall not be opened."

"Deerslayer, if we can find the key, I will authorize you to open the chest, and to take such things from it as you may think will buy father's ransom."

"First find the key, gal; we'll talk of the rest a'terwards. Sarpent, you've eyes like a fly, and a judgment that's seldom out; can you help us in calculating where Floating Tom would be apt to keep the key of a chist that he holds to be as private as this?"

The Delaware had taken no part in the discourse until he was thus directly appealed to, when he quitted the chest, which had continued to attract his attention, and cast about him for the place in which a key would be likely to be concealed under such circumstances. As Judith and Deerslayer were not idle the while, the whole three were soon engaged in an anxious and spirited search. As it was



certain that the desired key was not to be found in any of the common drawers or closets, of which there were several in the building, none looked there, but all turned their inquiries to those places that struck them as ingenious hiding-places, and more likely to be used for such a purpose. In this manner the outer room was thoroughly but fruitlessly examined, when they entered the sleeping apartment of Hutter. This part of the rude building was better furnished than the rest of the structure, containing several articles that had been especially devoted to the service of the deceased wife of its owner; but as Judith had all the rest of the keys it was soon rummaged, without bringing to light the particular key desired.

They now entered the bedroom of the daughters. Chingachgook was immediately struck with the contrast between the articles, and the arrangement of that side of the room that might be called Judith's, and that which more properly belonged to Hetty. A slight exclamation escaped him, and pointing in each direction, he alluded to the fact in a low voice, speaking to his friend in the Delaware tongue.

"As you think, Sarpent," answered Deerslayer, whose remarks we always translate into English, preserving as much as possible of the peculiar phraseology and manner of the man. "'T is just so, as any one may see; and 't is all founded in natur'. One sister loves finery, some say, overmuch; while t' other is as meek and lowly as God ever created goodness and truth. Yet, after all, I dare say that Judith has her vartues, and Hetty has her failin's."

"And the Feeble-Mind has seen the chest opened?" inquired Chingachgook, with curiosity in his glance.

"Sartain; that much I've heard from her own lips; and, for that matter, so have you. It seems her father does n't misgive *her* discretion, though he does that of his eldest darter."

"Then the key is hid only from the Wild Rose?" for so Chingachgook had begun gallantly to term Judith, in his private discourse with his friend.

"That's it! That's just it! One he trusts, and the other he does n't. There's red and white in that, Sarpent; all tribes and nations agreeing in trusting some, and refusing to trust other some. It depends on character and judgment."

"Where could a key be put, so little likely to be found by the Wild Rose, as among coarse clothes?"

Deerslayer started, and turning to his friend with admiration expressed in every lineament of his face, he fairly laughed, in his silent but hearty manner, at the ingenuity and readiness of the conjecture.

"Your name's well bestowed, Sarpent — yes, 't is well bestowed! Sure enough, where would a lover of finery be so little likely to s'arch, as among garments as coarse and unseemly as these of poor Hetty? Take the garments down, Delaware."

Chingachgook did as desired, but no key was found. A coarse pocket, apparently empty, hung on the adjoining peg, and this was next examined. By this time, the attention of Judith was called in that direction, and she spoke hurriedly, and like one who wished to save unnecessary trouble.

"These are only the clothes of poor Hetty, dear simple girl!" she said; "nothing we seek would be likely to be there."

The words were hardly out of the mouth of the speaker, when Chingachgook drew the desired key from the pocket. Judith was too quick of apprehension not to understand the reason a hiding-place so simple and exposed had been used. The blood rushed to her face, as much with resentment, perhaps, as with shame ; and she bit her lip, though she continued silent. Deerslayer and his friend now discovered the delicacy of men of native refinement,—neither smiling, or even by a glance betraying how completely he understood the motives and ingenuity of this clever artifice. The former, who had taken the key from the Indian, led the way into the adjoining room, and applying it to a lock, ascertained that the right instrument had actually been found. There were three padlocks, each of which, however, was easily opened by this single key. Deerslayer removed them all, loosened the hasps, raised the lid a little to make certain it was loose, and then he drew back from the chest several feet, signing to his friend to follow.

“This is a family chist, Judith,” he said, “and ’t is like to hold family secrets. The Sarpent and I will go into the ark, and look to the canoes, and paddles, and oars ; while you can examine it by yourself, and find out whether anything that will be a make-weight in a ransom is or is not among the articles. When you ’ve got through, give us a call, and we ’ll all sit in council together, touching the valie of the articles.”

“Stop, Deerslayer,” exclaimed the girl, as he was about to withdraw ; “not a single thing will I touch — I will not even raise the lid — unless you are present. Father and Hetty have seen fit to keep the inside of this chest a secret from me, and I am much too proud to pry into their

hidden treasures, unless it were for their own good. But on no account will I open the chest alone. Stay with me, then ; I want witnesses of what I do."

"I rather think, Sarpent, that the gal is right ! Confidence and reliance beget security, but suspicion is like to make us all wary. Judith has a right to ask us to be present ; and should the chist hold any of Master Hutter's secrets, they will fall into the keeping of two as close-mouthed young men as are to be found. We *will* stay with you, Judith — but first let us take a look at the lake and the shore, for this chist will not be emptied in a minute."

The two men now went out on the platform, and Deerslayer swept the shore with the glass, while the Indian gravely turned his eye on the water and the woods in quest of any sign that might betray the machinations of their enemies. Nothing was visible, and, assured of their temporary security, the three collected around the chest again, with the avowed object of opening it.

Finding that both her companions were watching her movements in grave silence, Judith placed a hand on the lid, and endeavored to raise it. Her strength, however, was insufficient, and at her request Deerslayer applied his strength to the effort, and succeeded in raising the lid against the timbers of the house, where he took care to secure it by a sufficient prop. Judith fairly trembled, as she cast her first glance at the interior ; and she felt a temporary relief in discovering that a piece of canvas that was carefully tucked in around the edges effectually concealed all beneath it. The chest was apparently well stored, however, the canvas lying within an inch of the lid.

“Here’s a full cargo,” said Deerslayer, eying the arrangement; “and we had needs go to work leisurely, and at our ease. Sarpent, bring some stools, while I spread this blanket on the floor, and then we’ll begin work orderly and in comfort.”

The Delaware complied; Deerslayer civilly placed a stool for Judith, took one himself, and commenced the removal of the canvas covering. This was done deliberately, and in as cautious a manner as if it were believed that fabrics of a delicate construction lay hidden beneath. When the canvas was removed, the first articles that came in view were some of the habiliments of the male sex. These were of fine materials, and, according to the fashions of the age, were gay in colors and rich in ornaments. One coat, in particular, was of scarlet, and had buttonholes worked in gold thread. Still it was not military, but was part of the attire of a civilian of condition, at a period when social rank was rigidly respected in dress. Chingachgook could not refrain from an exclamation of pleasure, as soon as Deerslayer opened this coat, and held it up to view; for, notwithstanding all his trained self-command, the splendor of the vestment was too much for the philosophy of an Indian. Deerslayer turned quickly, and regarded his friend with a momentary displeasure at this sign of weakness. Then he spoke indulgently.

“’T is his gift! — yes, ’t is the gift of a redskin to love finery, and he is not to be blamed. This is an extrornary garment, too; and extrornary things get up extrornary feelin’s. I think this will do, Judith; for the Indian heart is hardly to be found in all America that can withstand colors like these and glitter like that. If this coat was ever made

for your father, you 've come honestly by the taste for finery, you have."

"That coat was never made for father," answered the girl, quickly; "it is much too long; while father is short and square."

"Cloth was plenty, if it was, and glitter cheap," answered Deerslayer, with his silent, joyous laugh. "Sarpent, this garment was made for a man of your size, and I should like to see it on your shoulders."

Chingachgook, nothing loath, submitted to the trial; throwing aside his blanket to deck his person in a coat that was originally intended for a gentleman. The transformation was ludicrous; but as men are seldom struck with incongruities in their own appearance, the Delaware studied this change in a common glass, with grave interest and evident satisfaction.

"Off with it, Sarpent — off with it," resumed the inflexible Deerslayer; "such garments as little become you as they would become me. Your gifts are for paint, and hawk's feathers, and blankets, and wampum; and mine are for doublets of skins, tough leggings, and sarviceable moccasins. Lay the coat down on the blanket, Sarpent, and let us look further into the chist."

The tempting garment, one surely that was never intended for Hutter, was laid aside, and the examination proceeded. A beautiful dress of brocade, a little the worse from negligent treatment, followed; and this time open exclamations of delight escaped the lips of Judith. Much as the girl had been addicted to dress, never before had she beheld a tissue or tints to equal those that were now so unexpectedly placed before her eyes. Following the Indian's

example, she withdrew into her own room, where she soon got rid of her own neat gown of linen, and stood forth in the gay tints of the brocade, which happened to fit her well. When she returned, both Deerslayer and Chingachgook arose in surprise, each permitting exclamations of wonder and pleasure to escape him, in a way so unequivocal as to add new lustre to the eyes of Judith, by flushing her cheeks with a glow of triumph. Affecting, however, not to notice the impression she had made, the girl seated herself with the stateliness of a queen, desiring that the chest might be looked into further.

“I don't know a better way to treat with the Mingos, gal,” cried Deerslayer, “than to send you ashore as you be, and to tell 'em that a queen has arrived among 'em! They'll give up old Hutter and Hurry, and Hetty too, at such a spectacle!”

“I thought your tongue too honest to flatter, Deerslayer,” returned the girl, gratified at this admiration more than she would have cared to own. “One of the chief reasons of my respect for you was your love for truth.”

“And 't is truth, and solemn truth, Judith, and nothing else. Never did eyes of mine gaze on as glorious a lookin' creatur' as you be yourself, at this very moment. I've seen beauties in my time, too, both white and red, and them that was renowned and talked of far and near; but never have I beheld one that could hold any comparison with what you are at this blessed instant, Judith,—never.”

The glance of delight which the girl bestowed on the frank-speaking hunter in no degree lessened the effect of her charms; and as the humid eyes blended with it a look of sensibility, perhaps Judith never appeared more truly

lovely than at that moment. When the girl had returned to her room to divest herself of her finery, the two men discussed the propriety of penetrating any further into the chest. Judith on her return in her own simple linen frock argued that if they knew all that the chest held they could determine better what course to take, and her judgment prevailed. They came now to a second piece of canvas, beneath which the articles that lay uppermost were a pair of pistols, curiously inlaid with silver. While Chingachgook was handling these instruments,—“child guns” as he called them,—Deerslayer had opened a small bag, from which he was taking, one by one, the pieces of a set of chessmen. They were of ivory, much larger than common, and exquisitely wrought. Each piece represented the character or thing after which it is named,—the knights being mounted, the castles stood on elephants, and even the pawns possessed the heads and busts of men. The set was not complete, and a few fractures betrayed bad usage; but all that was left had been carefully put away and preserved. Even Judith expressed wonder as these novel objects were placed before her eyes, and Chingachgook fairly forgot his Indian dignity in admiration and delight. The latter took up each piece and examined it with never-tiring satisfaction, pointing out to the girl the more ingenious and striking portions of the workmanship. But the elephants gave him the greatest pleasure. The “Hughs!” that he uttered as he passed his fingers over their trunks and ears and tails were very distinct; nor did he fail to note the pawns, which were armed as archers. This exhibition lasted several minutes, during which time Judith and the Indian had all the rapture to themselves. Deerslayer





THE OPENING OF THE CHEST



sat silent, thoughtful, and even gloomy, though his eyes followed each movement of the two principal actors, noting every new peculiarity about the pieces as they were held up to view. Not an exclamation of pleasure nor a word of condemnation passed his lips. At length his companions observed his silence, and then, for the first time since the chessmen had been discovered, did he speak.

"Judith," he asked earnestly, "did your parents ever talk to you of religion?"

The girl colored, but replied simply and with sincerity.

"My *mother* did, often," she said; "my father, *never*. I thought it made my mother sorrowful to speak of our prayers and duties, but my father has never opened his mouth on such matters before or since her death."

"That I can believe — that I can believe. He has no God — no such God as it becomes a man of white skin to worship, or even a redskin. Them things are idols!"

Judith started, and for a moment she seemed seriously hurt. Then she reflected, and in the end she laughed.

"And you think, Deerslayer, that these ivory toys are my father's gods? I have heard of idols, and know what they are."

"Them are idols!" repeated the other positively. "Why should your father keep 'em if he does n't worship 'em?"

"Would he keep his gods in a bag, and locked up in a chest? No, no, Deerslayer; my poor father carries his god with him wherever he goes, and that is in his own cravings. These things may really be idols — I think they are, myself, from what I have heard and read of idolatry, but they have come from some distant country, like all the other

articles, and have fallen into Thomas Hutter's hands when he was a sailor."

"I'm glad of it—I am downright glad to hear it, Judith. The old man is of my color and nation, and I wish to sarve him; but as one who denied all his gifts in the way of religion, it would have come hard to do so. That animal seems to give you great satisfaction, Sarpent, though it's an idolatrous head, at the best."

"It is an elephant," interrupted Judith; "I've often seen pictures of such animals at the garrisons."

"Elephant, or no elephant, 't is an idol," returned the hunter, "and not fit to remain in Christian keeping."

"Good for Iroquois!" said Chingachgook, parting with one of the castles with reluctance, as his friend took it from him to replace it in the bag. "Elephon buy whole tribe—buy Delaware, almost!"

"Aye, that it would, as any one who comprehends red-skin natur' must know," answered Deerslayer; "but the man that passes false money, Sarpent, is as bad as he who makes it. I know that a few of these idols, perhaps *one* of them elephants, would go far towards buying Thomas Hutter's liberty, but it goes agin conscience to pass such counterfeit money. Perhaps no Injin tribe hereaway is downright idolaters, but there's some that come so near it that white gifts ought to be particular about encouraging them in their mistake."

"After all," said Judith, "these pieces of ivory may not be idols at all. I remember, now, to have seen one of the officers at the garrison, with a set of fox and geese made in some such a design as these; and here is something hard, wrapped in cloth, that may belong to your idols."

Deerslayer took the bundle the girl gave him, and, unrolling it, he found the board within. Like the pieces, it was large, rich, and inlaid with ebony and ivory. Putting the whole in conjunction, the hunter, though not without many misgivings, slowly came over to Judith's opinion, and finally admitted that the fancied idols must be merely the curiously carved men of some unknown game.

[This discovery of the uses of the extraordinary looking little images settled the affair of the proposed ransom. It was agreed generally that nothing could be more likely to tempt the Iroquois than the elephants in particular. Luckily, the whole of the castles were among the pieces, and these four tower-bearing animals it was finally determined should be the ransom offered. The remainder of the men, and, indeed, all the rest of the articles in the chest, were to be kept out of view, and to be resorted to only as a last appeal. As soon as these preliminaries were settled, everything but what was intended for the bribe was carefully replaced in the chest, all the covers were "tucked in" as they had been found, and the chest was closed and locked once more.

## CHAPTER VII

More than an hour had been consumed by Judith and Deerslayer in settling the course to be pursued, and in returning everything to its place in the chest. Deerslayer, indeed, appeared to be the first who was conscious of the time that was being thus wasted, and to call the attention of his companions to the necessity of doing something towards putting the plan of ransoming into execution. Chingachgook had remained in Hutter's bedroom, where the

elephants were laid, to feast his eyes with the images of animals so wonderful and so novel.

“ Well, Judith,” said Deerslayer, rising, after the interview had lasted much longer than even he himself suspected, “ ’t is pleasant conversing with you, and settling all these matters, but duty calls us another way. All this time, Hurry and your father, not to say Hetty ”—

The word was cut short in the speaker’s mouth, for, at that critical moment, a light step was heard on the platform or courtyard, a human figure darkened the doorway, and Hetty herself stood before him. The low exclamation that escaped Deerslayer, and the slight scream of Judith, were hardly uttered, when an Indian youth, between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, stood beside her. These two entrances had been made with moccasined feet, and consequently almost without noise ; but, unexpected and stealthy as they were, they had not the effect to disturb Deerslayer’s self-possession. His first measure was to speak rapidly in Delaware to his friend, cautioning him to keep out of sight, while he stood on his guard ; the second was to step to the door to ascertain the extent of the danger. No one else, however, had come ; and a simple contrivance, in the shape of a raft that lay floating at the side of the ark, at once explained the means that had been used in bringing Hetty off. Two dead and dry, and consequently buoyant, logs of pine were bound together with pins and withes, and a little platform of riven chestnut had been rudely placed on their surfaces. Here Hetty had been seated on a billet of wood, while the young Iroquois had rowed the primitive and slow-moving but perfectly safe craft from the shore. As soon as Deerslayer had taken a close survey of this raft, and

satisfied himself nothing else was near, he shook his head, and muttered, in his soliloquizing way,—

“This comes of prying into another man’s chist! Had we been watchful and keen-eyed, such a surprise could never have happened; and getting this much from a boy teaches us what we may expect when the old warriors set themselves fairly about their sarcumventions. It opens the way, hows’ever, to a treaty for the ransom, and I will hear what Hetty has to say.”

Judith, as soon as her surprise and alarm had a little abated, discovered a proper share of affectionate joy at the return of her sister. At Judith’s request Hetty took a seat, and entered into an account of her adventures since they had parted. Her narrative was clear and simple, although told with an utter absence of suspicion of anything but openness and friendliness on the part of the Indians. They had told her that what she had read from the Good Book was right and that they would gladly come out to the castle to hear more of it. But first Deerslayer must lend them some canoes in which to bring the prisoners and their women to the castle to hear this word read. It was to make this proposal that they had sent Hetty out on the raft with the boy.

When Hetty had finished her story Deerslayer turned to Judith.

“And the woods are full of the vagabonds, waiting to know what is to be the upshot,” he said. “We comprehend this affair, now, Judith—but I’ll first get rid of this young Canadian bloodsucker, and then we’ll settle our own course. Do you and Hetty leave us together, first bringing me the elephants, which the Sarpent is

admiring; for 't will never do to let this loping deer be alone a minute, or he 'll borrow a canoe without asking."

Judith did as desired, first bringing the pieces, and retiring with her sister into their own room. Deerslayer had acquired some knowledge of most of the Indian dialects of that region, and he knew enough of the Iroquois to hold a dialogue in the language. Beckoning to the lad, therefore, he caused him to take a seat on the chest, when he placed two of the castles suddenly before him. Up to that moment, this youthful savage had not expressed a single intelligible emotion or fancy. There were many things in and about the place that were novelties to him, but he had maintained his self-command with philosophical composure. It is true, Deerslayer had detected his dark eye scanning the defenses and the arms, but the scrutiny had been made with such an air of innocence, in such a gaping, indolent, boyish manner, that no one but a man who had himself been taught in a similar school would have even suspected his object. The instant, however, the eyes of the savage fell upon the wrought ivory, and the images of the wonderful, unknown beasts, surprise and admiration got the mastery of him, and he permitted an exclamation of rapture to escape him. Then he checked himself, like one who had been guilty of an indecorum. After this, his eyes ceased to wander, but became riveted on the elephants, one of which, after a short hesitation, he even presumed to handle. Deerslayer did not interrupt him for quite ten minutes; knowing that the lad was taking such note of the curiosities as would enable him to give the most minute and accurate description of their appearance to his seniors, on his return. When he thought sufficient time



had been allowed to produce the desired effect, the hunter laid a finger on the naked knee of the youth, and drew his attention to himself.

"Listen," he said; "I want to talk with my young friend from the Canadas. Let him forget that wonder for a minute. Can you tell me, boy, what your chiefs intend to do with these captives, or have n't they yet made up their minds?"

The lad looked a moment at the hunter with a little surprise; then he coolly put the end of his forefinger on his own head, just above the left ear, and passed it round his crown, with an accuracy and readiness that showed how well he had been drilled in the peculiar art of his race.

"When?" demanded Deerslayer. "And why not take them to your wigwams?"

"Road too long, and full of palefaces. Wigwam full, and scalps sell high. Small scalp, much gold."

"Well, that explains it—yes, that does explain it. There's no need of being any plainer. Now, you know, lad, that the oldest of your prisoners is the father of these two young women, and the other is the suitor of one of them. The gals nat'rally wish to save the scalps of such fri'nds, and they will give them two ivory creatur's as ransom; one for each scalp. Go back and tell this to your chiefs, and bring me the answer before the sun sets."

The boy entered zealously into this project, evidently desiring greatly to have such a treasure in his tribe, and Deerslayer was satisfied with the impression he had made. It is true, the lad proposed to carry one of the elephants with him, as a specimen of the other, but to this his brother

negotiator was too sagacious to consent, well knowing that it might never reach its destination if confided to such hands. This little difficulty was soon arranged, and the boy prepared to depart. As he stood on the platform ready to step aboard of the raft, he hesitated, and turned short with a proposal to borrow a canoe, as the means most likely to shorten the negotiation. Deerslayer quietly refused the request, and, after lingering a little longer, the boy rowed slowly away from the castle, taking the direction of a thicket on the shore, that lay less than half a mile distant. Deerslayer seated himself on a stool, and watched the progress of the ambassador; sometimes closely scanning the whole line of shore, as far as eye could reach, and then placing an elbow on a knee, he remained a long time with his chin resting on the hand.

During the interview between Deerslayer and the lad, a different scene took place in the adjoining room. Hetty had inquired for the Delaware and had gone to speak to him. The reception which Chingachgook gave his visitor was respectful and gentle. He understood her character; and, no doubt, his disposition to be kind to such a being was increased by the hope of learning some tidings of his betrothed. As soon as the girl entered she took a seat, and invited the Indian to place himself near her.

"You are Chingachgook — the Great Serpent of the Delawares, are n't you?" the girl commenced. "You *must* be; for there is no other red-man here, and she thought Chingachgook would come."

"Chin-gach-gook," pronouncing the name slowly, and dwelling on each syllable; "Great Serpent, Yengeese

tongue. Did any tongue name Chingachgook, Drooping-Lily?" for so the chief had named poor Hetty. "Was his name sung by a little bird among the Iroquois?"

"Chin-gach-gook," repeated Hetty, in the same deliberate manner. "Yes, so Hist called it, and you *must* be the chief."

"Wah-ta-Wah," added the Delaware, "Wah-ta-Wah, or Hist-oh-Hist."

"You make it sound differently from me. But never mind; I *did* hear the bird you speak of sing, Great Serpent."

"Will my sister say words of song? What she sing most—how she look—often she laugh?"

"She sang Chin-gach-gook oftener than anything else; and she told me to say, in a very low voice, that you mustn't trust the Iroquois in anything. They are more artful than any Indians she knows. Then she says that there is a large bright star that comes over the hill, about an hour after dark,"—Hist had pointed out the planet Jupiter, without knowing it,— "and just as that star comes in sight, she will be on the point where I landed last night, and that you must come for her, in a canoe."

"Good! Chingachgook understand well enough, now, but he understand better if my sister sing to him agin."

Hetty repeated her words, more fully explaining what star was meant, and mentioning the part of the point where he was to venture ashore. Chingachgook listened intently, but before there was time for him to ask more news of his betrothed, the voice of Deerslayer was heard calling on his friend, in the outer room. At this summons the Serpent arose to obey, and Hetty joined her sister.

## CHAPTER VIII

Deerslayer had summoned his friend that they might have a sort of council of war, in which they could settle their future course. In the dialogue that followed, the parties mutually made each other acquainted with what had passed in their several interviews. Chingachgook was told the history of the treaty about the ransom; and Deerslayer heard the whole of Hetty's communications. The latter listened with generous interest to his friend's hopes, and promised cheerfully all the assistance he could lend.

"'T is our main arr'nd, Sarpent, as you know; this battling for the castle and old Hutter's darters coming in as a sort of accident. Yes — yes — I'll be actyve in helping little Hist, who's not only one of the best and handsomest maidens of the tribe, but the *very* best and handsomest. Now let us calculate our movements a little, for we shall soon either have a truce and a peace, or we shall come to an actyve and bloody war. You see the vagabonds can make logs sarve their turn, as well as the best raftsmen on the rivers; and it would be no great explite for them to invade us in a body. I've been thinking of the wisdom of putting all old Tom's stores into the ark, of barring and locking up the castle, and of taking to the ark altogether. That is movable, and by keeping the sail up, and shifting places, we might worry through a great many nights without them Canada wolves finding a way into our sheep fold."

Chingachgook listened to this plan with approbation. Did the negotiation fail there was now little hope that the night would pass without an assault; and the enemy had

sagacity enough to understand that, in carrying the castle, they would probably become masters of all it contained, the offered ransom included, and still retain the advantages they had hitherto gained. Some precaution of the sort appeared to be absolutely necessary ; for now the numbers of the Iroquois were known, a night attack could scarcely be successfully met. It would be impossible to prevent the enemy from getting possession of the canoes and the ark, and the latter itself would be a hold in which the assailants would be as effectually protected against bullets as were those in the building. This decision was no sooner come to than it was communicated to Judith. The girl had no serious objection to make, and all four set about the measures necessary to carrying the plan into execution.

The reader will readily understand that Floating Tom's worldly goods were of no great amount. A couple of beds, some wearing apparel, the arms and ammunition, a few cooking utensils, with the mysterious but half-examined chest, formed the principal items. These were all soon removed, the ark having been hauled on the eastern side of the building, so that the transfer could be made without being seen from the shore. It was thought unnecessary to disturb the heavier and coarser articles of furniture, as they were not required in the ark, and were of but little value in themselves. As great caution was necessary in removing the different objects, most of which were passed out of a window with a view to conceal what was going on, it required two or three hours before all could be effected. By the expiration of that time the raft made its appearance, moving from the shore. Deerslayer immediately had recourse to the glass, by the aid of which he perceived that

two warriors were on it, though they appeared to be unarmed. The progress of the raft was slow, a circumstance that formed one of the great advantages that would be possessed by the scow in any future collision between them, the movements of the latter being comparatively swift and light. As there was time to make the dispositions for the reception of the two dangerous visitors, everything was prepared for them long before they had got near enough to be hailed. The Serpent and the girls retired into the building, where the former stood near the door, well provided with rifles; while Judith watched the proceedings without through a loop. As for Deerslayer, he had brought a stool to the edge of the platform, at the point towards which the raft was advancing, and taken his seat, with his rifle leaning carelessly between his legs.

As the raft drew nearer, every means possessed by the party in the castle was resorted to, in order to ascertain if their visitors had any firearms. Neither Deerslayer nor Chingachgook could discover any; but Judith, unwilling to trust to simple eyesight, thrust the glass through the loop, and directed it towards the hemlock boughs that lay between the two logs of the raft, forming a sort of flooring, as well as a seat for the use of the rowers. When the heavy-moving craft was within fifty feet of him, Deerslayer hailed the Hurons, directing them to cease rowing, it not being his intention to permit them to land. Compliance, of course, was necessary, and the two grim-looking warriors instantly quitted their seats, though the raft continued slowly to approach, until it had driven in much nearer to the platform.

“Are ye chiefs?” demanded Deerslayer, with dignity.

"Are ye chiefs? — or have the Mingos sent me warriors without names on such an arr'nd? If so, the sooner ye go back the sooner the one will be likely to come that a warrior can talk with."

"Hugh!" exclaimed the elder of the two on the raft, rolling his glowing eyes over the different objects that were visible in and about the castle, with a keenness that showed how little escaped him. "My brother is very proud, but Rivenoak is a name to make a Delaware turn pale."

"That's true, or it's a lie, Rivenoak, as it may be; but I am not likely to turn pale, seeing that I was born pale. What's your arr'nd, and why do you come among light bark canoes on logs that are not even dug out?"

"The Iroquois are not ducks, to walk on water! Let the palefaces give them a canoe, and they'll come in a canoe."

"That's more rational, than likely to come to pass. We have but four canoes, and being four persons, that's only one for each of us. You are welcome, Iroquois, on your logs!"

"Thanks — my young paleface warrior — he has got a name — how do the chiefs call him?"

Deerslayer hesitated a moment, his pride and honesty struggling with his sense of what modesty required. Then he smiled, muttered between his teeth, and looking up, he said, —

"Mingo, like all who are young and actyve, I've been known by different names, at different times. One of your warriors, whose spirit started for the happy-grounds of your people as lately as yesterday morning, thought I

deserved to be known by the name of Hawkeye ; and this because my sight happened to be quicker than his own, when it got to be life or death atween us."

Chingachgook, who was attentively listening to all that passed, heard and understood that this was what his friend in his modesty had refrained from telling him, and on a future occasion he questioned him more closely concerning the matter. When he had got the whole truth, he did not fail to communicate it to the tribe, from which time the young hunter was universally known among the Delawares by an appellation so honorably earned. But that is after the period of our story.

"My brother, Hawkeye, has sent a message to the Hurons," resumed Rivenoak, "and it has made their hearts very glad. They hear he has images of beasts with two tails ! Will he show them to his friends ?"

"Inimies would be truer," returned Deerslayer ; "but sound is n't sense, and does little harm. Here is one of the images ; I toss it to you under faith of treaties. If it's not returned, the rifle will settle the p'int atween us."

The Iroquois acquiesced in the conditions, and the little piece of ivory was soon successfully transferred from one hand to the other ; and then followed another scene on the raft, in which astonishment and delight got the mastery of Indian stoicism. For a few minutes the two grim old warriors apparently lost the consciousness of their situation in the intense scrutiny they bestowed on a material so fine, work so highly wrought, and an animal so extraordinary. The lip of the moose is, perhaps, the nearest approach to the trunk of the elephant that is to be found in the American forest ; but this resemblance was far from being



sufficiently striking to bring the new creature within the range of their habits and ideas, and the more they studied the image the greater was their astonishment. Nor did these children of the forest mistake the structure on the back of the elephant for a part of the animal. They were familiar with horses and oxen, and had seen towers in the Canadas, and found nothing surprising in creatures of burden. Still, by a very natural association, they supposed the carving meant to represent that the animal they saw was of a strength sufficient to carry a fort on its back ; a circumstance that in no degree lessened their wonder.

“Has my paleface brother any more such beasts?” at last the senior of the Iroquois asked, in a sort of petitioning manner.

“There’s more where these came from, Mingo,” was the answer ; “one is enough, however, to buy off fifty scalps.”

“One of my prisoners is a great warrior — tall as a pine — strong as the moose — active as a deer — fierce as the panther. Some day he’ll be a great chief, and lead the army of King George !”

“Tut — tut — Mingo ; Hurry Harry is Hurry Harry, and you’ll never make more than a corporal of him, if you do that. He’s tall enough, of a sartainty ; but that’s of no use, as he only hits his head agin the branches as he goes through the forest. He’s strong, too ; but a strong body is n’t a strong head, and the king’s generals are not chosen for their sinews. He’s swift, if you will, but a rifle bullet is swifter ; and as for f’erceness, it’s no great ricomment to a soldier ; they that think they feel the stoutest often givin’ out at the pinch. No — no — you’ll never

make Hurry's scalp pass for more than a good head of curly hair, and a rattlepate beneath it!"

"My old prisoner very wise — king of the lake — great warrior, wise counselor!"

"Well, there's them that might gainsay all this, too, Mingo. A very wise man would n't be apt to be taken in so foolish a manner as befell Master Hutter; and if he gives good counsel, he must have listened to very bad in that affair. There's only one king of this lake, and he's a long way off, and is n't likely ever to see it. Floating Tom is some such king of this region, as the wolf that prowls through the woods is king of the forest. A beast with two tails is well worth two such scalps!"

"But my brother has another beast. He will give two," holding up as many fingers, "for old father."

"Floating Tom is no father of mine, but he'll fare none the worse for that. As for giving two beasts for his scalp, and each beast with two tails, it is quite beyond reason. Think yourself well off, Mingo, if you make a much worse trade."

By this time the self-command of Rivenoak had got the better of his wonder, and he began to fall back on his usual habits of cunning, in order to drive the best bargain he could. It would be useless to relate more than the substance of the desultory dialogue that followed, in which the Indian manifested no little management, in endeavoring to recover the ground lost under the influence of surprise. He even affected to doubt whether any original for the image of the beast existed, and asserted that the oldest Indian had never heard a tradition of any such animal. As is not uncommon on such occasions, one of the parties got

a little warm in the course of the discussion ; for Deerslayer met all the arguments and prevarications of his subtle opponent with his own cool directness of manner and unmoved love of truth. What an elephant was he knew little better than the savage ; but he perfectly understood that the carved pieces of ivory must have some such value in the eyes of an Iroquois as a bag of gold, or a package of beaver-skins, would in those of a trader. Under the circumstances, therefore, he felt it to be prudent not to concede too much at first, — since there existed a nearly unconquerable obstacle to making the transfers, even after the contracting parties had actually agreed upon the terms. Keeping this difficulty in view, he held the extra chessmen in reserve as a means of smoothing any difficulty in the moment of need.

At length the savage pretended that further negotiation was useless, since he could not be so unjust to his tribe as to part with the honor and emoluments of two excellent, full-grown male scalps, for a consideration so trifling as a toy like that he had seen — and he prepared to take his departure. Both parties now felt as men are wont to feel, when a bargain that each is anxious to conclude is on the eve of being broken off in consequence of too much pertinacity in the way of management. The effect of the disappointment was very different, however, on the respective individuals. Deerslayer was mortified, and filled with regret, — for he not only felt for the prisoners, but he also felt deeply for the two girls. The conclusion of the treaty, therefore, left him melancholy and full of regret. With the savage, his defeat produced the desire of revenge. In a moment of excitement, he loudly announced his intention

to say no more ; and he felt equally enraged with himself and with his cool opponent, that he had permitted a pale-face to manifest more indifference and self-command than an Indian chief. When he began to urge his raft away from the platform, his countenance lowered, and his eye glowed even while he affected a smile of amity and a gesture of courtesy at parting.

It took some little time to start the raft, and while this was doing by the silent Indian, Rivenoak stalked over the hemlock boughs that lay between the logs, in sullen ferocity, eying keenly the while the hut, the platform, and the person of his late disputant. Once he spoke in low, quick terms to his companion, and he stirred the boughs with his feet, like an animal that is restive. At that moment the watchfulness of Deerslayer had a little abated, for he sat musing on the means of renewing the negotiation without giving too much advantage to the other side. It was, perhaps, fortunate for him that the keen and bright eyes of Judith were as vigilant as ever. At the instant when the young man was least on his guard, and his enemy was the most on the alert, she called out in a warning voice to the former, most opportunely giving the alarm.

“ Be on your guard, Deerslayer ! ” the girl cried ; “ I see rifles, with the glass, beneath the hemlock brush, and the Iroquois is loosening them with his feet ! ”

It was evident, by the sudden manner in which his feet ceased their treacherous occupation, and in which the countenance of Rivenoak changed from sullen ferocity to a smile of courtesy, that the call of the girl was understood. Signing to his companion to cease his efforts to set the

logs in motion, he advanced to the end of the raft which was nearest to the platform, and spoke.

"Why should Rivenoak and his brother leave any cloud between them?" he said. "They are both wise, both brave, and both generous; they ought to part friends. One beast shall be the price of one prisoner."

"And, Mingo," answered the other, delighted to renew the negotiation on almost any terms, and determined to clench the bargain if possible by a little extra liberality, "you'll see that a paleface knows how to pay a full price, when he trades with an open heart and an open hand. Keep the beast that you had forgotten to give back to me as you were about to start, and which I forgot to ask for on account of consarn at parting in anger. Show it to your chiefs. When you bring us our fri'nds two more shall be added to it — and" — hesitating a moment in distrust of the expediency of so great a concession, then deciding in its favor — "and, if we see them afore the sun sets, we may find a fourth to make up an even number."

This settled the matter. Every gleam of discontent vanished from the dark countenance of the Iroquois. The piece already in his possession was again examined, and an ejaculation of pleasure showed how much he was pleased with this termination of the affair. After repeating the terms of agreement, the two Indians finally took their departure, moving slowly towards the shore.

"Can any faith be put in such wretches?" asked Judith, when she and Hetty had come out on the platform, and were standing at the side of Deerslayer watching the dull movement of the logs. "Will they not rather keep the toy they have, and send us off some bloody proofs of their

getting the better of us in cunning, by way of boasting? I've heard of acts as bad as this."

"No doubt, Judith; no manner of doubt, if it was n't for Indian natur'. But I'm no judge of a redskin, if that two-tailed beast does n't set the whole tribe in some such stir as a stick raises in a beehive! Now, there's the Sarpent; a man with narves like flint, and no more cur'osity in every-day consarns than is befitting prudence. Why, he was so overcome with the sight of the creatur', carved as it is in bone, that I felt ashamed for him! That's just their gifts, however, and one can't well quarrel with a man for his gifts, when they are lawful. Chingachgook will soon get over his weakness, and remember that he's a chief, and that he comes of a great stock, and has a renowned name to support and uphold; but, as for yonder scamps, there'll be no peace among 'em until they think they've got possession of everything of the natur' of that bit of carved bone that's to be found among Thomas Hutter's stores!"

The prospects of success were now so encouraging as to raise the spirits of all in the castle, though a due watchfulness on the movements of the enemy was maintained. Hour passed after hour, notwithstanding, and the sun had once more begun to fall towards the summits of the western hills, and yet no signs were seen of the return of the raft. By dint of sweeping the shore with the glass, Deerslayer at length discovered a place in the dense and dark woods, where, he entertained no doubt, the Iroquois were assembled in considerable numbers. It was near the thicket whence the raft had issued, and a little rill that trickled into the lake announced the vicinity of a spring. Here,

then, the savages were probably holding their consultation, and the decision was to be made that went to settle the question of life or death for the prisoners.

The result justified Deerslayer's conjecture. Not long before the sun had finally disappeared, the two logs were seen coming out of the thicket again; and, as they drew near, Judith announced that her father and Hurry, both of them pinioned, lay on the bushes in the centre. Even after the conditions were so well understood, and matters had proceeded so far, the actual transfer of the prisoners was not a duty to be executed without difficulty. The Iroquois were compelled to place great reliance on the good faith of their foes, though it was reluctantly given, and was yielded to necessity rather than to confidence. It is probable the arrangement never could have been completed, had not the honest countenance and manner of Deerslayer wrought their usual effect on Rivenoak.

"My brother knows I put faith in *him*," said the latter as he advanced with Hutter, whose legs had been released to enable the old man to ascend to the platform. "One scalp — one more beast."

"Stop, Mingo," interrupted the hunter, "keep your prisoner a moment. I have to go and seek the means of payment."

This errand was, however, in part an excuse. Deerslayer left the platform, and entering the house, he directed Judith to collect all the arms, and to conceal them in her own room. He then spoke earnestly to the Delaware, who stood on guard as before, near the entrance of the building, put the three remaining castles in his pocket, and returned.

"You are welcome back to your old abode, Master Hutter," said Deerslayer, as he helped the other up on the platform, passing into the hand of Rivenoak, at the same time, another of the castles. "You'll find your darters right glad to see you."

Here the hunter stopped speaking and broke out into a hearty fit of his silent and peculiar laughter. Hurry's legs were just released and he had been placed on his feet. So tightly had the ligatures been drawn, that the use of his limbs was not immediately recovered, and the young giant presented, in good sooth, a very helpless and a somewhat ludicrous picture.

"You look like a girdled pine in a clearin', Hurry Harry, that is rocking in a gale," said Deerslayer.

"Harkee, Deerslayer," returned the other fiercely; "it will be prudent for you to deal less in mirth and more in friendship on this occasion. Act like a Christian, for once, and not like a laughing gal in a country school when the master's back is turned, and just tell me whether there's any feet or not at the end of these legs of mine. I think I can see them, but as for feelin', they might as well be down on the banks of the Mohawk as where they seem to be."

"You've come off whole, Hurry, and that's not a little," answered the other, secretly passing to the Indian the remainder of the stipulated ransom, and making an earnest sign, at the same moment, for him to commence his retreat. "You've come off whole, feet and all, and are only a little numb, from a tight fit of the withes. Natur'll soon set the blood in motion, and then you may begin to dance, to celebrate what I call a most wonderful and unexpected deliverance from a den of wolves."



Deerslayer released the arms of his friends, as each landed, and the two were now stamping and limping about on the platform, growling, and uttering denunciations, as they endeavored to help the returning circulation. They had been tethered too long, however, to regain the use of their limbs in a moment; and the Indians being quite as diligent on their return as on their advance, the raft was fully a hundred yards from the castle when Hurry, turning accidentally in that direction, discovered how fast it was getting beyond the reach of his vengeance. By this time he could move with tolerable facility, though still numb and awkward. Hastily he seized the rifle that leaned against the shoulder of Deerslayer, and attempted to cock and present it. The young hunter was too quick for him. Seizing the piece he wrenched it from the hands of the giant; not, however, until it had gone off in the struggle, when pointed directly upwards. The instant the gun went off Hurry yielded, and stumped towards the house as fast as his benumbed limbs would carry him. But he had been anticipated by Judith. The whole stock of Hutter's arms had been removed, and was already secreted, agreeably to Deerslayer's directions. In consequence of this precaution, so wisely taken by Deerslayer who knew the character of the man with whom he had to deal, no means offered by which March could put his treacherous designs into execution.

Disappointed in his vengeance, Hurry seated himself, and like Hutter, for half an hour, he was too much occupied in endeavoring to restore the circulation, and in regaining the use of his limbs, to indulge in any other reflections. By the end of this time the raft had disappeared,

and night was beginning to throw her shadows once more over the whole sylvan scene. Before darkness had completely set in, and while the girls were preparing the evening meal, Deerslayer related to Hutter an outline of the events that had taken place, and gave him a history of the means he had adopted for his ransom and also for the security of his children and property.

## PART IV. THE MIDNIGHT EXPEDITION

### CHAPTER I

The sun had set when the party in the castle reassembled, and the canopy overhead was heavy and dense, promising another night of darkness. The evening was calm, and the surface of the lake was scarcely disturbed by a ripple. The gloom and silence of the scene were in singular accord with the feelings of the members of the party. The two ransomed prisoners felt humbled and dishonored, but their humility partook of the rancor of revenge. They were far more disposed to remember the indignity with which they had been treated during the last few hours of their captivity, than to feel grateful for the previous indulgence. As for the others they were thoughtful equally from regret and joy. Deerslayer and Judith felt most of the former sensation, though from very different causes, while Hetty for the moment was perfectly happy. The Delaware had also lively pictures of felicity in the prospect of so soon regaining his betrothed. As Hutter rose to go indoors for a moment, the silence was broken by Hurry Harry.

"Old Tom!" he cried, bursting into a fit of boisterous laughter, "you looked amazin'ly like a tethered bear, as you was stretched on them hemlock boughs, and I only

wonder you didn't growl more. Well, it's over, and sythes and lamentations won't mend the matter! There's the blackguard Rivenoak, he that brought us off, has an uncommon scalp, and I'd give as much for it myself as the colony. Judith, darling, did you mourn for me much, when I was in the hands of the heathen?"

"Our tears have raised the lake, Harry March, as you might have seen by the shore!" returned Judith, with a feigned levity that she was far from feeling. "That Hetty and I should have grieved for father was to be expected; but we fairly rained tears for you."

"We *were* sorry for poor Hurry, as well as for father, Judith!" put in her innocent and unconscious sister.

"True, girl, true; but we feel sorrow for everybody that's in trouble, you know," returned the other in a quick, admonitory manner, and a low tone. "Nevertheless, we are glad to see you, Master March, and out of the hands of the heathen, too."

"Yes, they're a bad set, and so is the other brood of 'em, down on the river. What I wonder is if it's peace or war between us and the savages!" continued Hurry, just as Deerslayer, who had risen for an instant and listened attentively, was passing through the outer door. "This givin' up captives has a friendly look, and when men have traded together, on a fair and honorable footing, they ought to part fri'nds, for that occasion, at least. Come back, Deerslayer, and let us have your judgment, for I'm beginnin' to think more of you, since your late behavior, than I used to do."

"There's an answer to your question, Hurry, since you're in such haste to come agin to blows."

As Deerslayer spoke, he threw on the table on which the other was reclining with one elbow a sort of miniature fagot, composed of a dozen sticks bound tightly together with a deerskin thong. March seized it eagerly, and holding it close to a blazing knot of pine that lay on the hearth, and which gave out all the light there was in the room, ascertained that the ends of the several sticks had been dipped in blood.

"If this is n't plain English," said the reckless frontiersman, "it's plain Injin! Here's what they call a dicliration of war, down at York, Judith. How did you come by this defiance, Deerslayer?"

"Fairly enough. It lay, not a minut' since, in what you call Floatin' Tom's dooryard."

"How came it there? It never fell from the clouds surely."

Deerslayer had approached a window, and cast a glance out of it on the dark aspect of the lake. As if satisfied with what he beheld, he drew near Hurry and took the bundle of sticks into his own hand, examining it attentively.

"Yes, this is an Indian declaration of war, sure enough," he said, "and it's a proof how little you're suited to be on the path it has traveled, Harry March, that it has got here, and you never the wiser as to the means. The savages may have left the scalp on your head, but they must have taken off the *ears*; else you'd have heard the stirring of the water made by the lad as he come off agin, on his two logs. His arr'nd was to throw these sticks at our door, as much as to say, we've struck the war-post since the trade, and the next thing will be to strike *you*."

“The prowling wolves! But hand me that rifle, Judith, and I’ll send an answer back to the vagabonds through their messenger.”

“Not while I stand by, Master March,” coolly put in Deerslayer, motioning for the other to forbear. “Faith is faith, whether given to a redskin or to a Christian. The lad lighted a knot, and came off fairly, under its blaze, to give us this warning; and no man here should harm him while empl’yed on such an arr’nd. There’s no use in words, for the boy is too cunning to leave the knot burning, now his business is done, and the night is already too dark for a rifle to have any sartainty.”

“That may be true enough, as to a gun, but there’s virtue still in a canoe,” answered Hurry, passing towards the door with enormous strides, carrying a rifle in his hands. “The being does n’t live that shall stop me from following, and bringing back that riptyle’s scalp. The more on ’em that you crush in the egg, the fewer there’ll be to dart at you in the woods!”

Judith trembled like the aspen, she scarce knew why herself, though there was the prospect of a scene of violence; for, if Hurry was fierce and overbearing in the consciousness of his vast strength, Deerslayer had about him the calm determination that promises greater perseverance, and a resolution more likely to effect its object. It was the stern, resolute eye of the latter, rather than the noisy vehemence of the first, that excited her apprehensions. Hurry soon reached the spot where the canoe was fastened, but not before Deerslayer had spoken in a quick, earnest voice to the Serpent, in Delaware. The latter had been the first, in truth, to hear the sounds of the oars, and

he had gone upon the platform in jealous watchfulness. The light satisfied him that a message was coming, and when the boy cast his bundle of sticks at his feet it neither moved his anger nor induced surprise. He merely stood at watch, rifle in hand, to make certain that no treachery lay behind the defiance. As Deerslayer now called to him, he stepped into the canoe, and quick as thought removed the paddles. Hurry was furious when he found that he was deprived of the means of proceeding. He first approached the Indian with loud menaces, and even Deerslayer stood aghast at the probable consequences. March shook his sledge-hammer fists and flourished his arms, as he drew near the Indian, and all expected he would attempt to fell the Delaware to the earth; one of them at least was well aware that such an experiment would be followed by immediate bloodshed. But even Hurry was awed by the stern composure of the chief, and he, too, knew that such a man was not to be outraged with impunity; he therefore turned to vent his rage on Deerslayer, where he foresaw no consequences so terrible. What might have been the result of this second demonstration, if completed, is unknown, since it was never made.

“Hurry,” said a gentle, soothing voice at his elbow, “it’s wicked to be so angry, and God will not overlook it. The Iroquois treated you well, and they did n’t take *your* scalp, though you and father wanted to take *theirs*.”

The influence of mildness on passion is well known, and was in this case instantaneous. Instead of throttling his old fellow-traveler, Hurry turned to the girl, and poured out a portion of his discontent, if none of his anger, in her attentive ears.

"'T is too bad, Hetty!" he exclaimed; "as bad as a county jail, or a lack of beaver, to get a creatur' into your very trap, and then to see it get off. As much as six first quality skins, in valie, has paddled off on them clumsy logs, when twenty strokes of a well-turned paddle would overtake 'em. I say in valie, for as to the boy, in the way of natur' he is only a boy, and is worth neither more nor less than one. Deerslayer, you've been ontrue to your fri'nds in letting such a chance slip through my fingers as well as your own."

But Deerslayer had turned away, and Hutter, who had been summoned to the platform by the disturbance, now pulled Hurry Harry by the sleeve, and led him into the ark. There they sat long in private conference. In the meantime the Indian and his friend had their secret consultation; for, though it wanted some three or four hours to the rising of the star, there were plans to be made, that they might not fail to meet and rescue Hist at the time she had set.

At length the several conferences were broken up by the reappearance of Hutter on the platform. Here he assembled the whole party, and communicated as much of his intentions as he deemed expedient. Of the arrangement made by Deerslayer, to abandon the castle during the night, and to take refuge in the ark, he entirely approved. It struck him as it had the others, as the only effectual means of escaping destruction. Now that the savages had turned their attention to the construction of rafts, no doubt could exist of their at least making an attempt to carry the building, and the message of the bloody sticks sufficiently showed their confidence in their own success. In short the



old man viewed the night as critical, and he called on all to get ready as soon as possible, in order to abandon the dwelling, temporarily at least, if not forever.

These communications made, everything proceeded promptly, and with intelligence; the castle was secured in the manner already described, the canoes were withdrawn from the dock and fastened to the ark by the side of the other; the few necessaries that had been left in the house were transferred to the cabin, the fire was extinguished, and all embarked.

The vicinity of the hills, with their drapery of pines, had the effect to render nights that were obscure darker than common on the lake. As usual, however, a belt of comparative light was stretched through the centre of the sheet, while it was within the shadows of the mountains that the gloom rested most heavily on the water. The island or castle stood in this belt of comparative light, but still the night was so dark as to cover the departure of the ark. At the distance of an observer on the shore, her movements could not be seen at all, more particularly as a background of dark hillside filled up the perspective of every view that was taken diagonally or directly across the water.

It was now a question as to the course to be steered. Hutter decided that the wisest way would be to keep in motion as the means most likely to defeat any attempt at a surprise — announcing his own and March's intention to requite themselves for the loss of sleep during their captivity, by lying down. As the air still baffled and continued light, it was finally determined to sail before it, let it come in what direction it might, so long as it did not blow the ark upon the strand. This point settled, the released

prisoners helped to hoist the sail, and then threw themselves on two of the pallets, leaving Deerslayer and his friend to look after the movements of the craft, an arrangement which their private plans made doubly acceptable to them. That Judith and Hetty remained up also in no manner impaired the agreeable features of this change.

For some time the scow rather drifted than sailed along the western shore, following a light southerly current of the air. The progress was slow — not exceeding a couple of miles in the hour — but the two men perceived that it was not only carrying them towards the point they desired to reach, but at a rate that was quite as fast as the hour yet rendered necessary. Deerslayer kept the craft as much in the bays as was prudent, in order to sail within the shadows of the woods. In this manner they doubled one low point, and were already in the bay that was terminated north by the goal at which they aimed. The latter was still a quarter of a mile distant, when Chingachgook came silently to the side of his friend and pointed to a place directly ahead. A small fire was glimmering just within the verge of the bushes that lined the shore on the southern side of the point — leaving no doubt that the Indians had suddenly removed their camp to the very place, or at least the very projection of land, where Hist had given them the rendezvous!

## CHAPTER II

The discovery mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter was of great moment in the eyes of Deerslayer and his friend. In the first place, there was the danger, almost the certainty, that Hutter and Hurry would make

a fresh attempt on this camp should they awake and ascertain its position. Then there was the increased risk of landing to bring off Hist; and there were the general uncertainty and additional hazards that must follow from the circumstance that their enemies had begun to change their positions. One of the first things agreed upon between Deerslayer and the Indian was to permit the other two to sleep on, lest their thirst for revenge interfere with the execution of Chingachgook's project, of which it will be remembered they had as yet no knowledge. The ark moved slowly, and it would have taken fully a quarter of an hour to reach the point, at the rate at which they were going; thus affording time for a little forethought. The Indians, in the wish to conceal their fire from those who were thought to be still in the castle, had placed it so near the southern side of the point as to render it extremely difficult to shut it in by the bushes, though Deerslayer varied the direction of the scow, both to the right and to the left, in the hope of being able to effect that object.

"There's one advantage, Judith, in finding that fire so near the water," he said, while executing these little manoeuvres; "since it shows the Mingos believe we are in the hut, and our coming on 'em from this quarter will be an onlooked-for event. But 't is lucky Harry March and your father are asleep, else we should have 'em prowling after scalps agin. Ha! there — the bushes are beginning to shut in the fire — and now it can't be seen at all!"

Deerslayer waited a little to make certain that he had at last gained the desired position, when he gave the signal agreed on, and Chingachgook let go the anchor and lowered the sail. The intense darkness that prevailed so close

in with the forest, too, served as an effectual screen ; and so long as care was had not to make a noise there was little or no danger of being detected. This Deerslayer pointed out to Judith, even instructing her as to the course she was to follow in the event of an alarm.

“ And now, Judith, as we understand one another, it is time the Serpent and I had taken to the canoe,” the hunter concluded. “ The star has not risen yet, it ’s true, but it soon must ; though none of us are likely to be any the wiser for it to-night, on account of the clouds. Hows’ever, Hist has a ready mind, and she ’s one of them that does n’t always need to have a thing afore her to see it. I ’ll warrant you she ’ll not be either two minutes or two feet out of the way, unless them jealous vagabonds, the Mingos, have taken the alarm and hid her away, in order to prepare her mind for a Huron instead of a Mohican husband.”

Chingachgook and his paleface friend set forth on their hazardous and delicate enterprise with a coolness and method that would have done credit to men who were on their twentieth instead of being on their first warpath. As suited his relation to the pretty fugitive in whose service they were engaged, the Indian took his place in the head of the canoe, while Deerslayer guided its movements in the stern. By this arrangement, the former would be the first to land, and the first to meet his mistress. A few minutes sufficed to carry the canoe the necessary distance, when both the young men ceased paddling, as it were by instinctive consent, and the boat became stationary.

The darkness increased rather than diminished, but it was still possible, from the place where the adventurers

lay, to distinguish the outlines of mountains. In vain did the Delaware turn his head eastward, — to catch a glimpse of the promised star ; for, notwithstanding the clouds broke a little near the horizon in that quarter of the heavens, the curtain continued so far drawn as effectually to conceal all behind it. In front, as was known by the formation of land above and behind it, lay the point, at a distance of about a thousand feet. The utmost skill and precaution now became necessary in the management of the canoe. The paddles were lifted and returned to the water in a noiseless manner ; and when within a hundred yards of the beach Chingachgook took in his altogether, laying his hand on his rifle in its stead. As they got still more within the belt of darkness that girded the woods, the canoe now seemed to move by instinct, so cautious and deliberate were all its motions, until in a moment its bows grated on the gravel of the beach. There was, as usual, a narrow strand, but bushes fringed the woods and in most places overhung the water.

Chingachgook stepped upon the beach, and cautiously examined it for some distance on each side of the canoe. In order to do this, he was often obliged to wade to his knees in the lake. No Hist rewarded his search. When he returned, he found his friend also on the shore. They next conferred in whispers, the Indian apprehending that they must have mistaken the place of rendezvous. Deer-slayer thought it was probable they had mistaken the hour. While he was yet speaking, he grasped the arm of the Delaware, caused him to turn his head in the direction of the lake, and pointed towards the summits of the eastern mountains. The clouds had broken a little, apparently behind rather than above the hills and the selected star was

glittering among the branches of a pine. This was every way a flattering omen, and the young men leaned on their rifles, listening intently for the sound of approaching footsteps. Voices they often heard, and mingled with them were the suppressed cries of children, and the low but sweet laugh of Indian women. As the native Americans are habitually cautious, and seldom break out in loud conversation, the adventurers knew by these facts that they must be very near the encampment. It was easy to perceive that there was a fire within the woods, by the manner in which some of the upper branches of the trees were illuminated, but it was not possible, where they stood, to ascertain exactly how near it was to themselves. Once or twice it seemed as if stragglers from around the fire were approaching the place of rendezvous; but these sounds were either altogether illusion, or those who had drawn near returned again without coming to the shore. A quarter of an hour was passed in this state of intense expectation and anxiety, when Deerslayer proposed that they should circle the point in the canoe; and by getting a position close in, where the camp could be seen, reconnoitre the Indians, and thus enable themselves to form some plausible conjectures for the non-appearance of Hist. The Delaware, however, resolutely refused to quit the spot, plausibly enough offering as a reason the disappointment of the girl should she arrive in his absence. Deerslayer felt for his friend's concern, and offered to make the circuit of the point by himself, leaving the latter concealed in the bushes to await the occurrence of any fortunate event that might favor his views. With this understanding, then, the parties separated.

As soon as Deerslayer was at his post again, in the stern of the canoe, he left the shore with the same precautions, and in the same noiseless manner as he approached it. On this occasion he did not go far from the land, the bushes affording a sufficient cover, by keeping as close in as possible. Indeed, it would not have been easy to devise any means more favorable to reconnoitring round an Indian camp, than those afforded by the actual state of things. The formation of the point permitted the place to be circled on three of its sides, and the progress of the boat was so noiseless as to remove any apprehensions from an alarm through sound. The most practiced and guarded foot might stir a bunch of leaves or snap a dried stick in the dark, but a bark canoe could be made to float over the surface of smooth water, almost with the instinctive readiness, and certainly with the noiseless movements, of an aquatic bird.

Deerslayer had got nearly in a line between the camp and the ark before he caught a glimpse of the fire. This came upon him suddenly, and a little unexpectedly, at first causing an alarm, lest he had incautiously ventured within the circle of light it cast. But, perceiving at a second glance that he was certainly safe from detection, so long as the Indians kept near the centre of the illumination, he brought the canoe to a state of rest.

The canoe now lay in front of a natural vista, not only through the bushes that lined the shore but of the trees also, that afforded a clear view of the camp. It was by means of this same opening that the light had been first seen from the ark. In consequence of their recent change of ground, the Indians had not yet retired to their huts,

but had been delayed by their preparations, which included lodging as well as food. A large fire had been made, as much to answer the purpose of torches as for the use of their simple cookery; and at this precise moment it was blazing high and bright, having recently received a large supply of dried brush. The effect was to illuminate the arches of the forest, and to render the whole area occupied by the camp as light as if hundreds of tapers were burning. Most of the toil had ceased, and even the hungriest child had satisfied its appetite.

Deerslayer saw at a glance that many of the warriors were absent. His acquaintance, Rivenoak, however, was present, being seated in the foreground of a picture that *ter of* *uncan* Salvator Rosa would have delighted to draw, his swarthy features illuminated as much by pleasure as by the torch-like flame, while he showed another of the tribe one of the elephants that had caused so much sensation among his people. A boy was looking over his shoulder, in dull curiosity, completing the group. More in the background, eight or ten warriors lay half recumbent on the ground or sat with their backs inclining against trees—so many types of indolent repose. Their arms were near them, sometimes leaning against the same trees as themselves, or were lying across their bodies, in careless preparation. But the group that most attracted the attention of Deerslayer was that composed of the women and children. All the females appeared to be collected together, and, almost as a matter of course, their young were near them. The former laughed and chatted in their rebuked and quiet manner, though one who knew the habits of the people might have detected that everything was not going on in



its usual train. Most of the young women seemed to be light-hearted enough; but one old hag was seated apart, with a watchful, soured aspect, which the hunter at once knew betokened that some duty of an unpleasant character had been assigned her by the chiefs.

Deerslayer looked eagerly and anxiously for the form of Hist. She was nowhere visible, though the light penetrated to considerable distances in all directions around the fire. Once or twice he started, as he thought he recognized her laugh; but his ears were deceived by the soft melody that is so common to the Indian female voice. At length the old woman spoke loud and angrily, and then he caught a glimpse of one or two dark figures, in the background of trees, which turned as if obedient to the rebuke, and walked more within the circle of the light. A young warrior's form first came fairly into view; then followed two youthful females, one of whom proved to be the Delaware girl. Deerslayer now comprehended it all. Hist was watched, possibly by her young companion, certainly by the old woman. The youth was probably some suitor of either her or her companion; but even his discretion was distrusted under the influence of his admiration. The known vicinity of those who might be supposed to be her friends, and the arrival of a strange red-man on the lake, had induced more than the usual care, and the girl had not been able to slip away from those who watched her, in order to keep her appointment. Deerslayer traced her uneasiness, by her attempting, once or twice, to look up through the branches of the trees, as if endeavoring to get glimpses of the star she had herself named as the sign for meeting. All was vain, however, and after strolling about the camp

a little longer, in affected indifference, the two girls quitted their male escort, and took seats among their own sex. As soon as this was done, the old sentinel changed her place to one more agreeable to herself, a certain proof that she had hitherto been exclusively on watch.

Deerslayer now felt greatly at a loss how to proceed. He well knew that Chingachgook could never be persuaded to return to the ark, without making some desperate effort for the recovery of his mistress, and his own generous feelings well disposed him to aid in such an undertaking. He thought he saw the signs of an intention among the females to retire for the night; and should he remain, and the fire continue to give out its light, he might discover the particular hut, or arbor, under which Hist reposed; a circumstance that would be of infinite use in their future proceedings. Should he remain, however, much longer where he was, there was great danger that the impatience of his friend would drive him into some act of imprudence. At each instant, indeed, he expected to see the swarthy form of the Delaware appearing in the background, like the tiger prowling around the fold. Taking all things into consideration, therefore, he came to the conclusion it would be better to rejoin his friend, and endeavor to temper his impetuosity by some of his own coolness and discretion. It required but a minute or two to put this plan in execution, the canoe returning to the strand some ten or fifteen minutes after it had left it.

Contrary to his expectations, perhaps, Deerslayer found the Indian at his post, from which he had not stirred, fearful that his betrothed might arrive during his absence. A conference followed, in which Chingachgook was made

acquainted with the state of things in the camp. When Hist named the point as the place of meeting, it was with the expectation of making her escape from the old position, and of repairing to a spot that she expected to find without any occupants; but the sudden change of localities had disconcerted her plans. A much greater degree of vigilance than had been previously required was now necessary,—and the circumstance that an aged woman was on watch also denoted some special grounds of alarm. All these considerations were briefly discussed, and the course to be pursued was soon chosen. Disposing of the canoe in such a manner that Hist must see it, should she come to the place of meeting previously to their return, the young men looked to their arms, and prepared to enter the wood, going in a roundabout way in order to approach the camp from the rear. A little rise in the ground that lay behind the encampment greatly favored their secret advance.

As soon as the friends emerged from the bushes, they stopped to reconnoitre. The fire was still blazing behind the little ridge, casting its light upward into the tops of the trees, producing an effect that was more pleasing than advantageous. Still the glare had its uses; for, while the background was in obscurity, the foreground was in strong light; exposing the savages and concealing their foes. Profiting by the latter circumstance, the young men advanced cautiously towards the ridge, Deerslayer in front, for he insisted on this arrangement, lest the Delaware should be led by his feelings into some indiscretion. It required but a moment to reach the foot of the little ascent, and then commenced the most critical part of the enterprise. Moving with exceeding caution, and trailing his rifle,

both to keep its barrel out of view and in readiness for service, the hunter put foot before foot, until he had got sufficiently high to overlook the summit, his own head being alone brought into the light. Chingachgook was at his side, and both paused to take another close examination of the camp. In order, however, to protect themselves against any straggler in the rear, they placed their bodies against the trunk of an oak, standing on the side next the fire.

The view that Deerslayer now obtained of the camp was exactly the reverse of that he had perceived from the water. The dim figures which he had formerly discovered must have been on the summit of the ridge, a few feet in advance of the spot where he was now posted. The fire was still blazing brightly, and around it were seated on logs thirteen warriors, which accounted for all whom he had seen from the canoe. They were conversing with much earnestness among themselves, the image of the elephant passing from hand to hand. The first burst of savage wonder had abated, and the question now under discussion was the probable existence, the history and habits of so extraordinary an animal.

The females were collected near each other, much as Deerslayer had last seen them, nearly in a line between the place where he now stood and the fire. The distance from the oak against which the young men leaned to the warriors was about thirty yards; the women may have been half that number of yards nigher, so near that it was possible, in the profound stillness of the woods, even to catch passages of the discourse. Deerslayer felt the tremor that passed through the frame of his friend when the latter first caught the sweet sounds that issued from

the plump, pretty lips of Hist. He even laid a hand on the shoulder of the Indian, as a sort of admonition to command himself. As the conversation grew more earnest each leaned forward to listen.

"The Hurons have more curious beasts than that," said one of the girls contemptuously; for, like the men, they conversed of the elephant and his qualities. "The Delawares will think this creature wonderful, but to-morrow no Huron tongue will talk of it. Our young men will find him if the animal dares to come near our wigwams!"

"The Delawares are so far from letting such creatures come into their country," returned Hist, "that no one has even seen their images there! Their young men would frighten away the *images* as well as the *beasts*."

"The Delaware young men! — the nation is women, — even the deer walk when they hear their hunters coming. Who has ever heard the name of a young Delaware warrior?"

This was said in good-humor, and with a laugh; but it was also said bitingly. That Hist so felt it was apparent by the spirit betrayed in her answer.

"Who has ever heard the name of a young Delaware?" she repeated earnestly. "Tamenund himself, though now as old as the pines on the hill, or as the eagles in the air, was once young — his name was heard from the great salt lake to the sweet waters of the west. What is the family of Uncas? Where is another as great, though the pale-faces have ploughed up its graves, and trodden on its bones? Do the eagles fly as high, is the deer as swift, or the panther as brave? Is there no young warrior of that race? Let the Huron maidens open their eyes wider, and

they may see one called Chingachgook, who is as stately as a young ash, and as tough as the hickory."

As the girl used her figurative language, and told her companions "to open their eyes and they would see" the Delaware, Deerslayer thrust his fingers into the sides of his friend, and indulged in a fit of his hearty, benevolent laughter. The other smiled; but the language of the speaker was too flattering and the tones of her voice too sweet for him to be led away by any accidental coincidence, however ludicrous. The speech of Hist produced a retort, and the dispute, though still good-humored, grew warm and slightly clamorous. In the midst of this scene the Delaware caused his friend to stoop, so as completely to conceal himself, and then he made a noise so closely resembling the little chirrup of the smallest species of the American squirrel, that Deerslayer himself, though he had heard the imitation a hundred times, actually thought it came from one of the little animals skipping about over his head. The sound is so familiar in the woods that none of the Hurons paid it the least attention. Hist, however, instantly ceased talking, and sat motionless. Still, she had sufficient self-command to abstain from turning her head. She had heard the signal by which her lover so often called her from the wigwam to the stolen interview, and it came over her senses and her heart, as the serenade affects the maiden in the land of song.

From that moment Chingachgook felt certain that his presence was known. This was effecting much, and he could now hope for a bolder line of conduct on the part of his mistress than she might dare to adopt under an uncertainty of his situation. Deerslayer, too, was not slow to

detect the great change that had come over the manner of the girl. She still affected to dispute, though it was no longer with spirit and ingenuity, but what she said was uttered more as a lure to draw her antagonists on to an easy conquest than with any hopes of succeeding herself. At length the disputants became wearied, and they rose in a body as if about to separate. It was now that Hist, for the first time, ventured to turn her face in the direction whence the signal had come. In doing this, her movements were natural but guarded, and she stretched her arm and yawned, as if overcome with a desire to sleep. The chirrup was again heard, and the girl felt satisfied as to the position of her lover, though the strong light in which she herself was placed, and the comparative darkness in which the adventurers stood, prevented her from seeing them.

The moment was near when it became necessary for Hist to act. She was to sleep in a small hut, and her companion was the aged hag already mentioned. Once within the hut, with this sleepless old woman stretched across the entrance, as was her nightly practice, the hope of escape was nearly destroyed, and she might at any moment be summoned to her bed. Luckily, at this instant, one of the warriors called to the old woman by name, and bade her bring him water to drink. There was a delicious spring on the northern side of the point, and the hag took a gourd from a branch, and summoning Hist to her side, she moved towards the summit of the ridge, intending to descend and cross the point to the natural fountain. All this was seen and understood by the adventurers, and they fell back into the obscurity, concealing their persons

by trees, until the two females had passed them. In walking, Hist was held tightly by the hand. As she moved by the tree that hid Chingachgook and his friend, the former repeated the chirrup to indicate his position, and the Huron woman stopped and faced the tree whence the sounds seemed to proceed, standing, at the moment, within six feet of her enemies. She expressed her surprise that a squirrel should be in motion at so late an hour, and said it boded evil. Hist answered that she had heard the same squirrel three times within the last twenty minutes, and that she supposed it was waiting to obtain some of the crumbs left from the late supper. This explanation appeared satisfactory, and they moved towards the spring, the men following stealthily and closely. The gourd was filled, and the old woman was hurrying back, her hand still grasping the wrist of the girl, when she was suddenly seized so violently by the throat as to cause her to release her captive, and to prevent her making any other sound than a sort of gurgling, suffocating noise. The Serpent passed his arm round the waist of his mistress, and dashed through the bushes with her, on the north side of the point. Here he immediately turned along the beach and ran towards the canoe.

Deerslayer's part in the enterprise was plainly to endeavor to keep the old woman from sounding an alarm until his friend should have safely reached the canoe. This he did by playing on her throat as on the keys of an organ, occasionally allowing her to breathe, and then compressing his fingers again nearly to strangling her.

The brief intervals for breath, however, were well improved, and the hag succeeded in letting out a screech or



two that served to alarm the camp. The tramp of the warriors, as they sprang from the fire, was plainly audible ; and, at the next moment, three or four of them appeared on the top of the ridge, drawn against the background of light, resembling the dim shadows of the phantasmagoria. It was now quite time for the hunter to retreat. Tripping up the heels of his captive, and giving her throat a parting squeeze, he left her on her back, and moved towards the bushes, his rifle at a poise, and his head over his shoulders like a lion at bay.

### CHAPTER III

To gain the beach, and to follow it round to the place where Chingachgook was already in the canoe with Hist, anxiously waiting his appearance, took Deerslayer but a moment. Laying his rifle in the bottom of the canoe, he stooped to give the latter a vigorous shove from the shore, when a powerful Indian leaped through the bushes, alighting like a panther on his back. With a generosity which was so much a part of his character as to be instinctive, Deerslayer threw all his force into a desperate effort, shoved the canoe off with a power that sent it a hundred feet from the shore as it might be in an instant, and fell forward into the lake himself, face downward ; his assailant necessarily following him.

Although the water was deep within a few yards of the beach, it was not more than breast-high as close in as the spot where the two combatants fell. Still this was quite sufficient to destroy one who had sunk under the great disadvantages in which Deerslayer was placed. His hands

were free, however, and the savage was compelled to relinquish his hug to keep his own face above the surface. For half a minute there was a desperate struggle, and then both stood erect, grasping each other's arms, in order to prevent the use of the deadly knife in the darkness. What might have been the issue of this severe personal struggle cannot be known, for half a dozen savages came leaping into the water to the aid of their friend, and Deerslayer yielded himself a prisoner with a dignity that was as remarkable as his self-devotion.

To quit the lake and lead their new captive to the fire occupied the Indians but another minute. So much engaged were they all with the struggle and its consequences that the canoe was unseen, though it still lay so near the shore as to render every syllable that was uttered perfectly intelligible to the Delaware and his betrothed; and the whole party left the spot, some continuing the pursuit after Hist, along the beach, though most proceeded to the light. Here Deerslayer's antagonist so far recovered his breath and his recollection, for he had been throttled nearly to strangulation, as to relate the manner in which the girl had got off. It was now too late to assail the other fugitives, for no sooner was his friend led into the bushes than the Delaware placed his paddle in the water, and the light canoe glided noiselessly away, holding its course towards the centre of the lake, until safe from shot, after which it sought the ark.

When Deerslayer reached the fire, he found himself surrounded by no less than eight grim savages, among whom was his old acquaintance Rivenoak. As soon as the latter caught a glimpse of the captive's countenance, he

spoke apart to his companions, and a low but general exclamation of pleasure and surprise escaped them. They knew that the conqueror of their late friend, he who had fallen on the opposite side of the lake, was in their hands, and subject to their mercy or vengeance. There was no little admiration mingled in the ferocious looks that were thrown on the prisoner, an admiration that was as much excited by his present composure as by his past deeds. This scene may be said to have been the commencement of the great and terrible reputation that Deerslayer, or Hawkeye, as he was afterwards called, enjoyed among all the tribes of New York and Canada.

The arms of Deerslayer were not pinioned, and he was left the free use of his hands, his knife having been first removed. The only precaution that was taken to secure his person was untiring watchfulness, and a strong rope of bark that passed from ankle to ankle, not so much to prevent his walking as to place an obstacle in the way of his attempting to escape by any sudden leap. Even this extra provision against flight was not made until the captive had been brought to the light and his character ascertained. It was, in fact, a compliment to his prowess, and he felt proud of the distinction. That he might be bound when the warriors slept he would have thought probable, but to be bound in the moment of capture showed that he was already, and thus early, attaining a name. While the young Indians were fastening the rope, he wondered if Chingachgook would have been treated in the same manner, had he too fallen into the hands of the enemy. Nor did the reputation of the young paleface rest altogether on his success in the previous combat, or in his discriminating

and cool manner of managing the late negotiation ; for it had received a great accession by the occurrences of the night. Ignorant of the movements of the ark, and of the accident that had brought their fire into view, the Iroquois attributed the discovery of their new camp to the vigilance of so shrewd a foe. The manner in which he ventured upon the point, the abstraction or escape of Hist, and most of all the self-devotion of the prisoner, united to the readiness with which he had sent the canoe adrift, were so many important links in the chain of facts on which his growing fame was founded.

While the warriors consulted together, near at hand, all those who had been out having returned to report that no signs of any other prowlers near the camp were to be found, Deerslayer was permitted to seat himself on the end of a log, near the fire, in order to dry his clothes, his late adversary standing opposite, now holding articles of his own scanty vestments to the heat, and now feeling his throat, on which the marks of his enemy's fingers were still quite visible. In this state of things, the old woman, whose name was Shebear, in plain English, approached Deerslayer with her fists clenched and her eyes flashing fire. Although Deerslayer had not permanently injured her, he had temporarily caused her to suffer, and had thus aroused all the fury of a woman not likely to overlook such treatment.

"Skunk of the palefaces," commenced this exasperated fury, shaking her fist under the nose of the impassible hunter, "you are not even a woman. Your friends, the Delawares, are only women, and you are their sheep. Your own people will not own you, and no tribe of red-men

would have you in their wigwams; you skulk among petticoated warriors. *You* slay our brave friend who has left us? — no — his great soul scorned to fight you, and left his body rather than have the shame of slaying *you*! But the blood that you spilt when the spirit was not looking on has not sunk into the ground. It must be buried in your groans! What music do I hear? Those are not the wailings of a red-man! — no red warrior groans so much like a hog. They come from a paleface throat — a Yengeese bosom, and sound as pleasant as girls singing. Dog — skunk — woodchuck — mink — hedgehog — pig — toad — spider — Yengee ” —

Here the old woman, having expended her breath, and exhausted her epithets, was fain to pause a moment, though both her fists were shaken in the prisoner's face, and the whole of her wrinkled countenance was filled with fierce resentment. Deerslayer looked upon these impotent attempts to arouse him with indifference, but he well understood that he was to be the subject of all her means of annoyance, if not of positive injury, so long as he remained in the power of his enemies. He was, however, spared any further attack at present, by the interposition of Rivenoak, who shoved aside the hag, bidding her quit the spot, and prepared to take his seat at the side of his prisoner.

“ My paleface friend is very welcome,” said the Indian, with a covert smile; “ he is welcome. The Hurons keep a hot fire to dry the white man's clothes.”

“ I thank you, Huron, or Mingo, as I most like to call you,” returned the other; “ I thank you for the welcome, and I thank you for the fire. Each is good in its way, and

the last is very good, when one has been in a spring as cold as the Glimmerglass. Even Huron warmth may be pleasant, at such a time, to a man with a Delaware heart."

"My brother Hawkeye is not a woman; why does he live with the Delawares?"

"Providence placed me among the Delawares young, Mingo; and, 'bating what Christian usages demand of my color and gifts, I hope to live and die in their tribe. Still, I do not mean to throw away altogether my natyve rights, and shall strive to do a paleface's duty in redskin society."

"Good! a Huron is a redskin, as well as a Delaware. Hawkeye is more of a Huron than of a woman."

"I suppose you know, Mingo, your own meaning — if you don't, I make no question 't is well known to Satan. But if you wish to get anything out of me, speak plainer, for bargains cannot be made blindfolded or tongue-tied."

"Good! Hawkeye has not a forked tongue, and he likes to say what he thinks. He is an acquaintance of the Muskrat," — this was a name by which all the Indians designated Hutter, — "and he has lived in his wigwam; but he is not a friend. He wants no scalps, like a miserable Indian, but fights like a stout-hearted paleface. The Muskrat is neither white nor red; neither a beast nor a fish. He is a water-snake; sometimes in the spring and sometimes on the land. He looks for scalps like an outcast. Hawkeye can go back and tell him how he has outwitted the Hurons, how he has escaped; and when his eyes are in a fog, when he can't see as far as from his cabin to the woods, then Hawkeye can open the door for the Hurons. And how will the plunder be divided? Why, Hawkeye will carry away the most, and the Hurons will take what

he may choose to leave behind him. The scalps can go to Canada, for a paleface has no satisfaction in *them*."

"Well, well, Rivenoak, — for so I hear 'em tarm you, — this is plain English enough, though spoken in Iroquois. I understand all you mean, now, and must say it out-devils even Mingo deviltry! No doubt, 't would be easy enough to go back and tell the Muskrat that I had got away from you, and gain some credit, too, by the explite."

"Good! that is what I want the paleface to do."

"Yes — yes — that's plain enough. I know what you want me to do, without more words. When inside the house, and eating the Muskrat's bread, and laughing and talking with his pretty darters, I might put his eyes into so thick a fog that he could n't even see the door, much less the land."

"Good! Hawkeye should have been born a Huron! His blood is not more than half white!"

"There you're out, Huron; yes, there you're as much out, as if you mistook a wolf for a catamount. I'm white in blood, heart, natur', and gifts, though a little redskin in feelin's and habits. But when old Hutter's eyes are well befogged, and his pretty darters, perhaps, in a deep sleep, and Hurry Harry, the Great Pine, as you Indians tarm him, is dreaming of anything but mischief, and all suppose Hawkeye is acting as a faithful sentinel, all I have to do is to set a torch somewhere in sight for a signal, open the door, and let in the Hurons to knock 'em all on the head."

"Surely my brother is mistaken; he *cannot* be white! He is worthy to be a great chief among the Hurons!"

"That is true enough, I dare to say, if he could do all

this. Now, harkee, Huron, and for once hear a few honest words from the mouth of a plain man. I am a Christian born, and them that come of such a stock, and that listen to the words that were spoken to their fathers, and will be spoken to their children, until 'arth and all it holds perishes, can never lend themselves to such wickedness. Sarcumventions in war may be, and *are* lawful; but sarcumventions, and deceit, and treachery, among fri'nds, are fit only for the paleface devils. I know that there are white men enough to give you this wrong idee of our natur', but such are ontrue to their blood and gifts, and ought to be, if they are not, outcasts and vagabonds. No upright paleface could do what you wish, and to be as plain with you as I wish to be, in my judgment no upright Delaware either; with a Mingo it may be different."

The Huron listened to his rebuke with obvious disgust; but he had his ends in view, and was too wily to lose all chance of effecting them by a precipitate avowal of resentment. Affecting to smile, he seemed to listen eagerly; and with an air of pondering on what he had heard, he quitted his prisoner, and joining the rest of his warriors he communicated to them the substance of his conversation with the prisoner. In a few moments he returned, assuming his former position on the log at the side of Deerslayer. Here he continued silent for a little time, maintaining the grave reserve of an Indian chief.

"Hawkeye is right," the Iroquois at length began; "his sight is so strong that he can see truth in a dark night, and our eyes have been blinded. He is an owl, darkness hiding nothing from him. He ought not to strike his friends. He is right."



"I'm glad you think so, Mingo," returned the other, "for a traitor, in my judgment, is worse than a coward. I care as little for the Muskrat as one paleface ought to care for another; but I care too much for him to ambush him in the way you wished. In short, according to my ideas, any sarcumvention, except open-war sarcumventions, are agin both law, and what we whites call 'gospel,' too."

"My paleface brother is right; he is no Indian to forget his Manitou and his color. The Hurons know that they have a great warrior for their prisoner, and they will treat him as one. If he is to be tortured, his torments shall be such as no common man can bear; if he is to be treated as a friend, it will be the friendship of chiefs."

As the Huron uttered this extraordinary assurance of consideration his eye furtively glanced at the countenance of his listener, in order to discover how he stood the compliment. Although Deerslayer was sufficiently well acquainted with the Indian notions of what constituted respect, in matters connected with the tréatment of captives, so that he felt his blood chill at the announcement, yet he maintained an aspect so steeled that his quick-sighted enemy could discover in it no signs of weakness.

"God has put me in your hands, Huron," the captive at length answered, "and I suppose you will act your will on me. I shall not boast of what I can do, under torment, for I've never been tried, and no man can say till he has been; but I'll do my endivors not to disgrace the people among whom I got my training. Hows'ever, I wish you now to bear witness, that I'm altogether of white blood, and, in a nat'ral way, of white gifts, too; so, should I be

overcome and forget myself, I hope you'll lay the fault where it properly belongs; and in no manner put it on the Delawares, or their allies and friends the Mohicans. We're all created with more or less weakness, and I'm afeard it's a paleface's to give in under great bodily torment, when a redskin will sing his songs, and boast of his deeds in the very teeth of his foes!"

"We shall see. Hawkeye has a good countenance, and he is tough — but why should he be tormented when the Hurons love him? He is not born their enemy; and the death of one warrior will not cast a cloud between them forever."

"So much the better, Huron; so much the better. Still, I don't wish to owe anything to a mistake about each other's meaning. It is so much the better that you bear no malice for the loss of a warrior who fell in war; and yet it is ontrue that there is no inimity — lawful inimity, I mean, atween us. So far as I have redskin feelin's at all, I've Delaware feelin's; and I leave you to judge for yourself, how far they are likely to be fri'ndly to the Mingos" —

Deerslayer ceased, for a sort of spectre stood before him that put a stop to his words, and, indeed, caused him for a moment to doubt the fidelity of his boasted vision. Hetty Hutter was standing at the side of the fire, as quietly as if she belonged to the tribe, and as if it were not the middle of the night.

As the hunter and the Indian sat together, the girl had approached unnoticed by them, doubtless from the beach, and had advanced to the fire with the fearlessness that belonged to her simplicity, and which was certainly justified

by the treatment formerly received from the Indians. As soon as Rivenoak perceived the girl, he sent two of the younger warriors out to reconnoitre, lest her appearance should be the forerunner of another attack. He then motioned to Hetty to draw near.

"I hope your visit is a sign that the Sarpent and Hist are in safety, Hetty," said Deerslayer, as soon as the girl had complied with the Huron's request. "I don't think you'd come ashore agin on the arr'nd that brought you here afore."

"Judith told me to come this time, Deerslayer," Hetty replied; "she paddled me ashore herself, in a canoe, as soon as the Serpent had shown her Hist, and told his story. She bid me come to see you, and to try and persuade the savages to take more elephants to let you off; but I've brought the Bible with me — *that* will do more than all the elephants in father's chest!"

"And your father, good little Hetty — and Hurry; did they know of your arr'nd?"

"Nothing. Both are asleep; and Judith and the Serpent thought it best they should not be woke, less they might want to come again after scalps, when Hist had told them how few warriors and how many women and children there were in the camp. Judith would give me no peace till I had come ashore, to see what had happened to *you*."

"Well, that's kind as consarns Judith! But I'm sorry she sent you, for I'm afeard you'll not find it so easy to go back again this time. They're a venomous set of riptyles, and their p'ison's none the milder for the loss of Hist."

“Now you put me in mind of a part of my errand that I had almost forgotten, Deerslayer. Judith told me to ask you what you thought the Hurons would do with you if you could n't be bought off, and what *she* had best do to serve you. Yes, this was the most important part of the errand — what she had best do in order to serve you.”

“That's as *you* think, Hetty; but it's no matter. Young women are apt to lay most stress on what most touches their feelin's; but no matter; have it your own way, so you be but careful not to let the vagabonds get the mastery of a canoe. When you get back to the ark, tell 'em to keep close, and to keep moving too, most especially at night. Many hours can't go by without the troops on the river hearing of this party, and then your fri'nds may look for relief. 'T is but a day's march from the nearest garrison, and true soldiers will never lie idle with the foe in their neighborhood. This is my advice, and you must say to your father and Hurry that scalp-hunting will be a poor business now, as the Mingos are up and awake, and nothing can save 'em till the troops come except keeping a good belt of water atween 'em and the savages.”

“What shall I tell Judith about you, Deerslayer? I know she will send me back again, if I don't bring her the truth about *you*.”

“Then tell her the *truth*. I see no reason Judith Hutter should n't hear the *truth* about me as well as a *lie*. I'm a captvye in Indian hands, and Providence only knows what will come of it! Harkee, Hetty,” dropping his voice and speaking still more confidentially, “*you are* a little weak-minded, it must be allowed, but you know something

of Injins. Here I am in their hands, after having slain one of their stoutest warriors, and they 've been endivoring to work upon me, through fear of consequences, to betray your father and all in the ark. I understand the blackguards as well as if they told it all out plainly with their tongues. They hold up avarice afore me on one side, and fear on t'other, and think honesty will give way atween 'em both. But let your father and Hurry know 't is all useless ; as for the Serpent, *he* knows it already."

"But what shall I tell *Judith*? She will certainly send me back if I don't satisfy her mind."

“Well, tell *Judith* the same. No doubt the savages will try the torments to make me give in, and to revenge the loss of their warrior, but I must hold out agin nat'ral weakness in the best manner I can. You may tell *Judith* to feel no consarn on my account — it will come hard, I know, seeing that a white man's gifts don't run to boasting and singing under torment, for he generally feels smallest when he suffers most — but you may tell her not to have any consarn. I think I shall make out to stand it; and she may rely on this, let me give in as much as I may, and prove completely that I am white, by wailings, and howlings, and even tears, yet I 'll never fall so far as to betray my fri'nds. When it gets to burning holes in the flesh with heated ramrods, and to hacking the body, and tearing the hair out by the roots, natur' may get the upper hand, so far as groans and complaints are consarned, but there the triumph of the vagabonds will ind; nothing short of God's abandoning him to the devils can make an honest man ontrue to his color and duty.”

Hetty listened with great attention, and her mild but

speaking countenance manifested a strong sympathy in the anticipated agony of the supposititious sufferer. At first she seemed at a loss how to act; then, taking a hand of Deerslayer's, she affectionately recommended to him to borrow her Bible, and to read it while the savages were inflicting their torments. The offer was gently declined, and Rivenoak being about to join them, Deerslayer requested the girl to leave him — first enjoining her again to tell those in the ark to have full confidence in his fidelity. Hetty now walked away, and approached the group of females with as much confidence and self-possession as if she were a native of the tribe.

#### CHAPTER IV

The young men who had been sent out to reconnoitre, on the sudden appearance of Hetty, soon returned to report their want of success in making any discovery. A watch was set, therefore, and all but the sentinels disposed themselves to sleep.

Sufficient care was had to the safe keeping of the captive without inflicting on him any unnecessary suffering; and as for Hetty, she was permitted to find a place among the Indian girls, in the best manner she could. She was supplied by a kindly squaw with a skin, and made her own bed on a pile of boughs a little apart from the huts. Here she was soon in a profound sleep, like all around her.

There were now thirteen men in the party, and three kept watch at a time. One remained in shadow, not far from the fire, however. His duty was to guard the captive, to take care that the fire neither blazed up so as to

illuminate the spot, nor yet became wholly extinguished ; and to keep an eye generally on the state of the camp. Another passed from one beach to the other, crossing the base of the point ; while the third kept moving slowly around the strand on its outer extremity, to prevent a repetition of the surprise that had already taken place that night.

It was some hours later when Hetty awoke, and leaving her bed of skin and boughs, walked innocently and openly to the embers of the fire, stirring the latter, as the coolness of the night and the woods had a little chilled her. As the flame shot up, it lighted the swarthy countenance of the Huron on watch, whose dark eyes glistened under its light, like the balls of a panther that is pursued to his den with burning brands. But Hetty felt no fear, and she approached the spot where the Indian stood. Her movements were so natural, and so perfectly devoid of any of the stealthiness of cunning or deception, that he imagined she had merely arisen on account of the coolness of the night, a common occurrence in a camp, and the one of all others, perhaps, the least likely to excite suspicion. Hetty spoke to him, but he understood no English. She then gazed near a minute at the sleeping captive, and moved slowly away in a sad and melancholy manner.

The girl took no pains to conceal her movements. Any ingenious expedient of this nature, quite likely, exceeded her powers ; still her step was habitually light, and scarcely audible. As she took the direction of the extremity of the point, or the place where she had landed in the first adventure, and where Hist had embarked, the sentinel saw her light form gradually disappear in the gloom without

uneasiness or changing his own position. He knew that others were on the lookout, and he did not believe that one who had twice come into the camp voluntarily, and had already left it openly, would take refuge in flight.

Hetty soon found her way to the beach, and by following the margin of the water, encountered the Indian who paced the strand as sentinel. This was a young warrior, and when he heard her light tread coming along the gravel he approached swiftly, though with anything but menace in his manner. The darkness was so intense that it was not easy to discover forms, within the shadows of the woods, at the distance of twenty feet, and quite impossible to distinguish persons until near enough to touch them. The young Huron manifested disappointment when he found whom he had met; for, truth to say, he was expecting his favorite, who had promised to relieve the ennui of a midnight watch with her presence. This man was also ignorant of English, but he was at no loss to understand why the girl should be up at that hour. Such things were usual in an Indian village and camp, where sleep is as irregular as the meals. Then poor Hetty's known imbecility, as in most things connected with the savages, stood her friend on this occasion. Vexed at his disappointment, and impatient of the presence of one he thought an intruder, the young warrior signed for the girl to move forward, holding the direction of the beach. Hetty complied, and came in a moment to the place where the canoes had come ashore. Here she spoke softly, but another footstep had caught the lover's ear, and he was already nearly beyond the sound of the girl's silvery voice.



"Here I am, Judith," she said, "and there is no one near me."

Her voice was hushed by a "Hist!" that came from the water, and then she caught a dim view of the canoe, which approached noiselessly, and soon grated on the shingle with its bow. The moment the weight of Hetty was felt in the light craft, the canoe withdrew, stern foremost, as if possessed of life and volition, until it was a hundred yards from the shore. Then it turned, and held its way towards the ark. For several minutes nothing was uttered; but, believing herself to be in a favorable position to confer with her sister, Judith began a discourse which she had been burning to commence ever since they quitted the point.

"Here we are safe, Hetty," she said, "and may talk without the fear of being overheard. You must speak low, however, for sounds are heard far on the water in a still night. I was so close to the point, some of the time, while you were on it, that I have heard the voices of the warriors, and I heard your shoes on the gravel of the beach, even before you spoke. But tell me, Hetty, did you see and speak with Deerslayer?"

"Oh, yes, there he was seated near the fire, with his legs tied, though they left his arms free to move them as he pleased."

"Well, what did he tell you, child? Speak quick; I am dying to know what message he sent me. Did you tell him *I* sent you ashore, Hetty, and how much concern I feel for his misfortune?" asked the other, impatiently.

"I believe I did, Judith; but you know I am feeble-minded, and I may have forgotten. I *did* tell him you

brought me ashore. And he told me a great deal that I was to say to you, which I remember well, for it made my blood run cold to hear him. He told me to say that his friends — I suppose you are one of them, sister” —

“How can you torment me thus, Hetty! Certainly, I am one of the truest friends he has on earth.”

“Torment you! yes, now I remember all about it. I am glad you used that word, Judith, for it brings it all back to my mind. Well, he said he might be *tormented* by the savages, but he would try to bear it as becomes a Christian white man, and that no one need be afraid — why does Deerslayer call it afraid, when mother always taught us to say afraid?”

“Never mind, dear Hetty, never mind *that* now!” cried the other, almost gasping for breath. “Did Deerslayer really tell you that he thought the savages would put him to the torture? Recollect now, well, Hetty, for this is a most awful and serious thing.”

“Yes, he did; and I remember it by your speaking about my tormenting you. Oh, I felt very sorry for him, and Deerslayer took it all so quietly and without noise!”

Judith bowed her face between her hands, and groaned.

“Tortured he *shall* not be,” she cried, “while Judith Hutter lives, and can find means to prevent it.”

The conversation was drawn out until the elder sister had extracted from the younger every fact the feeble faculties of the latter permitted her to retain, and to communicate. When Judith could think of no more questions to ask, the canoe was paddled towards the scow. The intense darkness of the night, and the deep shadows which the hills and forest cast upon the water, rendered it difficult

to find the vessel; anchored, as it had been, as close to the shore as a regard to safety rendered prudent. Judith was expert in the management of a bark canoe, the lightness of which demanded skill rather than strength; and she forced her own little vessel swiftly over the water. Still no ark was seen. Several times the sisters fancied they saw it looming up in the obscurity, like a low black rock, but on each occasion it was found to be either an optical illusion or some swell of the foliage on the shore.

"Perhaps father has thought us in our cabin asleep, Judith, and has moved away to go home," suggested Hetty. "You know we often move the ark in the night."

"This is true, Hetty, and it must be as you suppose. There is a little more southern air than there was, and they have gone up the lake" —

Judith stopped, for, as the last word was on her tongue, the scene was suddenly lighted, though only for a single instant, by a flash. The crack of a rifle succeeded, and then followed the roll of the echo along the eastern mountains. Almost at the same moment a piercing female cry arose in the air in a prolonged shriek. The awful stillness that succeeded was, if possible, more appalling than the fierce and sudden interruption of the deep silence of midnight. Resolute as she was, both by nature and habit, Judith scarce breathed, while poor Hetty hid her face and trembled.

"That was a woman's cry, Hetty," said the former, solemnly, "and it was a cry of anguish! If the ark has moved from this spot, it can only have gone north with this air, and the gun and shriek came from the point. Can anything have befallen Hist?"

“Let us go and see, Judith; she may want our assistance — for besides herself, there are none but men in the ark.”

It was not a moment for hesitation, and ere Judith had ceased speaking her paddle was in the water. The distance to the point, in a direct line, was not great, and the impulses under which the girls worked were too exciting to allow them to waste the precious moments in useless precautions. They paddled incautiously, for them, but the same excitement kept others from noting their movements. Presently a glare of light caught the eye of Judith through an opening in the bushes, and steering by it she so directed the canoe as to keep it visible, while she got as near the land as was either prudent or necessary.

The scene that was now presented to the observation of the girls was within the woods, on the side of the declivity so often mentioned, and in plain view from the boat. Here all in the camp were collected, some six or eight carrying torches of fat-pine, which cast a strong but funereal light on all beneath the arches of the forest. With her back supported against a tree, and sustained on one side by the young sentinel whose remissness had suffered Hetty to escape, sat the female whose expected visit had produced his delinquency. By the glare of the torch that was held near her face, it was evident that she was in the agonies of death, while the blood that trickled from her bared bosom betrayed the nature of the injury she had received. The pungent, peculiar smell of gunpowder, too, was still quite perceptible in the heavy damp night air. There could be no question that she had been shot. As to the

effect, that was soon still more apparent, the head of the victim dropping, and the body sinking in death. Then all the torches but one were extinguished—a measure of prudence; and the melancholy train that bore the body to the camp was just to be distinguished by the glimmering light that remained.

Judith sighed heavily and shuddered, as her paddle again dipped, and the canoe moved cautiously around the point. A sight had afflicted her senses, and now haunted her imagination, that was still harder to be borne than even the untimely fate and passing agony of the deceased girl. She had seen, under the strong glare of all the torches, the erect form of Deerslayer, standing, with commiseration, and as she thought with shame depicted on his countenance, near the dying female. He betrayed neither fear nor backwardness, *himself*; but it was apparent by the glances cast at him by the warriors that fierce passions were struggling in *their* bosoms. All this seemed to be unheeded by the captive, but it remained impressed on the memory of Judith throughout the night.

No canoe was met hovering near the point. A stillness and darkness, as complete as if the silence of the forest had never been disturbed, or the sun had never shone on that retired region, now reigned on the point, and on the gloomy water, the slumbering woods, and even the murky sky. No more could be done, therefore, than to seek a place of safety; and this was only to be found in the centre of the lake. Paddling in silence to that spot, the canoe was suffered to drift northerly, while the girls sought such repose as their situation and feelings would permit.

## CHAPTER V

The fears of Judith concerning the disappearance of the ark and the manner in which the Indian girl had met her death were accurate in the main. After sleeping several hours, her father and March awoke. This occurred soon after she had left the ark to go in quest of her sister, and when of course Chingachgook and his betrothed were on board. From the Delaware the old man learned the position of the camp, and the recent events, as well as the absence of his daughters. The latter gave him no concern; for he relied greatly on the sagacity of the eldest, and the known impunity with which the younger passed among the savages. Long familiarity with danger, too, had blunted his sensibilities. Nor did he seem much to regret the captivity of Deerslayer; for while he knew how material his aid might be in a defense, the difference in their views on the morality of the woods had not left much sympathy between them. He would have rejoiced to know the position of the camp before it had been alarmed by the escape of Hist, but it would be too hazardous now to venture to land; and he reluctantly relinquished for the night the ruthless designs that captivity and revenge had excited him to entertain. In this mood Hutter took a seat in the head of the scow, where he was quickly joined by Hurry; leaving the Serpent and Hist in quiet possession of the other extremity of the vessel. Hurry was filled with resentment and anger when he heard from Hutter the story of what had happened while he slept. Nor could he brook the idea of being so near the camp of his enemies without at least going in to reconnoitre if nothing more. It was at his

suggestion, therefore, that the ark had been moved, and it was his hand which had fired the fatal shot.

It had happened in this wise. Floating Tom had sailed the ark along as near the land as the depth of the water and the overhanging branches would allow. It was impossible to distinguish anything that stood within the shadows of the shore; but the forms of the sail and of the hut were discerned by the young sentinel on the beach who has already been mentioned. In the moment of sudden surprise, a deep Indian exclamation escaped him. In that spirit of recklessness and ferocity that formed the essence of Hurry's character, he dropped his rifle and fired. The shriek announced the effects of the random shot of March, and it also proclaimed that the victim was a woman. Hurry himself was startled at these unlooked-for consequences; and for a moment he was sorely disturbed by conflicting sensations. At first he laughed, in reckless and rude-minded exultation; and then conscience, that monitor planted in our breasts by God, shot a pang to his heart. For a minute the mind of this creature was a sort of chaos as to feeling, not knowing what to think of its own act; and then the obstinacy and pride of one of his habits interposed to assert their usual ascendancy. He struck the butt of his rifle on the bottom of the scow with a species of defiance, and began to whistle a low air with an affectation of indifference. All this time the ark was in motion, and it was already opening the bay above the point, and was consequently quitting the land.

Hurry's companions did not view his conduct with the same indulgence as that with which he appeared disposed to regard it himself. Hutter growled out his dissatisfaction,

for the act led to no advantage, while it threatened to render the warfare more vindictive than ever. Still he commanded himself, the captivity of Deerslayer rendering the arm of the offender of double consequence to him at that moment. Chingachgook arose, and for a single instant the ancient animosity of tribes was forgotten in a feeling of color; but he recollected himself in season to prevent any of the fierce consequences that for a passing moment he certainly meditated. Not so with Hist. Rushing through the hut, or cabin, the girl stood at the side of Hurry almost as soon as his rifle touched the bottom of the scow; and with a fearlessness that did credit to her heart she poured out her reproaches with the generous warmth of a woman.

“What for you shoot?” she said. “What Huron gal do, dat you kill him? What you t’ink Manitou *say*? What you t’ink Manitou *feel*? What Iroquois *do*? No get honor—no get camp—no get prisoner—no get battle—no get scalp—no get not’ing at all. Blood come after blood! You big as great pine—Huron gal little slender birch—why you fall on her and crush her? You t’ink Huron forget it? No; redskin never forget. Never forget friend; never forget enemy. Red-man Manitou in *dat*. Why you so wicked, great paleface?”

Hurry had never been so daunted as by this close and warm attack of the Indian girl, whose presence he had hardly noticed before. It is true that she had a powerful ally in his conscience; and while she spoke earnestly, it was in tones so feminine as to deprive him of any pretext for unmanly anger. Instead of resenting or answering flippantly the simple but natural appeal of Hist, he walked



away like one who disdained entering into a controversy with a woman.

In the meanwhile the ark swept onward, and by the time the scene with the torches was enacting beneath the trees it had reached the open lake ; Floating Tom causing it to sheer further from the land, with a sort of instinctive dread of retaliation. An hour now passed in gloomy silence, no one appearing disposed to break it. Hist had retired to her pallet, and Chingachgook lay sleeping in the forward part of the scow. Hutter and Hurry alone remained awake. The former now felt some little concern about his daughters ; but, on the whole, this uncertainty did not much disturb him, as he had the reliance already mentioned on the intelligence of Judith.

It was the season of the shortest nights, and it was not long before the deep obscurity which precedes the day began to yield to the returning light. As soon as the light was sufficiently strong to allow of a distinct view of the lake, Hutter turned the head of the ark directly towards the castle, with the intention of taking possession for the day at least, as the place most favorable for meeting his daughters, and for carrying on his operations against the Indians. By this time, Chingachgook was up, and Hist was heard stirring among the furniture of the kitchen. At this moment, too, to render the appearances generally auspicious, the canoe of Judith was seen floating northward in the broadest part of the lake, having actually passed the scow in the darkness. Hutter got his glass, and took a long and anxious survey to ascertain if his daughters were in the light craft, or not ; and a slight exclamation like that of joy escaped him, as he caught a glimpse of what he

rightly conceived to be a part of Judith's dress above the top of the canoe. At the next instant the girl arose, and was seen gazing about her, like one assuring herself of her situation. A minute later Hetty was seen on her knees, in the other end of the canoe, repeating the prayers that had been taught her in childhood by a misguided but repentant mother. As Hutter laid down the glass, still drawn to its focus, the Serpent raised it to his eye and turned it towards the canoe. It was the first time he had ever used such an instrument, and Hist understood by his "Hugh!" the expression of his face, and his entire mien, that something wonderful had excited his admiration. It is well known that the American Indians, more particularly those of superior character and stations, singularly maintain their self-possession and stoicism in the midst of the flood of marvels that present themselves in their occasional visits to the abodes of civilization; and Chingachgook had imbibed enough of this impassibility to suppress any very undignified manifestation of surprise. With Hist, however, no such law was binding, and when her lover managed to bring the glass in a line with a canoe, and her eye was applied to the smaller end, the girl started back in alarm; then she clapped her hands with delight, and a laugh, the usual attendant of untutored admiration, followed. A few minutes sufficed to enable this quick-witted girl to manage the instrument for herself, and she directed it at every prominent object that struck her fancy. Finding a rest in one of the windows, she and the Delaware first surveyed the lake; then the shores, the hills, and finally the castle attracted their attention. After a long steady gaze at the latter, Hist took away her eye,

and spoke to her lover in a low, earnest manner. Chingachgook immediately placed his eye to the glass, and his look even exceeded that of his betrothed in length and intensity. Again they spoke together confidentially, appearing to compare opinions, after which the glass was laid aside, and the young warrior quitted the cabin to join Hutter and Hurry.

The ark was slowly but steadily advancing, and the castle was materially within half a mile, when Chingachgook joined the two white men in the stern of the scow. His manner was calm, but it was evident that he had something to communicate. Hurry was generally prompt to speak, and according to custom, he took the lead on this occasion.

"Out with it, redskin," he cried, in his usual rough manner. "Have you discovered a chipmunk in a tree, or is there a salmon-trout swimming under the bottom of the scow? You find what a paleface can do in the way of eyes, now, Sarpent, and must n't wonder that they can see the land of the Indians from afar off."

"No good to go to castle," put in Chingachgook with emphasis, the moment the other gave him an opportunity of speaking. "Huron there."

"The devil he is! If this should turn out to be true, Floating Tom, a pretty trap were we about to pull down on our heads! Huron there! — well, this may be so; but no signs can I see of anything near or about the old hut but logs, water, and bark — 'bating two or three windows and one door."

Hutter called for the glass and took a careful survey of the spot before he ventured an opinion at all; then he

somewhat cavalierly expressed his dissent from that given by the Indian.

"You've got this glass wrong end foremost, Delaware," continued Hurry; "neither the old man nor I can see any trail in the lake."

"No trail — water make no trail," said Hist, eagerly. "Stop boat — no go too near — Huron there!"

"Aye, that's it! Stick to the same tale and more people will believe you. I hope, Sarpent, you and your gal will agree in telling the same story arter marriage as well as you do now. Huron there! — whereabouts is he to be seen — in the padlock, or the chains, or the logs?"

"No see moccasin!" said Hist, impatiently, "why no *look* and see him?"

"Give me the glass, Hurry," interrupted Hutter, "and lower the sail. It is seldom that an Indian woman meddles, and when she does there is generally a cause for it. There *is*, truly, a moccasin floating against one of the piles; and it may or may not be a sign that the castle has n't escaped visitors in our absence. Moccasins are no rarities, however, for I wear 'em, myself, and Deerslayer wears 'em, and you wear 'em, March; and for that matter so does Hetty, quite as often as she wears shoes; though I never yet saw Judith thrust her pretty foot in a moccasin."

Hurry had lowered the sail, and by this time the ark was within two hundred yards of the castle, setting in nearer and nearer each moment. Each now took the glass in turn, and the castle and everything near it was subjected to a scrutiny still more rigid than ever. There the moccasin lay, beyond a question, floating so lightly and preserving

its form so well that it was scarcely wet. It had caught by a piece of the rough bark of one of the piles on the exterior of the water-palisade that formed the dock already mentioned, which circumstance alone prevented it from drifting away before the air. There were many modes, however, of accounting for the presence of the moccasin without supposing it to have been dropped by an enemy. It might have fallen from the platform even while Hutter was in possession of the place, and drifted to the spot where it was now seen, remaining unnoticed until detected by the acute vision of Hist. It might have drifted from a distance, up or down the lake, and accidentally become attached to the pile or palisade. It might have been thrown from a window and alighted in that particular place ; or it might certainly have fallen from a scout or an assailant during the past night, who was obliged to abandon it to the lake in the deep obscurity which then prevailed.

All these conjectures passed from Hutter to Hurry, the former appearing disposed to regard the omen as a little sinister, while the latter treated it with his usual reckless disdain. As for the Indian, he was of opinion that the moccasin should be viewed as one would regard a trail in the woods which might or might not equally prove to be threatening. Hist, however, had something available to propose. She declared her readiness to take a canoe, to proceed to the palisade, and bring away the moccasin, when its ornaments would show whether it came from the Canadas or not. Both the white men were disposed to accept this offer ; but the Delaware interfered to prevent the risk. If such a service was to be undertaken, it best became a warrior to expose himself in its

execution ; and he gave his refusal to let his betrothed proceed, much in the quiet but brief manner in which an Indian husband issues his commands.

“ Well, then, Delaware, go yourself if you ’re so tender of your squaw,” put in the unceremonious Hurry. “ That moccasin must be had, or Floating Tom will keep off here at arm’s length till the hearth cools in his cabin. It’s but a little deerskin arter all, and cut this-a-way or that-a-way, it’s not a skear-crow to frighten true hunters from their game. What say you, Sarpent, shall you or I canoe it ? ”

“ Let red-man go. Better eyes than paleface — know Huron trick better, too.”

“ That I ’ll gainsay, to the hour of my death ! A white man’s eyes, and a white man’s nose, and for that matter his sight and ears, are all better than an Injin’s when fairly tried. Time and agin have I put that to the proof, and what is proved is sartain. Still I suppose the poorest vagabond going, whether Delaware or Huron, can find his way to yonder hut and back agin ; and so, Sarpent, use your paddle and welcome.”

Chingachgook was already in the canoe, and he dipped the implement the other named into the water, just as Hurry’s limber tongue ceased. The Indian chief paddled steadily towards the palisades, keeping his eye on the different loops of the building. Each instant he expected to see the muzzle of a rifle protruded, or to hear its sharp crack ; but he succeeded in reaching the piles in safety. Here he was, in a measure, protected, having the heads of the palisades between him and the hut ; and the chances of any attempt on his life, while thus covered, were greatly diminished. The canoe had reached the piles

with its head inclining northward and at a short distance from the moccasin. Instead of turning to pick up the latter, the Delaware slowly made the circuit of the whole building, deliberately examining every object that should betray the presence of enemies, or the commission of violence. Not a single sign could be discovered, however, to confirm the suspicions that had been awakened. The stillness of desertion pervaded the building; not a fastening was displaced; not a window had been broken. The door looked as secure as at the hour when it was closed by Hutter, and even the gate of the dock had all the customary fastenings. In short, the most wary and jealous eye could detect no other evidence of the visit of enemies than that which was connected with the appearance of the floating moccasin.

The Delaware was now greatly at a loss how to proceed. At one moment, as he came round in front of the castle, he was on the point of stepping up on the platform, and of applying his eye to one of the loops, with a view of taking a direct personal inspection of the state of things within; but he hesitated. Though of little experience in such matters himself, he had heard so much of Indian artifices through traditions, had listened with such breathless interest to the narration of the escapes of the elder warriors, and, in short, was so well schooled in the theory of his calling, that it was almost impossible for him to make any gross blunder on such an occasion. Relinquishing the momentary intention to land, the chief slowly pursued his course round the palisades. As he approached the moccasin — having now nearly completed the circuit of the building — he threw the ominous article

into the canoe, by a dexterous and almost imperceptible movement of his paddle. He was now ready to depart; but retreat was even more dangerous than the approach, as the eye could no longer be riveted on the loops. If there was really any one in the castle, the motive of the Delaware in reconnoitring must be understood; and it was the wisest way, however perilous it might be, to retire with an air of confidence, as if all distrust were terminated by the examination. Such, accordingly, was the course adopted by the Indian, who paddled deliberately away, taking the direction of the ark, suffering no nervous impulse to quicken the motions of his arms, or to induce him to turn even a furtive glance behind him.

Joy sparkled in Hist's dark eyes, and a smile lighted her pretty mouth, as she saw the Great Serpent of the Delawares step unharmed into the ark; but, after the custom of Indian women, she neither spoke nor moved.

"Well, Sarpent," cried Hurry, always the first to speak, "what news from the Muskrats? Did they show their teeth, as you surrounded their dwelling?"

"I no like him," sententiously returned the Delaware. "Too still. So still, can see silence!"

"That's downright Injin — as if anything could make less noise than nothing! If you've no better reason than this to give, Old Tom had better hoist his sail, and go and get his breakfast under his own roof. What has become of the moccasin?"

"Here," returned Chingachgook, holding up his prize for the general inspection.

The moccasin was examined, and Hist confidently pronounced it to be Huron, by the manner in which the



porcupine's quills were arranged on its front. Hutter, and the Delaware, too, were decidedly of the same opinion. Admitting all this, however, it did not necessarily follow that its owners were in the castle. The moccasin might have drifted from a distance, or it might have fallen from the foot of some scout, who had quitted the place when his errand was accomplished. In short, it explained nothing, while it awakened so much distrust.

Under these circumstances, Hutter and Harry were not men to be long deterred from proceeding, by proofs as slight as that of the moccasin. They hoisted the sail again, and the ark was soon in motion, heading towards the castle. The wind, or air, continued light, and the movement was sufficiently slow to allow of a deliberate survey of the building as the scow approached.

The same deathlike silence reigned, and it was difficult to fancy that anything possessing animal life could be in or around the place. Unlike the Serpent, whose imagination had acted through his traditions until he was ready to perceive an artificial in a natural stillness, the others saw nothing to apprehend in a tranquillity that, in truth, merely denoted the repose of inanimate objects. The accessories of the scene, too, were soothing and calm, rather than exciting. The day had not yet advanced so far as to bring the sun above the horizon, but the heavens, the atmosphere, and the woods and lake, were all seen under that softening light which immediately precedes his appearance, and which, perhaps, is the most witching period of the four-and-twenty hours. It is the moment when everything is distinct, even the atmosphere seeming to possess a liquid lucidity, the hues appearing gray and softened.

## CHAPTER VI

The moment the head of the scow was within reach of the castle, Hurry was on the platform, stamping his feet, and proclaiming his indifference to the whole Huron tribe in his customary noisy, dogmatical manner. Hutter had hauled a canoe up to the head of the scow, and was already about to undo the fastenings of the gate, in order to enter within the dock. March had no other motive in landing than a senseless bravado, and having shaken the door in a manner to put its solidity to the proof, he joined Hutter in the canoe, and began to aid him in opening the gate. On entering the canoe, Hutter had placed a line in the Delaware's hand, intimating that the other was to fasten the ark to the platform and to lower the sail. Instead of following these directions, however, Chingachgook left the sail standing, and throwing the bight of the rope over the head of a pile, he permitted the ark to drift round until it lay against the defenses in a position where it could be entered only by means of a boat.

A single shove sent the canoe from the gate to the trap beneath the castle. Here Hutter found all fast, neither padlock nor chain nor bar having been molested. The key was produced, the locks removed, the chain loosened, and the trap pushed upward. Hurry now thrust his head in at the opening; the arms followed, and the colossal legs rose without any apparent effort. At the next instant, his heavy foot was heard stamping in the passage above; that which separated the chambers of the father and daughters, and into which the trap opened. He then gave a shout of triumph.

"Come on, old Tom," the reckless woodsman called out from within the building; "here's your tenement, safe and sound; aye, and as empty as a nut that has passed half an hour in the paws of a squirrel! The Delaware brags of being able to *see* silence; let him come here, and he may *feel* it in the bargain."

"Any silence where you are, Hurry Harry," returned Hutter, thrusting his head in at the hole, "ought to be both seen and felt, for it's unlike any other silence."

"Come, come, old fellow; hoist yourself up, and we'll open doors and windows and let in the fresh air to brighten up matters."

A moment of silence succeeded, and a noise like that produced by the fall of a heavy body followed. A deep execration from Hurry succeeded, and then the whole interior of the building seemed alive. The noises that now so suddenly broke the stillness within could not be mistaken. They resembled those that would be produced by a struggle between tigers in a cage. Once or twice the Indian yell was given, but it seemed smothered, and as if it proceeded from exhausted or compressed throats; and, in a single instance, another execration came from the throat of Hurry. It appeared as if bodies were constantly thrown upon the floor with violence, as often rising to renew the struggle. Chingachgook felt greatly at a loss what to do. He had all the arms in the ark, Hutter and Hurry having proceeded without their rifles; but there was no means of using them, or of passing them to the hands of their owners. The combatants were literally caged, rendering it almost as impossible, under the circumstances, to get out, as to get into the building. At this instant

the door flew open and the fight was transferred to the platform, the light, and the open air.

A Huron had undone the fastenings of the door, and three or four of his tribe rushed after him upon the narrow space. The body of another followed, pitched headlong through the door, with terrific violence. Then Maïrch appeared, raging like a lion at bay, and for an instant freed from his numerous enemies. Hutter was already evidently a captive and bound. There was now a pause in the struggle, which resembled a lull in a tempest. The necessity of breathing was common to all, and the combatants stood watching each other, like mastiffs that have been driven from their holds, and are waiting for a favorable opportunity of renewing them.

Hurry was the first to resume hostilities, and his onset was furious. He seized the nearest Huron by the waist, raised him entirely from the platform, and hurled him into the water, as if he had been a child. In half a minute two more were at his side, one of whom received a grave injury by falling on the friend who had just preceded him. But four enemies remained, and in a hand-to-hand conflict, in which no arms were used but those which nature had furnished, Hurry believed himself fully able to cope with that number of redskins.

"Hurrah! Old Tom," he shouted; "the rascals are taking to the lake, and I'll soon have 'em all swimming!" As these words were uttered, a violent kick in the face sent back the injured Indian, who had caught at the edge of the platform and was endeavoring to raise himself to its level, helplessly and hopelessly into the water. A blow, sent into the pit of another's stomach, doubled him up

like a worm ; and but two able-bodied foes remained to be dealt with. One of these, however, was not only the largest and strongest of the Hurons, but he was also the most experienced of the warriors present, and that one whose sinews were the best strung in fights, and by marches on the warpath. This man fully appreciated the gigantic strength of his opponent, and had carefully husbanded his own. He was also equipped in the best manner for such a conflict, standing in nothing but his breechcloth, the model of a naked and beautiful statue of agility and strength. To grasp him required additional dexterity and unusual force. Still Hurry did not hesitate ; but the kick, that had actually destroyed one fellow-creature, was no sooner given than he closed in with this formidable antagonist, endeavoring to force him into the water also. The struggle that succeeded was truly frightful. So fierce did it immediately become, and so quick and changeful were the evolutions of the athletes, that the remaining savage had no chance for interfering had he possessed the desire ; but he was an inexperienced youth, and wonder and apprehension held him spellbound.

Hurry first attempted to throw his antagonist. With this view he seized him by the throat and an arm, and endeavored to trip him. The effect was frustrated by the agile movements of the Huron, who had clothes to grasp by, and whose feet avoided the attempt with a nimbleness equal to that with which it was made. Then followed a sharp struggle, in which no efforts were distinctly visible, the limbs and bodies of the combatants assuming so many attitudes and contortions as to defeat observation. This confused but fierce rally lasted less than a minute,

however, when Hurry, furious at having his strength baffled by the agility and nakedness of his foe, made a desperate effort, which sent the Huron from him, hurling his body violently against the logs of the hut. The concussion was so great as momentarily to confuse the latter's faculties. The pain, too, extorted a deep groan; an unusual concession to agony to escape a red-man in the heat of battle. Still he rushed forward again, to meet his enemy, conscious that his safety rested on his resolution. Hurry now seized the other by the waist, raised him, bodily from the platform, and fell with his own great weight on the form beneath. This additional shock so far stunned the sufferer that his gigantic white opponent now had him completely at his mercy.

Passing his hands round the throat of his victim, he compressed them with the strength of a vice, fairly doubling the head of the Huron over the edge of the platform, until the chin was uppermost, with the infernal strength he expended. An instant sufficed to show the consequences. The eyes of the sufferer seemed to start forward, his tongue protruded, and his nostrils dilated nearly to splitting. At this instant a rope of bark, having an eye, was passed dexterously within the two arms of Hurry; the end threaded the eye, forming a noose, and his elbows were drawn together behind his back, with a power that all his gigantic strength could not resist. Almost at the same instant a similar fastening secured his ankles, and his body was rolled to the centre of the platform as helplessly, and as cavalierly, as if it were a log of wood; and his rescued antagonist began again to breathe.

Hurry owed his defeat and capture to the intensity with

which he had concentrated all his powers on his fallen foe. While thus occupied, the two Indians he had hurled into the water mounted to the heads of the piles, along which they passed, and joined their companion on the platform. The latter had so far rallied his faculties as to have got the ropes, which were in readiness for use as the others appeared, and they were applied in the manner related, as Hurry lay pressing his enemy down with his whole weight, intent only on strangling him. Thus were the tables turned, in a single moment ; he who had been so near achieving victory lying helpless, bound, and a captive. So fearful had been the efforts of the paleface, and so prodigious the strength he exhibited, that even as he lay tethered like a sheep before them, they regarded him with respect and not without dread.

## CHAPTER VII

Chingachgook and his betrothed witnessed the whole of this struggle from the ark. When the three Hurons were about to pass the cords around the arms of the prostrate Hurry, the Delaware sought his rifle ; but before he could use it the white man was bound, and the mischief was done. The canoe of the girls, by the time the struggle on the platform had ceased, was within three hundred yards of the castle, and here Judith ceased paddling, the evidences of strife first becoming apparent to the eyes. She and Hetty were standing erect, anxiously endeavoring to ascertain what had occurred, but unable to satisfy their doubts, from the circumstance that the building in a great measure concealed the scene of action.

The parties in the ark and in the canoe were indebted to the ferocity of Hurry's attack for their momentary security. In any ordinary case, the girls would have been immediately captured; only the attack of Hurry on the principal man of the party had saved them from the attention of the other Indians. Now it was of the last importance that Judith and her sister should seek immediate refuge in the ark, where the defenses offered a temporary shelter at least.

Chingachgook lost no time in hoisting the sail. Whatever might be in reserve for him, there could be no question that it was every way desirable to get the ark at such a distance from the castle, as to reduce his enemies to the necessity of approaching the former in the canoe, which the chances of war had so inopportunately for his wishes and security thrown into their hands. The appearance of the opening sail seemed first to arouse the Hurons from their apathy; and by the time the head of the scow had fallen off before the wind, which it did unfortunately in the wrong direction, bringing it within a few yards of the platform, Hist found it necessary to warn her lover of the importance of covering his person against the rifles of his foes. This was a danger to be avoided under all circumstances, and so much the more, because the Delaware found that Hist would not take to the cover herself, so long as he remained exposed. Accordingly, Chingachgook abandoned the scow to its own movements, forced Hist into the cabin, the doors of which he immediately secured, and then he looked about him for the rifles.

As the ark swung slowly round, the head caught between two of the piles, which projected several feet beyond



the platform, and hung there. At this moment the Delaware was vigilantly watching through a loophole for an opportunity to fire, and the Hurons, who had withdrawn to the shelter of the building to do the same, were similarly occupied. The exhausted warrior reclined against the hut, there having been no time to remove him, and Hurry lay, almost as helpless as a log, tethered like a sheep on its way to the slaughter, near the middle of the platform.

“Run out one of the poles, Sarpent, if Sarpent you be,” said Hurry, amid the groans that the tightness of the ligatures was beginning to extort from him; “run out one of the poles, and shove the head of the scow off, and you’ll drift clear of us — and, when you’ve done that good turn for *yourself*, just finish this gagging blackguard for *me*.”

The appeal of Hurry, however, had no other effect than to draw the attention of Hist to his situation. This quick-witted creature comprehended it at a glance. His ankles were bound with several turns of stout bark rope, and his arms, above the elbows, were similarly secured behind his back, barely leaving him a little play of the hands and wrists. Putting her mouth near a loop, she said, in a low but distinct voice: —

“Why you don’t roll here, and fall in scow? Chingachgook shoot Huron if he chase!”

“By the Lord, gal, that’s a judgmatical thought, and it shall be tried, if the starn of your scow will come a little nearer. Put a bed at the bottom for me to fall on.”

This was said at a happy moment, for, tired of waiting, all the Indians made a rapid discharge of their rifles, almost simultaneously, — injuring no one, though several bullets passed through the loops. Hist had heard part of

Hurry's words, but most of what he said was lost in the sharp reports of the firearms. She undid the bar of the door that led to the stern of the scow, but did not dare to expose her person. All this time the head of the ark hung, but by a gradually decreasing hold, as the other end swung slowly round, nearer and nearer to the platform. Hurry, who now lay with his face towards the ark, occasionally writhing and turning over like one in pain, evolutions he had performed ever since he was secured, watched every change, and at last he saw that the whole vessel was free, and was beginning to grate slowly along the sides of the piles. The attempt was desperate, but it seemed the only chance for escaping torture and death, and it suited the reckless daring of the man's character. Waiting to the last moment, in order that the stern of the scow might fairly rub against the platform, he began to writhe again as if in intolerable suffering, execrating all Indians in general, and the Hurons in particular, and then he suddenly and rapidly rolled over and over, taking the direction of the stern of the scow. Unfortunately, Hurry's shoulders required more space to revolve in than his feet, and by the time he reached the edge of the platform, his direction had so far changed as to carry him clear of the ark altogether; and the rapidity of his revolutions and the emergency admitting of no delay, he fell into the water. At this instant, Chingachgook, by an understanding with his betrothed, drew the fire of the Hurons again, not a man of whom saw the manner in which one whom they knew to be effectually tethered had disappeared.

The moment Hurry was in motion, Hist foresaw the consequences, and instantly she bethought her of the means of saving him. She opened the door at the very moment

the rifles were ringing in her ears, and protected by the intervening cabin, she stepped into the stern of the scow in time to witness the fall of Hurry into the lake. Catching up a coil of spare rope, she threw it in the direction of the helpless Hurry. The line fell on the head and body of the sinking man, and he not only succeeded in grasping separate parts of it with his hands, but he actually got a portion of it between his teeth. Hurry was an expert swimmer, — and, tethered as he was, he resorted to the very expedient that philosophy and reflection would have suggested. He had fallen on his back, and instead of floundering and drowning himself by desperate efforts to walk on the water, he permitted his body to sink as low as possible, and was already submerged, with the exception of his face, when the line reached him. The movement of the ark soon tightened the rope, and of course he was dragged gently ahead, holding even pace with the scow.

It has been said that the Hurons did not observe the sudden disappearance of Hurry. In his present situation he was not only hid from view by the platform, but as the ark drew slowly ahead, impelled by a sail that was now filled, he received the same friendly service from the piles. The Hurons, indeed, were too intent on endeavoring to slay their Delaware foe by sending a bullet through some one of the loops or crevices of the cabin, to bethink them of one whom they fancied so thoroughly tied. Chingachgook was similarly occupied, and remained as ignorant as his enemies of the situation of Hurry. As the ark grated along the rifles sent their little clouds of smoke from one cover to the other, but the eyes and movements of the opposing parties were too quick to permit any injury to be

done. At length one side had the mortification, and the other the pleasure, of seeing the scow swing clear of the piles altogether, when it immediately moved away, with materially accelerated motion, towards the north.

Chingachgook now first learned the critical condition of Hurry; and Hist, who was already forward for that purpose, immediately began to pull upon the line. At this moment Hurry was towing fifty or sixty feet astern, with nothing but his face above water. As he was dragged out clear of the castle and the piles, he was first perceived by the Hurons, who raised a hideous yell and commenced a fire on what may very well be termed the floating mass. It was at the same instant that Hist began to pull upon the line forward—a circumstance that probably saved Hurry's life. The first bullet struck the water directly on the spot where the broad chest of the young giant was visible through the water, and might have pierced his heart had the angle at which it was fired been less acute. Instead of penetrating the lake, however, it glanced from its smooth surface, rose, and actually buried itself in the logs of the cabin, near the spot at which Chingachgook had shown himself the minute before, while clearing the line from the cleat. A second, and a third, and a fourth bullet followed, all meeting with the same resistance from the surface of the water; though Hurry sensibly felt the violence of the blows they struck upon the lake so immediately above, and so near his breast. Discovering their mistake, the Hurons now changed their plan, and aimed at the uncovered face; but by this time Hist was pulling on the line, the target advanced, and the deadly missiles still fell upon the water. In another moment the body was

dragged past the end of the scow and became concealed. As for the Delaware and Hist, they worked perfectly covered by the cabin, and in less time than it requires to tell it they had hauled the huge frame of Hurry to the place they occupied. Chingachgook stood in readiness with his keen knife, and bending over the side of the scow he soon severed the bark that bound the limbs of the borderer. To raise him high enough to reach the edge of the boat, and to aid him in entering, were less easy tasks, as Hurry's arms were still nearly useless ; but both were done in time, when the liberated man staggered forward, and fell, exhausted and helpless, into the bottom of the scow.

The moment the Hurons lost sight of the body of Hurry, they gave a common yell of disappointment, and three of the most active of their number ran to the trap and entered the canoe. By the time they had found the paddles and embarked, Hurry was in the scow, and the Delaware had his rifles again in readiness.

When the three Hurons emerged from behind the palisades, and found themselves on the open lake, and under the necessity of advancing unprotected on the ark, if they persevered in the original design, their ardor sensibly cooled. In a bark canoe they were totally without cover, and Indian discretion was entirely opposed to such a sacrifice of life as would most probably follow any attempt to assault an enemy entrenched as effectually as the Delaware. Instead of following the ark, therefore, they seemed suddenly to decide to give chase to the girls, whose canoe was about a quarter of a mile distant from the ark, as Judith in her uncertainty of what was happening had deemed it wiser not to venture too near.

At the moment when the Hurons so suddenly changed their mode of attack, their canoe was not in the best possible racing trim. There were but two paddles, and the third man was so much extra and useless cargo. Then the difference in weight between the sisters and the other two men, more especially in vessels so extremely light, almost neutralized any difference that might proceed from the greater strength of the Hurons, and rendered the trial of speed far from being as unequal as it might seem, especially as the girls, from long habit, used the paddles with great dexterity. When Judith saw that they were being followed, she excited Hetty to aid her with her utmost skill and strength.

"Why should we run, Judith?" asked the simple-minded girl; "the Hurons have never harmed *me*, nor do I think they ever will."

"That may be true as to you, Hetty, but it will prove very different with me. Kneel down and say your prayer, and then rise and do your utmost to help escape. Think of me, dear girl, too, as you pray."

Judith gave these directions from a mixed feeling; first, because she knew that her sister ever sought the support of her Great Ally, in trouble; and next, because a sensation of febleness and dependence suddenly came over her own proud spirit, in that moment of apparent desertion and trial. The prayer was quickly said, however, and the canoe was soon in rapid motion. Still, neither party resorted to their greatest exertions from the outset, — both knowing that the chase was likely to be arduous and long, for a few minutes had sufficed to show the Hurons that the girls were expert, and that it would require all their skill and energies to overtake them.

Judith had inclined towards the eastern shore at the commencement of the chase, with a vague determination of landing and flying to the woods, as a last resort ; but as she approached the land, the certainty that scouts must be watching her movements made her reluctance to adopt such an expedient unconquerable. Then she was still fresh, and had sanguine hopes of being able to tire out her pursuers. With such feelings, she gave a sweep with her paddle, and sheered off from the fringe of dark hemlocks, beneath the shades of which she was so near entering, and held her way again more towards the centre of the lake. This seemed the instant favorable for the Hurons to make their push, as it gave them the entire breadth of the sheet to do it in. The canoes now flew ; Judith making up for what she wanted in strength, by her great dexterity and self-command. For half a mile the Indians gained no material advantage, but the continuance of so great exertions for so many minutes sensibly affected all concerned. Here the Indians resorted to an expedient that enabled them to give one of their party time to breathe, by shifting their paddles from hand to hand, — and this, too, without sensibly relaxing their efforts. Judith occasionally looked behind her, and she saw this expedient practiced. It caused her immediately to distrust the result, since her powers of endurance were not likely to hold out against those of men who had the means of relieving each other ; still she persevered, allowing no very visible consequences immediately to follow the change.

As yet the Indians had not been able to get nearer to the girls than two hundred yards. But before she had gained the centre of the lake, Judith perceived that the

Hurons were drawing sensibly nearer and nearer. She was not a girl to despair ; but there was an instant when she thought of yielding, with the wish of being carried to the camp where she knew the Deerslayer to be a captive ; but the thought of the means she intended to employ to procure his release stimulated her to renewed exertions. The outburst of speed to which she was thus freshly impelled was so great that the Hurons began to be convinced all their powers must be exerted, or they would suffer the disgrace of being baffled by women. Making a furious effort, under the mortification of such a conviction, one of the stronger of their party broke his paddle, at the very moment when he had taken it from the hand of a comrade, to relieve him. This at once decided the matter ; a canoe containing three men, and having but one paddle, being utterly unable to overtake fugitives like the daughters of Thomas Hutter.

“ There, Judith ! ” exclaimed Hetty, who saw the accident, “ I hope, now, you will own that praying is useful ! The Hurons have broke a paddle, and they never *can* overtake us.”

“ I never denied it, poor Hetty ; and sometimes wish, in bitterness of spirit, that I had prayed more myself, and thought less of my beauty. As you say, we are now safe, and need only go a little south and take breath.”

This was done ; the enemy giving up the pursuit the instant the accident occurred. Instead of following Judith’s canoe, which was now lightly skimming over the water towards the south, the Hurons turned their bows towards the shore, where they soon arrived and landed. The ark was now quite a mile to the northward, and



Judith, uncertain whether it was manned by friends or foes, decided to proceed to the castle.

Notwithstanding the seeming desertion of the castle, Judith approached it with extreme caution. When within a hundred yards of the building, the girls began to encircle it, in order to make sure that it was empty. No canoe was nigh, and this emboldened them to draw nearer and nearer, until they had gone round the piles and reached the platform.

“Do you go into the house, Hetty,” said Judith, “and see that the savages are gone. They will not harm you; and if any of them are still here, you can give me the alarm. I do not think they will fire on a poor defenseless girl, and I at least may escape, until I shall be ready to go among them of my own accord.”

Hetty did as desired, Judith retiring a few yards from the platform the instant her sister landed, in readiness for flight. But the last was unnecessary, not a minute elapsing before Hetty returned to communicate that all was safe.

“I’ve been in all the rooms, Judith,” said the latter, earnestly, “and they are empty, except father’s; he is in his own chamber, sleeping, though not as quietly as we could wish.”

“Has anything happened to father?” demanded Judith, as her foot touched the platform, speaking quick, for her nerves were in a state to be easily alarmed.

Hetty seemed concerned, and she looked furtively about her, as if unwilling any one but a child should hear what she had to communicate, and even that *she* should learn it abruptly.

“You know how it is with father, sometimes, Judith,”

she said. "When overtaken with liquor he does n't always know what he says or does ; and he seems to be overtaken with liquor, now."

"That is strange ! Would the savages have drunk with him, and then leave him behind ? But 't is a grievous sight to witness, Hetty, and we will not go near him till he wakes."

A groan from the inner room, however, changed this resolution, and the girls ventured near. Hutter was seated, reclining in a corner of a narrow room, with his shoulders supported by the angle, and his head fallen heavily on his chest. Judith moved forward with a sudden impulse, and removed a canvas cap that was forced so low on his head as to conceal his face, and, indeed, all but his shoulders. The instant this obstacle was taken away, the quivering and raw flesh, the bared veins and muscles, and all the other disgusting signs of mortality, as they are revealed by tearing away the skin, showed he had been scalped, though still living.

## CHAPTER VIII

The reader must imagine the horror that daughters would experience at unexpectedly beholding the shocking spectacle that was placed before the eyes of Judith and Hetty. We shall pass over the first emotions, the first acts of filial piety, and proceed with the narrative, by imagining rather than relating most of the revolting features of the scene. The mutilated and ragged head was bound up, the unseemly blood was wiped from the face of the sufferer, the other appliances required by appearances and care were resorted to, and there was time to consider the horrible situation.

There are moments of vivid consciousness, when the stern justice of God stands forth in colors so prominent as to defy any attempts to veil them from the sight, however unpleasant they may appear, or however anxious we may be to avoid recognizing it. Such was now the fact with Judith and Hetty, who both perceived the decrees of a retributive Providence, in the manner of their father's suffering, as a punishment for his own recent attempts on the Iroquois. This was seen and felt by Judith, with the keenness of perception and sensibility that were suited to her character; while the impression made on the simpler mind of her sister was perhaps less lively, though it might well have proved more lasting.

"Oh, Judith," exclaimed the weak-minded girl, as soon as their first care had been bestowed on the sufferer. "Father went for scalps, himself, and now where is his own? The Bible might have foretold this dreadful punishment!"

"Hush! Hetty — hush! poor sister; he opens his eyes; he may hear and understand you. 'T is as you say and think; but 't is too dreadful to speak of!"

"Water!" ejaculated Hutter, as it might be by a desperate effort, that rendered his voice frightfully deep and strong, for one as near death as he evidently was; "water! foolish girls — will you let me die of thirst?"

Water was brought and administered to the sufferer; the first he had tasted in hours of physical anguish. It had the double effect of clearing his throat, and of momentarily reviving his sinking system. His eyes opened with that anxious, distended gaze which is apt to accompany the passage of a soul surprised by death, and he seemed disposed to speak.

“Father,” said Judith, inexpressibly pained by his deplorable situation, and this so much the more from her ignorance of what remedies ought to be applied, “Father, can we do anything for you? Can Hetty and I relieve your pain?”

“Father!” slowly repeated the old man. “No, Judith — no, Hetty — I’m no father. *She* was your mother, but I’m no father. Look in the chest — ’t is all there — give me more water.”

The girls complied; and Judith, whose early recollections extended further back than her sister’s, and who, on every account, had more distinct impressions of the past, felt an uncontrollable impulse of joy as she heard these words. There had never been much sympathy between her reputed father and herself, and suspicions of this very truth had often glanced across her mind, in consequence of dialogues she had overheard between Hutter and her mother. It might be going too far to say she had never loved him; but it is not so to add, that she rejoiced it was no longer a duty. With Hetty the feeling was different. Incapable of making all the distinctions of her sister, her very nature was full of affection, and she *had* loved her reputed parent, though far less tenderly than the real parent; and it grieved her, now, to hear him declare he was not naturally entitled to that love. She felt a double grief, as if his death and his words together were twice depriving her of parents. Yielding to her feelings, the poor girl went aside and wept.

The very opposite emotions of the two girls kept both silent for a long time. Judith gave water to the sufferer frequently, and she forebore to urge him with questions.

At length Hetty dried her tears, and came and seated herself on a stool by the side of the dying man, who had been placed at his length on the floor, with his head supported by some worn vestments that had been left in the house.

“Father,” she said, “you will let me *call* you father, though you say you are not one, — father, shall I read the Bible to you? — mother always said the Bible was good for people in trouble. She was often in trouble herself, and then she made me read the Bible to her — for Judith was n’t as fond of the Bible as I am — and it always did her good. Many is the time I’ve known mother begin to listen with the tears streaming from her eyes, and end with smiles and gladness. Oh, father, you don’t know how much good the Bible can do, for you’ve never tried it, — now I’ll read a chapter, and it will soften your heart, as it softened the hearts of the Hurons.”

While poor Hetty had so much reverence for, and faith in, the virtue of the Bible, her intellect was too shallow to enable her fully to appreciate its beauties, or to fathom its profound and sometimes mysterious wisdom. Her selections from the Bible, therefore, were commonly distinguished by the simplicity of her own mind, and were oftener marked for containing images of known and palpable things, than for any of the higher cast of moral truths with which the pages of that wonderful book abound. Her mother had been fond of the book of Job, and Hetty had, in a great measure, learned to read by the frequent lessons she had received from the different chapters of this venerable and sublime poem, now believed to be the oldest book in the world. On this occasion, the poor girl

was submissive to her training, and she turned to that well-known part of the sacred volume. In selecting the particular chapter, she was influenced by the heading, and she chose that which stands in our English version as "Job excuseth his desire of death." This she read steadily, from beginning to end, in a sweet, low, and plaintive voice.

The very opening sentence — *Is there not an appointed time to man on earth?* — was startling. The solemn words, *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?* struck Hutter more perceptibly than the others; and, though too obscure for one of his blunted feelings and obtuse mind either to feel or to comprehend in their fullest extent, they had a directness of application to his own state that caused him to wince under them.

"Don't you feel better now, father?" asked Hetty, closing the volume. "Mother was always better when she had read the Bible."

"Water," returned Hutter; "give me water, Judith. I wonder if my tongue will always be so hot! Hetty, is n't there something in the Bible about cooling the tongue of a man who was burning in hell-fire?"

Judith turned away, shocked; but Hetty eagerly sought the passage, which she read aloud to the conscience-stricken victim of his own avaricious longings.

"That's it, poor Hetty; yes, that's it. My tongue wants cooling, *now*; what will it be *hereafter*?"

This appeal silenced even the confiding Hetty, for she had no answer ready for a confession so fraught with despair. Water, so long as it could relieve the sufferer, it

was in the power of the sisters to give ; and, from time to time, it was offered to the lips of the sufferer as he asked for it. Even Judith prayed. As for Hetty, as soon as she found that her efforts to make her father listen to her texts were no longer rewarded with success, she knelt at his side, and devoutly repeated the words which the Saviour has left behind Him as a model for human petitions. This she continued to do, at intervals, as long as it seemed to her that the act could benefit the dying man. Hutter, however, lingered longer than the girls had believed possible, when they first found him. At times he spoke intelligibly, though his lips oftener moved in utterance of sounds that carried no distinct impressions to the mind. Judith listened intently, and she heard the words "husband," "death," "pirate," "law," "scalps," and several others of a similar import, though there was no sentence to tell the precise connection in which they were used. Still, they were sufficiently expressive to be understood by one whose ears had not escaped all the rumors that had been circulated to her reputed father's discredit, and whose comprehension was as quick as her faculties were attentive.

During the whole of the painful hour that succeeded, neither of the sisters bethought her sufficiently of the Hurons to dread their return. It seemed as if their desolation and grief placed them above the danger of such an interruption ; and when the sound of oars was at length heard, even Judith, who alone had any reason to apprehend the enemy, did not start, but at once understood that the ark was near. She went upon the platform fearlessly ; for, should it turn out that Hurry was not there, and that the Hurons were masters of the scow also, escape was

impossible. Then she had the sort of confidence that is inspired by extreme misery. But there was no cause for any new alarm, — Chingachgook, Hist, and Hurry all standing in the open part of the scow, cautiously examining the building, to make certain of the absence of the enemy. They, too, had seen the departure of the Hurons, as well as the approach of the canoe of the girls. A word sufficed to explain that there was nothing to be apprehended, and the ark was soon moored in her old berth.

Judith said not a word concerning the condition of her father, but Hurry knew her too well not to understand that something was more than usually wrong. He led the way, though with less of his confident bold manner than usual, into the house, and penetrating to the inner room found Hutter lying on his back, with Hetty sitting at his side fanning him with pious care. The events of the morning had sensibly changed the manner of Hurry. Notwithstanding his skill as a swimmer, and the readiness with which he had adopted the only expedient that could possibly save him, the helplessness of being in the water, bound hand and foot, had produced some such an effect on him as the near approach of punishment is known to produce on most criminals, leaving a vivid impression of the horrors of death upon his mind, and this, too, in connection with a picture of bodily helplessness ; the daring of this man being far more the offspring of past physical powers than of the energy of the will, or even of natural spirit. Such heroes invariably lose a large portion of their courage with the failure of their strength ; and, though Hurry was now unfettered, and as vigorous as ever, events were too recent to permit the recollection of his late deplorable condition to be at all weakened.



Hurry was not only shocked when he found his late associate in this desperate situation, but he was greatly surprised. During the struggle in the building he had been far too much occupied himself to learn what had befallen his comrade, and, as no deadly weapon had been used in his particular case, but every effort had been made to capture him without injury, he naturally believed that Hutter had been overcome and taken prisoner. As a matter of fact, Hutter had made so violent a stand that the Indian chief who was struggling with him had been obliged to use a knife to stab him, since he could not overcome him otherwise. Having wounded him severely, he scalped him to secure the usual trophy, and left him to die.

Death, in the silence and solemnity of a chamber, was a novelty to Hurry. Notwithstanding the change in his feelings, the manners of a life could not be altogether cast aside in a moment, and the unexpected scene extorted a characteristic speech from the borderer.

"How now! old Tom," he said, "have the vagabonds got you at an advantage, where you're not only down, but are likely to be kept down! I thought you a captive, it's true, but never supposed you so hard run as this!"

Hutter opened his glassy eyes, and stared wildly at the speaker. A flood of confused recollections rushed on his wavering mind at the sight of his late comrade. It was evident that he struggled with his own images, and knew not the real from the unreal.

"Who are you?" he asked in a husky whisper; his failing strength refusing to aid him in a louder effort of his voice. "Who are you? You look like the mate of the *Snow* — he was a giant, too, and near overcoming us."

"I'm your mate, Floating Tom, and your comrade, but have nothing to do with any snow. It's summer now, and Harry March always quits the hills as soon after the frosts set in as is convenient."

"I know you — Hurry Skurry ; I'll sell you a scalp ! a sound one, and of a full grown man ; what'll you give ?"

"Poor Tom ! That scalp business has n't turned out at all profitable, and I've pretty much concluded to give it up, and to follow a less bloody calling."

"Have you got any scalp ? Mine's gone ; how does it feel to have a scalp ? I know how it feels to lose one — fire and flames about the brain — and a wrenching at the heart ; no, no — kill *first*, Hurry, and scalp *afterwards*."

Once more Hutter opened his eyes and even tried to feel about him with his hands, a sign that sight was failing. A minute later his breathing grew ghastly ; a pause totally without respiration followed ; and then succeeded the last long-drawn sigh. The spirit of Thomas Hutter had passed from the body.

## CHAPTER IX

The day passed by without further interruption — the Hurons, though possessed of a canoe, appearing so far satisfied with their success as to have relinquished all immediate designs on the castle. It would not have been a safe undertaking, indeed, to approach it under the rifles of those it was now known to contain, and it is probable that the truce was more owing to this circumstance than to any other. In the meanwhile, the preparations were made for the interment of Hutter. To bury him on the land was impracticable, and it was Hetty's wish that his body should

lie by the side of that of her mother in the lake. Judith had not meddled with the arrangement, but had left every necessary disposition to the others. The hour chosen for the rude ceremony was just as the sun was setting. When Judith was told that all was ready, she went upon the platform, passive to the request of her sister, and then she first took heed of the arrangement. The body was in the scow, enveloped in a sheet, and quite a hundred-weight of stones, that had been taken from the fireplace, were inclosed with it in order that it might sink. No other preparation seemed to be thought necessary, though Hetty carried her Bible beneath her arm.

The progress of the ark had something of the stately solemnity of a funeral procession, the dip of the oars being measured, and the movement slow and steady. The wash of the water, as the blades rose and fell, kept time with the efforts of Hurry, and might have been likened to the measured tread of mourners. Then the tranquil scene was in beautiful accordance with a rite that ever associates with itself the idea of God. At that instant, the lake had not even a single ripple on its glassy surface, and the broad panorama of woods seemed to look down on the holy tranquillity of the hour and ceremony in melancholy stillness. Judith was affected to tears, and even Hurry, though he hardly knew why, was troubled. Hetty preserved the outward signs of tranquillity, but her inward grief greatly surpassed that of her sister, since her affectionate heart loved more from habit and long association than from the usual connections of sentiment and taste. Hist was serious, attentive, and interested, for she had often seen the interments of the palefaces, though never one that promised to be as

peculiar as this ; while the Delaware, though grave, and also observant in his demeanor, was stoical and calm.

Hetty acted as pilot, directing Hurry how to proceed to find that spot in the lake which she was in the habit of terming "mother's grave," for it had been her custom to repair to the place frequently after nightfall, and, anchoring her canoe, to sit and hold fancied conversations with the deceased, sing sweet hymns to the evening air, and repeat the prayers that the being who now slumbered below had taught her in infancy. At the proper time she approached March, whispering :—

"Now, Hurry, you can stop rowing. We have passed the stone on the bottom, and mother's grave is near."

The ark turned slowly round under Hurry's guidance, and was brought to a full stop.

There was no other priest than nature at that wild and singular funeral rite. March cast his eyes below, and through the transparent medium of the clear water, which was almost as pure as air, he saw what Hetty was accustomed to call "mother's grave." It was a low, straggling mound of earth, fashioned by no spade, out of a corner of which gleamed a bit of the white cloth that formed the shroud of the dead. The body had been lowered to the bottom, and Hutter brought earth from the shore and let it fall upon it, until all was concealed. In this state the place had remained until the movement of the waters revealed the solitary sign of the uses of the spot that has just been mentioned. March signified to Judith that all was ready, received her directions to proceed, and, with no other assistant than his own vast strength, raised the body and bore it to the end of the scow. Two parts of a rope were passed

beneath the legs and shoulders, as they are placed beneath coffins, and then the corpse was slowly lowered beneath the surface of the lake.

"Not *there* — Harry March — no, not *there*," said Judith, shuddering involuntarily; "do not lower it quite so near the spot where mother lies!"

"Why not, Judith?" asked Hetty, earnestly. "They lived together in life, and should lie together in death."

"No — no — Harry March, further off — further off. Poor Hetty, you know not what you say. Leave me to order this."

"I know I am weak-minded, Judith, and that you are clever — but, surely a husband should be placed near a wife. Mother always said that this was the way they bury in Christian churchyards."

This little controversy was conducted earnestly, but in smothered voices, as if the speakers feared that the dead might overhear them. Judith could not contend with her sister at such a moment, but a significant gesture from her induced March to lower the body at a little distance from that of his wife; when he withdrew the cords, and the act was performed.

"There's an end of Floating Tom!" exclaimed Hurry, bending over the scow, and gazing through the water at the body. "He was a brave companion on a scout, and a notable hand with traps. Don't weep, Judith — don't be overcome, Hetty, for the righteousest of us all must die; and when the time comes, lamentations and tears can't bring the dead to life. Your father will be a loss to you, no doubt; most fathers are a loss, especially to onmarried darters; but there's a way to cure that evil, and you're

both too young and handsome to live long without finding it out. When it's agreeable to hear what an honest and onpretending man has to say, Judith, I should like to talk a little with you apart."

Judith had scarce attended to this rude attempt of Hurry's at consolation. She was weeping at the recollection of her mother's early tenderness, and painful images of long-forgotten lessons and neglected precepts were crowding her mind. The words of Hurry, however, recalled her to the present time. Earlier in the day she had communicated to him with all possible brevity the fact that she was not Thomas Hutter's daughter. Now she gazed intently for a moment at the young man, dried her eyes, and led the way to the other end of the scow, signifying her wish for him to follow. Here she took a seat, and motioned for March to place himself at her side. The decision and earnestness with which all this was done a little intimidated her companion, and Judith found it necessary to open the subject herself.

"You wish to speak to me of marriage, Harry March," she said, "and I have come here, over the grave of my parents, as it might be — no, no — over the grave of my poor, dear, dear mother, to hear what you have to say."

"This is uncommon, and you have a skearful way with you, this evening, Judith," answered Hurry, more disturbed than he would have cared to own; "but truth is truth, and it shall come out, let what will follow. You well know, gal, that I've long thought you the comeliest young woman my eyes ever beheld, and that I've made no secret of that fact, either here on the lake, out among the hunters and trappers, or in the settlements."

"Yes, yes, I've heard this before, and I suppose it to be true," answered Judith, with a sort of feverish impatience.

"When a young man holds such language of any particular young woman, it's reasonable to calculate he sets store by her."

"True — true, Hurry; all this you've told me, again and again."

"Well, if it's agreeable, I should think a woman could n't hear it too often. They all tell me this is the way with your sex; that nothing pleases them more than to repeat, over and over, for the hundredth time, how much you like 'em, unless it be to talk to 'em of their good looks!"

"No doubt — we like both, on most occasions; but this is an uncommon moment, Hurry, and vain words should not be too freely used. I would rather hear you speak plainly."

"You shall have your own way, Judith, and I some suspect you always will. I've often told you that I not only like you better than any other young woman going, or, for that matter, better than *all* the young women going; but you must have observed, Judith, that I never asked you, in up and down terms, to marry me."

"I have observed both," returned the girl, a smile struggling about her beautiful mouth, in spite of the singular and engrossing intentness which caused her cheeks to flush and lighted her eyes with a brilliancy that was almost dazzling; "I have observed both, and have thought the last remarkable for a man of Harry March's decision and fearlessness."

“There ’s been a reason, gal, and it ’s one that troubles me even now — nay, don’t flush up so, and look fierylike, for there are thoughts which will stick long in any man’s mind, as there be words which will stick in his throat ; but then, agin, there ’s feelin’s that will get the better of ’em all, and to these feelin’s I find I must submit. You’ve no longer a father, or a mother, Judith ; and it ’s morally impossible that you and Hetty could live here, alone, allowing it was peace and the Iroquois was quiet ; but, as matters stand, not only would you starve, but you’d both be prisoners, or scalped, afore a week was out. It ’s time to think of a change and a husband, and if you’ll accept of me, all that ’s past shall be forgotten, and there ’s an end on ’t.”

Judith had difficulty in repressing her impatience until this rude declaration and offer were made, which she evidently wished to hear, and which she now listened to with a willingness that might well have excited hope. She hardly allowed the young man to conclude, so eager was she to bring him to the point, and so ready to answer.

“There, Hurry, that’s enough,” she said, raising a hand, as if to stop him ; “I understand you as well as if you were to talk a month. You prefer me to other girls, and you wish me to become your wife.”

“You put it in better words than I can do, Judith, and I wish you to fancy them said, just as you most like to hear ’em.”

“They’re plain enough, Hurry, and ’t is fitting they should be so. This is no place to trifle or deceive in. Now, listen to my answer, which shall be as sincere as your offer. There is a reason, March, why I should never ” —



"I suppose I understand you, Judith; but if I'm willing to overlook that reason, it's no one's concern but mine. Now don't brighten up like the sky at sundown; for no offense is meant, and none should be taken."

"I do not brighten up, and will *not* take offense," said Judith, struggling to repress her indignation. "There is a reason why I should not, *cannot*, ever be your wife, Hurry, that you seem to overlook, and which it is my duty now to tell you, as plainly as you have asked me to consent to become so. I do not, and I am certain that I never shall, love you well enough to marry you. No man can wish for a wife who does not prefer him to all other men; and when I tell you this frankly, I suppose you yourself will thank me for my sincerity."

"O Judith, them flaunting, gay, scarlet-coated officers of the garrisons have done all this mischief!"

"Hush, March; do not calumniate a daughter over her mother's grave. Do not, when I only wish to treat you fairly, give me reason to call for evil on your head, in bitterness of heart! Do not forget that I am a woman, and that you are a man; and that I have neither father nor brother to revenge your words."

"Well, there is something in the last, and I'll say no more. Take time, Judith, and think better on this."

"I want no time; my mind has long been made up, and I have only waited for you to speak plainly, to answer plainly. We now understand each other, and there is no use in saying any more."

The impetuous earnestness of the girl awed the young man, for never before had he seen her so serious and determined. In most of their previous interviews she had

met his advances with evasion or sarcasm ; but these Hurry had mistaken for female coquetry, and had supposed might easily be converted into consent. The struggle had been with himself, about offering ; nor had he ever seriously believed it possible that Judith would refuse to become the wife of the handsomest man on all that frontier. Now that the refusal came, and that in terms so decided as to put all caviling out of the question, if not absolutely dumfounded he was so much mortified and surprised as to feel no wish to attempt to change her resolution.

“The Glimmerglass has now no great call for me,” he exclaimed, after a minute’s silence. “Old Tom is gone ; the Hurons are as plenty on shore as pigeons in the woods, and altogether, it is getting to be an unsuitable place.”

“Then leave it. You see it surrounded by dangers, and there is no reason why you should risk your life for others. Nor do I know that you can be of any service to us. Go to-night ; we ’ll never accuse you of having done anything forgetful or unmanly.”

“If I do go, ’twill be with a heavy heart on your account, Judith ; I would rather take you with me.”

“That is not to be spoken of any longer, March ; but I will land you in one of the canoes, as soon as it is dark, and you can strike a trail for the nearest garrison. When you reach the fort, if you send a party ” —

Judith smothered the words, for she felt that it was humiliating to be thus exposing herself to the comments and reflections of one who was not disposed to view her conduct in connection with all in these garrisons with an eye of favor. Hurry, however, caught the idea ; and, without perverting it, as the girl dreaded, he answered to the purpose.

"I understand *what* you would say, and *why* you don't say it," he replied. "If I get safe to the fort, a party shall start on the trail of these vagabonds, and I'll come with it myself; for I should like to see you and Hetty in a place of safety, before we part forever."

"Ah, Harry March, had you always spoken thus, felt thus, my feelings towards you might have been different!"

"Is it too late, now, Judith? I'm rough, and a woodsman; but we all change under different treatment from what we have been used to."

"It *is* too late, March. I can never feel towards you, or any other man but *one*, as you would wish to have me. There, I've said enough, surely, and you will question me no further. As soon as it is dark, I or the Delaware will put you on the shore; you will make the best of your way to the Mohawk, and the nearest garrison, and send all you can to our assistance. And, Hurry, we are now friends, and I may trust you, may I not?"

"Sartain, Judith; though our fri'ndship would have been all the warmer, could you look upon me as I look upon you."

Judith hesitated, and some powerful emotion was struggling within her. Then, as if determined to look down all weaknesses, and accomplish her purposes at every hazard, she spoke more plainly.

"You will find a captain of the name of Warley, at the nearest post," she said, pale as death, and even trembling as she spoke; "I think it likely he will wish to head the party; I would greatly prefer it should be another. If Captain Warley *can* be kept back, 't would make me very happy."

“That’s easier said than done, Judith ; for these officers do pretty much as they please. The major will order, and captains, and lieutenants, and ensigns must obey. I know the officer you mean ; a red-faced, gay, O-be-joyful sort of a gentleman, who swallows Madeira enough to drown the Mohawk, and yet a pleasant talker. All the gals in the valley admire him ; and they say he admires all the gals. I don’t wonder he is your dislike, Judith, for he’s a very gin’ral lover, if he is n’t a gin’ral officer.”

Judith did not answer, though her frame shook, and her color changed from pale to crimson, and from crimson back again to the hue of death.

“Alas ! my poor mother !” she ejaculated mentally, instead of uttering it aloud ; “we are over thy grave, but little dost thou know how much thy lessons have been forgotten ; thy care neglected ; thy love defeated !”

With these words she arose, and signified to Hurry that she had no more to communicate.

## CHAPTER X

All this time Hetty had remained seated in the head of the scow, looking sorrowfully into the water which held the body of her mother, as well as that of the man whom she had been taught to consider her father. Hist stood near her in gentle quiet, but had no consolation to offer in words. The habits of her people taught her reserve in this respect ; and the habits of her sex induced her to wait patiently for a moment when she might manifest some soothing sympathy by means of acts rather than of

speech. Chingachgook held himself a little aloof, in grave reserve, looking like a warrior, but feeling like a man.

Judith joined her sister with an air of dignity and solemnity it was not her practice to show ; and, though the gleamings of anguish were still visible on her beautiful face, when she spoke it was firmly and without tremor. At that instant Hist and the Delaware withdrew, moving towards Hurry, in the other end of the boat.

"Sister," said Judith, kindly, "I have much to say to you ; we will get into this canoe, and paddle off to a distance from the ark ; the secrets of two orphans ought not to be heard by every ear."

"Certainly, Judith, by the ears of their parents. Let Hurry lift the grapnel, and move away with the ark, and leave us here, near the graves of father and mother, to say what we may have to say."

"Father!" repeated Judith, slowly, the blood for the first time since her parting with March mounting to her cheeks ; "he was no father of ours, Hetty! *That* we had from his own mouth, and in his dying moments."

"Are you glad, Judith, to find you had no father? He took care of us, and fed us, and clothed us, and loved us ; a father could have done no more. I don't understand why he was n't a father."

"Never mind, dear child, but let us do as you have said. It may be well to remain here, and let the ark move a little away. Do you prepare the canoe, and I will tell Hurry and the Indians our wishes."

This was soon and simply done ; the ark moving, with measured strokes of the sweeps, a hundred yards from the spot, leaving the girls floating, seemingly in air, above the

place of the dead, so buoyant was the light vessel that held them, and so limpid the element by which it was sustained.

"The death of Thomas Hutter," Judith commenced, after a short pause had prepared her sister to receive her communications, "has altered all our prospects, Hetty. If he was *not* our father, we are *sisters*, and must feel alike and live together."

"How do I know, Judith, that you would n't be as glad to find I am not your sister as you are in finding that Thomas Hutter, as you call him, was not your father? I am only half-witted, and few people like to have half-witted relations; and then I'm not handsome — at least, not as handsome as you — and you may wish a handsomer sister."

"No, no, Hetty. *You* and you only are my sister — my heart and my love for you tell me that; and mother was my mother — of that, too, am I glad and proud; for she was a mother to be proud of — but father was not father."

"Hush, Judith! His spirit may be near — it would grieve it to hear his children talking so, and that, too, over his very grave. Children should never grieve parents, mother often told me, and especially when they are dead!"

"Poor Hetty! They are happily removed beyond all cares on our accounts. The bodies of mother and Thomas Hutter lie together in the lake, and we will hope that the spirits of both are with God. That we, the children of one of them, remain on earth is certain; it is now proper to know what we are to do in the future."

"If we are not Thomas Hutter's children, Judith, no one will dispute our right to his property. We have the castle, and the ark, and the canoes, and the woods, and

the lakes, the same as when he was living ; and what can prevent us from staying here, and passing our lives just as we ever have done ? ”

“ No, no, poor sister. This can no longer be. Two girls would not be safe here, even should these Hurons fail in getting us into their power. Even father had as much as he could sometimes do to keep peace upon the lake ; and we should fail altogether. We must quit this spot, Hetty, and remove into the settlements. ”

“ I am sorry you think so, Judith, ” returned Hetty, dropping her head on her bosom, and looking thoughtfully down at the spot where the funeral pile of her mother could just be seen. “ I am *very* sorry to hear it. I would rather stay here, where, if I was n't born, I've passed my life. I don't like the settlements ; they are full of wickedness and heart-burnings, while God dwells unoffended in these hills ! I love the trees, and the mountains, and the lake, and the springs ; all that his bounty has given us, and it would grieve me sorely, Judith, to be forced to quit them. You are handsome, and not at all half-witted, and one day you will marry, and then you will have a husband and I a brother to take care of us, if women can't really take care of themselves in such a place as this. ”

“ Ah ! if this *could* be so, Hetty, then, indeed, I could *now* be a thousand times happier in these woods than in the settlements ! *Once* I did not feel thus, but *now* I do. Yet where is the man to turn this beautiful place into such a garden of Eden for us ? ”

“ Harry March loves you, sister, ” returned poor Hetty, unconsciously picking the bark off the canoe as she spoke. “ He would be glad to be your husband, I'm sure ; and

a stouter and a braver youth is not to be met with the whole country round."

"Harry March and I understand each other, and no more need be said about *him*. There is one — but no matter. It is all in the hands of Providence, and we must shortly come to some conclusion about our future manner of living. Remain here — that is, remain here alone — we cannot; and perhaps no occasion will ever offer for remaining in the manner you think of. It is time too, Hetty, we should learn all we can concerning our relations and family. It is not probable we are altogether without relations, and they may be glad to see us. The old chest is now our property, and we have a right to look into it, and learn all we can by what it holds. Mother was so very different from Thomas Hutter, that, now I know we are not his children, I burn with a desire to know whose children we can be. There are papers in that chest, I am certain, and those papers may tell us all about our parents and natural friends."

"Well, Judith, you know best, for you are cleverer than common, mother always said, and I am only half-witted. Now father and mother are dead, I don't much care for any relations but you, and don't think I could love them I never saw as well as I ought. If you don't like to marry Hurry, I don't see who you can choose for a husband, and then I fear we shall have to quit the lake, after all."

"What do you think of Deerslayer, Hetty?" asked Judith, bending forward like her unsophisticated sister, and endeavoring to conceal her embarrassment in a similar manner. "Would he not make a brother-in-law to your liking?"



"Deerslayer!" repeated the other, looking up in unfeigned surprise; "why, Judith, Deerslayer is n't in the least comely, and is altogether unfit for one like you!"

"He is not ill-looking, Hetty; and beauty in a man is not of much matter."

"Do you think so, Judith? I know that beauty is of no great matter, in man or woman, in the eyes of God; for mother has often told me so, when she thought I might have been sorry I was not as handsome as you — though she need n't have been uneasy on that account, for I never coveted anything that is yours, sister: but tell me so she did; still, beauty is very pleasant to the eye, in both. I think, if I were a man, I should pine more for good looks than I do as a girl. A handsome man is a more pleasing sight than a handsome woman."

"Poor child! you scarce know what you say or what you mean! Beauty in our sex is something, but in man it passes for little. To be sure, a man ought to be tall, but others are tall as well as Hurry; and active — I think I know those that are more active; and strong — well, he has n't all the strength in the world; and brave — I'm certain I can name a youth who is braver."

"This is strange, Judith. I did n't think the earth held a handsomer, or a stronger, or a more active, or a braver man than Hurry Harry. I am sure I never met his equal in either of these things."

"Well, well, Hetty, say no more of this. The sun has set, and the ark is drifting away from us; let us paddle up to the scow. This night I shall look into the chest, and to-morrow shall determine what we are to do. As for the Hurons, now we can use our stores without fear of Thomas

Hutter, they will be easily bought off. Let me get Deerslayer once out of their hands, and a single hour shall bring things to an understanding."

Judith spoke with decision, and authority, and, suiting her action to her words, dipped her paddle into the water and began to propel the light craft forward. This reversed her own position, and gave her a view of the whole lake. At once she uttered an exclamation.

"Hetty, is not that a canoe, just passing behind the castle? — here, more in the direction of the point, I mean; it is hid, now; but, certainly, I saw a canoe stealing behind the logs."

"I've seen it some time," Hetty quietly answered, for the Indians had few terrors for her, "but I did not think it right to talk about such things over mother's grave. The canoe came from the camp, Judith, and was paddled by a single man; he seemed to be Deerslayer, and no Iroquois."

"Deerslayer!" returned the other, with much of her native impetuosity. "That can't be! Deerslayer is a prisoner, and I have been thinking of the means of setting him free. Why did you fancy it Deerslayer, child?"

"You can look for yourself, sister; there comes the canoe in sight again, on this side of the hut."

Sure enough, the light boat had passed the building, and was now steadily advancing towards the ark; the persons on board of which were already collecting in the head of the scow to receive their visitor. A single glance sufficed to assure Judith that her sister was right, and that Deerslayer was alone in the canoe. His approach was so calm and leisurely, however, as to fill her with wonder, since a man who had effected his escape from enemies, by

either artifice or violence, would not be apt to move with the steadiness and deliberation with which his paddle swept the water. By this time the day was fairly departing, and objects were already seen dimly under the shores. In the broad lake, however, the light still lingered, and around the immediate scene of the present incidents, which was less shaded than most of the sheet, being in its broadest part, it cast a glare that bore some faint resemblance to the warm tints of an Italian or Grecian sunset. The logs of the hut and ark had a sort of purple hue, blended with the growing obscurity, and the bark of the hunter's boat was losing its distinctness, in colors richer, but more mellowed, than those it showed under a bright sun. As the two canoes approached each other — for Judith and her sister had plied their paddles so as to intercept the unexpected visitor ere he reached the ark — even Deerslayer's sunburned countenance wore a brighter aspect than common, under the pleasing tints that seemed to dance in the atmosphere.

“Welcome — welcome, Deerslayer!” exclaimed the girl, as the canoes floated at each other's sides; “we have had a melancholy — a frightful day; but your return is, at least, one misfortune the less. Have the Hurons become more humane and let you go, or have you escaped from the wretches by your own courage and skill?”

“Neither, Judith, neither one nor t'other. The Mingos are Mingos still, and will live and die Mingos; it is not likely their natur's will ever undergo much improvement. Well, they've *their* gifts, and we've our'n, Judith, and it does n't much become either to speak ill of what the Lord has created; though, if the truth must be said, I find it a sore trial to think kindly or to talk kindly of them vagabonds.”

"But if you have not escaped from the savages, how came you here?"

"I! — Oh! That's not very onaccountable, if I am myself, Judith. I'm out on furlough."

"Furlough! That word has a meaning among the soldiers that I understand; I cannot tell what it signifies when used by a prisoner."

"It means just the same. You're right enough; the soldiers do use it, and just in the same way as I use it. A furlough is when a man has leave to quit a camp, or a garrison, for a sartain specified time; at the end of which he is to come back and shoulder his musket, or submit to his torments, just as he may happen to be a soldier, or a captvyve. Being the last, I must take the chances of a prisoner."

"Have the Hurons suffered you to quit them in this manner, without watch or guard?"

"Sartain — I could n't have come in any other manner unless, indeed, it had been by a bold rising, or a sarcumvention."

"What pledge have they that you will ever return?"

"My word," answered the hunter, simply. "Yes, I own I gave 'em *that*, and big fools would they have been to let me come without it! Why, in that case, I should n't have been obliged to go back and ondergo any deviltries their fury may invent, but might have shouldered my rifle, and made the best of my way to the Delaware villages. But, Lord! Judith, they know'd this, just as well as you and I do, and would no more let me come away, without a promise to go back, than they would let the wolves dig up the bones of their fathers!"

“ Is it possible you mean to do this act of extraordinary self-destruction and recklessness ? ”

“ Anan ! ”

“ I ask if it can be possible that you expect to be able to put yourself again in the power of such ruthless enemies by keeping your word ? ”

Deerslayer looked at his fair questioner for a moment with stern displeasure. Then the expression of his honest and guileless face suddenly changed, lighting as by a quick illumination of thought ; after which he laughed in his ordinary manner.

“ I did n't understand you at first, Judith — no, I did n't. Do you believe that Chingachgook and Hurry Harry won't suffer it ; but you don't know mankind thoroughly yet, I see. The Delaware would be the last man on 'arth to offer any objections to what he knows is a duty ; and, as for March, he does n't care enough about any creatur' but himself to spend many words on such a subject. If he did, 't would make no great difference, hows'ever ; but not he — for he thinks more of his gains than of even his own word. As for my promises, or your'n, Judith, or anybody else's, they give him no consarn. Don't be under any on-easiness, therefore, gal ; I shall be allowed to go back according to the furlough ; and if difficulties was made, I've not been brought up and edicated, as one may say, in the woods, without knowing how to look 'em down.”

Judith made no answer for some little time. All her feelings as a woman revolted at the cruel fate that she fancied Deerslayer was drawing down upon himself, while the sense of right, which God has implanted in every human breast, told her to admire an integrity as indomitable and

unpretending as that which the other so unconsciously displayed. Argument, she felt, would be useless; nor was she, at that moment, disposed to lessen the dignity and high principle that were so striking in the intentions of the hunter, by any attempt to turn him from his purpose. That something might yet occur to supersede the necessity for this self-immolation, she tried to hope; and then she proceeded to ascertain the facts, in order that her own conduct might be regulated by her knowledge of circumstances.

"When is your furlough out, Deerslayer?" she asked, after both canoes were heading towards the ark, and moving, with scarcely a perceptible effort of the paddles, through the water.

"To-morrow noon; not a minute afore; and you may depend on it, Judith, I shan't quit what I call Christian company, to go and give myself up to them vagabonds, an instant sooner than is downright necessary. They begin to fear a visit from the garrisons, and wouldn't lengthen the time a moment; and it's pretty well understood atween us that, should I fail in my arr'nd, the torments are to take place when the sun begins to fall, that they may strike upon their home trail as soon as it is dark."

This was said solemnly, as if the thought of what was believed to be in reserve duly weighed on the prisoner's mind, and yet so simply, and without a parade of suffering, as rather to repel than to invite any open manifestations of sympathy.

"Are they bent on revenging their losses?" Judith asked, faintly, her own high spirit yielding to the influence of the other's quiet but dignified integrity of purpose.

“Downright, if I can judge of Indian inclinations by the symptoms. They think, hows’ever, I don’t suspect their designs, I do believe ; but one that has lived so long among men of redskin gifts is no more likely to be misled in Injin feelin’s than a true hunter is like to lose his trail, or a stanch hound his scent. My own judgment is greatly agin my own escape, for I see the women are a good deal enraged on behalf of Hist, though I say it, perhaps, that should n’t say it — seein’ that I had a considerable hand myself in getting the gal off. Then there was a cruel murder in their camp last night, and that shot might just as well have been fired into my breast. Hows’ever, come what will, the Sarpent and his wife will be safe, and that is some happiness, in any case.”

“Oh, Deerslayer, they will think better of this, since they have given you until to-morrow noon to make up your mind !”

“I judge not, Judith ; yes, I judge not. An Injin is an Injin, gal, and it’s pretty much hopeless to think of swarving him, when he’s got the scent and follows it with his nose in the air. The Delawares, now, are a half-christianized tribe — not that I think such sort of Christians much better than your whole-blooded disbelievers — but, nevertheless, what good half-christianizing can do to a man some among ’em have got, and yet revenge clings to their hearts like the wild creepers here to the tree ! Then I slew one of the best and boldest of their warriors, they say, and it *is* too much to expect that they should captivate the man who did this deed, in the very same scouting on which it was performed, and they take no account of the matter. Had a month or so gone by, their feelin’s would have been

softened down, and we might have met in a more friendly way ; but it is as it is. Judith, this is talking of nothing but myself and my own consarns, when you have had trouble enough, and may want to consult a fri'nd a little about your own matters. I have heard the whole story. Well, life is unsartain at the best. If you've lost a stanch fri'nd, Providence will raise up new ones in his stead ; and I shall be right glad to be counted as such. Is the old man laid in the water, where I should think his body would like to rest ? ”

“ It is, Deerslayer,” answered Judith, almost inaudibly. “ That duty has just been performed. You are right in thinking that I wish to consult a friend ; and that friend is yourself. Hurry Harry is about to leave us ; when he is gone, and we have got a little over the feelings of this solemn office, I hope you will give me an hour alone. Hetty and I are at a loss what to do.”

“ That's quite natural, coming as things have, suddenly and fearfully. But here's the ark, and we'll say more of this when there is a better opportunity.”



## PART V. THE FURLOUGH

### CHAPTER I

The meeting between Deerslayer and his friends in the ark was grave and anxious. The two Indians, in particular, read in his manner that he was not a successful fugitive, and a few words sufficed to let them comprehend the nature of what their friend had termed his "furlough." It was now getting to be dark, and it was decided to sweep the ark up to the castle, and secure it in its ordinary berth. The decision was come to, in some measure, on account of the fact that all the canoes were again in the possession of their proper owners, but principally from the security that was created by the representations of Deerslayer. He had examined the state of things among the Hurons, and felt satisfied that they meditated no further hostilities during the night, the loss they had met having indisposed them to further exertions for the moment. Then he had a proposition to make, — the object of his visit ; and, if this were accepted, the war would at once terminate between the parties ; and it was improbable that the Hurons would anticipate the failure of a project on which their chiefs had apparently set their hearts, by having recourse to violence previously to the return of their messenger.

As soon as the ark was properly secured, the different

members of the party occupied themselves in their several peculiar manners. The women busied themselves in preparations for the evening meal. Hurry set about repairing his moccasins, by the light of a blazing knot; Chingachgook seated himself in gloomy thought; while Deerslayer proceeded, in a manner equally free from affectation and concern, to examine "Killdeer," the rifle of Hutter, that has been already mentioned, and which subsequently became so celebrated in the hands of the individual who was now making a survey of its merits. The piece was a little longer than usual, and had evidently been turned out from the workshop of some manufacturer of a superior order. It had a few silver ornaments; though, on the whole, it would have been deemed a plain piece by most frontiersmen; its great merit consisting in the accuracy of its bore, the perfection of the details, and the excellence of the metal. Again and again did the hunter apply the breech to his shoulder, and glance his eye along the sights, and as often did he poise his body and raise the weapon slowly, as if about to catch an aim at a deer, in order to try the weight, and to ascertain its fitness for quick and accurate firing.

"'T is a glorious we'pon, Hurry!" Deerslayer at length exclaimed, "and it may be thought a pity that it has fallen into the hands of women. The hunters have told me of its explites, and by all I have heard, I should set it down as sartain death in exper'enced hands. Harken to the tick of this lock—a wolf-trap has n't a livelier spring; pan and cock speak together, like two singing masters undertaking a psalm in meetin'. I never *did* see so true a bore, Hurry, that 's sartain."

"Aye, Old Tom used to give the piece a character, though he was n't the man to particularize the raal natur' of any sort of firearms, in practice," returned March, passing the deer's thongs through the moccasin with the coolness of a cobbler. "He was no marksman, that we must all allow; but he had his good p'int's as well as his bad ones. I have had hopes that Judith might consait the idee of giving Killdeer to me."

"There's no saying what young women may do, that's a truth, Hurry; and I suppose you're as likely to own the rifle as another. Still, when things are so very near perfection, it's a pity not to reach it entirely."

"What do you mean by that? Would not that piece look as well on my shoulder as on any man's?"

"As for looks, I say nothing. You are both good-looking, and might make what is called a good-looking couple. But the true p'int is as to conduct. More deer would fall in one day by that piece in some men's hands than would fall in a week in your'n, Hurry! I've seen you try; you remember the buck t' other day?"

"That buck was out of season; and who wishes to kill venison out of season? I was merely trying to frighten the creatur', and I think you will own that he was pretty well skeared at any rate."

"Well, well, have it as you say. But this is a lordly piece, and would make a steady hand and quick eye the King of the Woods."

"Then keep it, Deerslayer, and become King of the Woods," said Judith, earnestly, who had heard the conversation. "It can never be in better hands than it is at this moment; there I hope it will remain these fifty years."

"Judith, you can't be in 'arnest!" exclaimed Deerslayer, taken so much by surprise as to betray more emotion than it was usual for him to manifest on ordinary occasions. "Such a gift would be fit for a raal king to make; yes, and for a raal king to receive."

"I never was more in earnest in my life, Deerslayer, and I am as much in earnest in the wish as in the gift."

"Well, gal, well; we'll find time to talk of this agin. You must n't be down-hearted, Hurry, for Judith is a sprightly young woman, and she has a quick reason; she knows that the credit of her father's rifle is safer in my hands than it can possibly be in your'n; and, therefore, you must n't be down-hearted. In other matters, more to your liking, too, you'll find she'll give you the preference."

Hurry growled out his dissatisfaction; but he was too intent on quitting the lake, and in making his preparations, to waste his breath on a subject of this nature. Shortly after, the supper was ready; it was eaten in silence, as sadness and thought contributed their share to the general desire not to converse.

The meal ended, and the humble preparations removed, the whole party assembled on the platform to hear the expected intelligence from Deerslayer on the subject of his visit. Stools were brought from the ark and the hut, and the six placed themselves in a circle near the door, watching each other's countenances by the scanty means that were furnished by a lovely starlight night. Along the shore, beneath the mountains, lay the usual body of gloom; but in the broad lake no shadow was cast, and a thousand mimic stars were dancing in the limpid element,

that was just stirred enough by the evening air to set them all in motion.

"Now, Deerslayer," commenced Judith, "tell us all the Hurons have to say, and the reason why they have sent you on parole, to make us some offer."

"Well, then, if the message must be given, it must; and perhaps there is no use in putting it off. Hurry will soon be wanting to set out on his journey to the river, and the stars rise and set, just as if they cared for neither Injin nor message. Ah's me! 't is n't a pleasant, and I know it's a useless, arr'nd; but it must be told. The simple fact is this. When the party came back from the castle, the Mingos held a council, and bitter thoughts were uppermost, as was plainly to be seen by their gloomy faces. No one likes to be beaten, and a redskin as little as a paleface. Well, when they had smoked upon it, and made their speeches, and their council-fire had burnt low, the matter came out. It seems the elders among 'em consaited I was a man to be trusted on a furlough. It is n't often" — added the hunter, with a pleasing consciousness that his previous life justified this implicit reliance on his good faith — "it is n't often they consait anything so good of a paleface; but so they did with me, and therefore they did n't hesitate to speak their minds, which is just this: You see the state of things. The lake and all on it, they fancy, lie at their marcy, and, therefore, they send by me this belt of wampum," showing the article in question to the Delaware, as he spoke, "with these words: Tell the Sarpent, they say, that he has done well for a beginner; he may now strike across the mountains, for his own vilages, and no one shall look for his trail. If he has found

a scalp, let him take it with him ; the Huron braves have hearts, and can feel for a young warrior who does n't wish to go home empty-handed. If he is nimble, he is welcome to lead out a party in pursuit. Hist, hows'ever, must go back to the Hurons ; when she left them in the night she brought away with her the inclinations of a young Huron, and they want her back again, that the poor young man may find them where he last saw them ! The Serpent, they say, is too promising a young warrior not to find as many wives as he wants, but this one he cannot have. The next message is to you, Judith. They say the Muskrat, as they call your father, has dove to the bottom of the lake ; that he will never come up again, and that his young will soon be in want of wigwams, if not of food. The Huron huts, they think, are better than the huts of York, — they wish you to come and try them. Your color is white, they own, but they think young women who 've lived so long in the woods would lose their way in the clearin's. A great warrior among them has lately lost his wife, and he would be glad to put the Wild Rose on her bench at his fireside. As for the Feeble-Mind, she will always be honored and taken care of by red warriors. Your father's goods, they think, ought to go to enrich the tribe ; but your own property, which is to include everything of a female natur', will go, like that of all wives, into the wigwam of the husband."

"And do *you* bring such a message to *me* ?" exclaimed Judith. "Am I a girl to be an Indian's slave ?"

"If you wish my honest thoughts on this p'int, Judith, I shall answer that I don't think you 'll willingly ever become any man's slave, redskin or white. You're not to think

hard, hows'ever, of my bringing the message, as near as I could, in the very words in which it was given to me. Them was the conditions on which I got my furlough, and a bargain is a bargain, though it is made with a vagabond. I've told you what *they've* said, but I've not yet told you what I think you ought, one and all, to answer."

"Aye; let's hear that, Deerslayer," put in Hurry. "My cur'osity is up on that consideration, and I should like right well to hear your idees of the reasonableness of the reply. For my part, though, my own mind is pretty much settled on the p'int of my own answer, which shall be made known as soon as necessary."

"And so is mine, Hurry, on all the different heads, and on no one is it more sartainly settled than on your'n. If I was you, I should say — 'Deerslayer, tell them scamps they don't know Harry March! He is human; and having a white skin he has also a white natur', which natur' won't let him desart females of his own race and gifts, in their greatest need. So set me down as one that will refuse to come into your treaty, though you should smoke a hogshead of tobacco over it.'"

March was a little embarrassed at this rebuke, which was uttered with sufficient warmth of manner, and with a point that left no doubt of the meaning. Had Judith encouraged him, he would not have hesitated about remaining to defend her and her sister, but under the circumstances, a feeling of resentment rather urged him to abandon them. At all events, there was not a sufficiency of chivalry in Hurry Harry to induce him to hazard the safety of his own person, unless he could see a direct connection between the probable consequences and his own interests.

"Fair words make long friendships, Master Deerslayer," he said, a little menacingly. "You're but a stripling, and you know, by exper'ence, what you are in the hands of a man. As you're not me, but only a go-between, sent by the savages to us Christians, you may tell your empl'yers that they do know Harry March, which is a proof of their sense as well as his. He's human enough to follow human natur', and that tells him to see the folly of one-man's fighting a whole tribe. If females desart him, they must expect to be deserted *by* him, whether they're of his own gifts or another man's gifts. Should Judith see fit to change her mind, she's welcome to my company to the river, and Hetty with her; but should n't she come to this conclusion, I start as soon as I think the enemy's scouts are beginning to nestle themselves in among the brush and leaves for the night."

"Judith will *not* change her mind, and she does not ask your company, Master March," returned the girl, with spirit.

"That p'int's settled, then," resumed Deerslayer, unmoved by the other's warmth. "Hurry Harry must act for himself, and do that which will be most likely to suit his own fancy. The course he means to take will give him an easy race, if it don't give him an easy conscience. Next comes the question with Hist — what say you, gal? — will you go back to the Mingos and take a Huron husband?"

"Why you talk so to Hist?" demanded the girl, half offended. "You t'ink a redskin girl made like captain's lady, to laugh and joke with any officer that come?"

"What I think, Hist, is neither here nor there, in this



matter. I must carry back your answer, and in order to do so it is necessary that you should send it. A faithful messenger gives his arr'nd word for word."

Hist no longer hesitated to speak her mind fully.

"Tell the Hurons, Deerslayer," she said, rising from the bench and delivering her intentions in the tongue of her own people, "that they are as ignorant as moles; they don't know the wolf from the dog. Among my people, the rose dies on the stem where it budded; the tears of the child fall on the graves of its parents; the corn grows where the seed has been planted. The Delaware girls are not messengers, to be sent like belts of wampum from tribe to tribe. They are honeysuckles, that are sweetest in their own woods; their own young men carry them away in their bosoms, because they are fragrant; they are sweetest when plucked from their native stems. Even the robin and the martin come back, year after year, to their old nests; shall a woman be less true-hearted than a bird? Set the pine in the clay, and it will turn yellow; the willow will not flourish on the hill; the tamarack is healthiest in the swamp; the tribes of the sea love best to hear the winds that blow over the salt water. As for a Huron youth, what is he to a maiden of the Delawares? He may be fleet, but her eyes do not follow him in the race; they look back towards the lodges of her people. He may sing a sweet song for the girls of Canada, but there is no music for Wah but in the tongue she has listened to from childhood. Were the Huron born of the people that once roamed the shores of the salt lake, it would be in vain, unless he were of the family of Uncas. The young pine will rise to be as high as any of its fathers.

Wah-ta-Wah has but one heart, and it can love but one husband."

Deerslayer listened to this characteristic message with undisguised delight.

"That 's worth all the wampum in the woods!" he exclaimed. "Give me a woman for raal eloquence, if they 'll only make up their minds to speak what they *feel*. And now, Judith, having got the answer of a redskin girl, it is fit I should get that of a paleface, if, indeed, a countenance that is as blooming as your'n can in any wise so be tarmed. You are well named the Wild Rose, and so far as color goes Hetty ought to be called the Honeysuckle."

"It is too soon," returned Judith, "to ask my answer; the Great Serpent has not yet spoken."

"The Sarpent? Lord; I could carry back his speech without hearing a word of it! I did n't think of putting the question to him at all, I will allow; though 't would be hardly right either, seeing that truth is truth, and I'm bound to tell these Mingos the fact, and nothing else. So, Chingachgook, let us hear *your* mind on this matter: are you inclined to strike across the hills towards your village, to give up Hist to a Huron, and to tell the chiefs at home, that if they're actyve and successful they may possibly get *on* the end of the Iroquois trail some two or three days a'ter the inimy has got *off* of it?"

Like his betrothed, the young chief arose, that his answer might be given with due distinctness and dignity. Hist had spoken with her hands crossed upon her bosom, as if to suppress the emotions within; but the warrior stretched an arm before him, with a calm energy that aided in giving emphasis to his expressions.

“Wampum should be sent for wampum,” he said; “a message must be answered by a message. Hear what the Great Serpent of the Delawares has to say to the pretended wolves from the great lakes that are howling through our woods. They are no wolves — they are dogs that have come to get their tails and ears cropped by the hands of the Delawares. They are good at stealing young women : bad at keeping them. Chingachgook takes his own where he finds it ; he asks leave of no cur from the Canadas. If he has a tender feeling in his heart, it is no business of the Hurons. He tells it to her who most likes to know it ; he will not bellow it in the forest for the ears of those that only understand yells of terror. What passes in his lodge is not for the chiefs of his own people to know ; still less for Mingo rogues ” —

“Call ’em vagabonds, Sarpent,” interrupted Deerslayer, unable to restrain his delight, — “yes, just call ’em up-and-down vagabonds, which is a word easily intarpreted, and the most hateful to all their ears, it’s so true. Never fear me ; I’ll give ’em your message, syllable for syllable, sneer for sneer, idee for idee, scorn for scorn, and they deserve no better at your hands. Only call ’em vagabonds, once or twice, and that will set the sap mounting in ’em from their lowest roots to the uppermost branches.”

“Still less for Mingo vagabonds !” resumed Chingachgook, quite willingly complying with his friend’s request. “Tell the Huron dogs to howl louder, if they wish a Delaware to find them in the woods, where they burrow like foxes, instead of hunting like warriors. When they had a Delaware maiden in their camp, there was a reason for hunting them up ; now they will be forgotten, unless they

make a noise. Chingachgook don't like the trouble of going to his villages for more warriors ; he can strike their run-away trail ; unless they hide it under ground he will follow it to Canada, alone. He will keep Wah-ta-Wah with him to cook his game ; they two will be Delawares enough to scare all the Hurons back to their own country."

"That's a grand despatch, as the officers call them things!" cried Deerslayer ; "'twill set all the Huron blood in motion ; most particularly that part where he tells 'em Hist, too, will keep on their heels, till they're fairly driven out of the country. Now, Hetty, if you have anything to say, I'll carry it to the Hurons as faithfully as if it was spoken by a schoolmaster or a missionary."

The girl hesitated a moment, and then she answered earnestly, in her own gentle, soft tones.

"The Hurons can't understand the difference between white people and themselves," she said, "or they would n't ask Judith and me to go and live in their villages. God has given one country to the red-men and another to us. He meant us to live apart. Then mother always said that we should never dwell with any but Christians, if possible, and *that* is a reason why we can't go. This lake is ours, and we won't leave it. Father's and mother's graves are in it, and even the worst Indians love to stay near the graves of their fathers. I will come and see them again, if they wish me to, and read more out of the Bible to them, but I can't quit father's and mother's graves."

"That will do — that will do, Hetty, just as well as if you sent them a message twice as long," interrupted the hunter. "I'll tell 'em all you've said, and all you mean, and I'll answer for it that they'll be easily satisfied. Now,

Judith, your turn comes next, and then this part of my arr'nd will be tarminated for the night."

Judith manifested a reluctance to give her reply that had awakened a little curiosity in the messenger. Judging from her known spirit, he had never supposed the girl would be less true to her feelings and principles than Hist or Hetty; and yet there was a visible wavering of purpose that rendered him slightly uneasy. Even now, when directly required to speak, she seemed to hesitate; nor did she open her lips until the profound silence told her how anxiously her words were expected. Then, indeed, she spoke, but it was doubtingly and with reluctance.

"Tell me, first — tell *us*, first, Deerslayer," she commenced, repeating the words merely to change the emphasis, "what effect will our answers have on *your* fate? If you are to be the sacrifice of our spirit, it would have been better had we all been more wary as to the language we use. What, then, are likely to be the consequences to yourself?"

"Lord, Judith, you might as well ask me which way the wind will blow next week, or what will be the age of the next deer that will be shot! I can only say that their faces look a little dark upon me, but it does n't thunder every time a black cloud rises, nor does every puff of wind blow up rain. That's a question, therefore, much more easily put than answered."

"My answer shall be given, Deerslayer, after you and I have talked together alone, when the others have laid themselves down for the night," said Judith, rising.

The meeting now broke up, Hurry announcing his resolution to leave them speedily. Instead of making his

adieux frankly, and in a generous spirit, the little he thought it necessary to say was uttered sullenly and in coldness. Resentment at what he considered Judith's obstinacy was blended with mortification at the career he had run since reaching the lake; and, as is usual with the vulgar and narrow-minded, he was more disposed to reproach others with his failures than to censure himself. Judith gave him her hand, but it was quite as much in gladness as with regret, while the two Delawares were not sorry to find he was leaving them. Of the whole party, Hetty alone betrayed any real feeling. Bashfulness kept her aloof, so that Hurry entered the canoe, where Deerslayer was already waiting for him, before she ventured near enough to be observed. Then, indeed, the girl came into the ark, and approached its end just as the little bark was turning from it.

"Good-by, Hurry," — she called out in her sweet voice, — "good-by, dear Hurry. Take care of yourself in the woods, and don't stop once till you reach the garrison. The leaves on the trees are scarcely plentier than the Hurons round the lake, and they'd not treat a strong man like you as kindly as they treat me."

Hurry received so little sympathy at his departure, that the gentle tones of Hetty, as she thus called after him, sounded soothingly. He checked the canoe, and with one sweep of his powerful arm brought it back to the side of the ark. This was more than Hetty, whose courage had risen with the departure of her hero, expected, and she now shrank timidly back at his unexpected return.

"You're a good gal, Hetty, and I can't quit you without shaking hands," said March, kindly. "Judith, a'ter

all, is n't worth as much as you, though she may be a trifle better looking. Well, if we ever meet again, Hetty, you 'd find a fri'nd in me, let your sister do what she may."

In another minute the two adventurers were a hundred feet from the ark, and half a dozen had not elapsed before they were completely lost to view. Hetty sighed deeply, and rejoined her sister and Hist.

For some time Deerslayer and his companion paddled ahead in silence. It had been determined to land Hurry at the precise point where he is represented, in the commencement of our tale, as having embarked; not only as a place little likely to be watched by the Hurons, but because he was sufficiently familiar with the signs of the woods, at that spot, to thread his way through them in the dark. Thither, then, the light craft proceeded, and in less than a quarter of an hour was within the shadows of the shore.

"You will do well to persuade the officers at the garrison to lead out a party agin these vagabonds as soon as you get in, Hurry," Deerslayer commenced; "and you 'll do better if you volunteer to guide it up yourself. You know the paths, and the shape of the lake, and the natur' of the land, and can do it better than a common, gin'ralizing scout. Strike at the Huron camp first, and follow the signs that will then show themselves. A few looks at the hut and the ark will satisfy you as to the state of the Delaware and the women; and, at any rate, there 'll be a fine opportunity to fall on the Mingo trail, and to make a mark on the memories of the blackguards that they 'll be apt to carry with 'em a long time. It won't be likely to make much difference with me, since *that* matter will

be determined afore to-morrow's sun has set; but it may make a great change in Judith and Hetty's hopes and prospects!"

"And as for yourself, Nathaniel," Hurry inquired with more interest than he was accustomed to betray in the welfare of others, — "and as for yourself, what do you think is likely to turn up?"

"The Lord in his wisdom only can tell, Henry March! The clouds look black and threatening, and I keep my mind in a state to meet the worst. Vengeful feelin's are uppermost in the hearts of the Mingos, and any little disapp'intment about the plunder, or the prisoners, or Hist, may make the torments sartain. The Lord, in his wisdom, can only determine my fate, or your'n!"

"This is a black business, and ought to be put a stop to," answered Hurry. "I heartily wish old Hutter and I had scalped every creatur' in their camp, the night we first landed with that capital object! Had you not held back, Deerslayer, it might have been done; then you would n't have found yourself, at the last moment, in the desperate condition you mention."

"'T would have been better had you said you wished you had never attempted to do what it little becomes any white man's gifts to undertake; in which case, not only might we have kept from coming to blows, but Thomas Hutter would now have been living, and the hearts of the savages would be less given to vengeance."

This was so obvious to Hurry himself, at the moment, that he dashed his paddle into the water, and began to urge the canoe towards the shore, as if bent only on running away from his own lively remorse. In a minute or two



the bows of the boat grated lightly on the beach. To land, shoulder his pack and rifle, and to get ready for his march, occupied Hurry but an instant, and with a growling adieu, he had already commenced his march, when a sudden twinge of feeling brought him back to the other's side.

"You cannot mean to give yourself up agin to them murdering savages, Deerslayer!" he said, quite as much in angry remonstrance as with generous feeling. "'T would be the act of a madman or a fool!"

"There's them that thinks it madness to keep their words, and there's them that don't, Hurry Harry. You may be one of the first, but I'm one of the last. No red-skin breathing shall have it in his power to say that a Mingo minds his word more than a man of white blood and white gifts, in anything that consarns me. I'm out on a furlough, and if I've strength and reason, I'll go in on a furlough afore noon to-morrow!"

"Wha t's an Injin, or a word passed, or a furlough taken from creatur's like them, that have neither souls nor names?"

"If they've got neither souls nor names, you and I have both, Harry March, and one is accountable for the other. This furlough is not, as you seem to think, a matter altogether atween me and the Mingos, seeing it is a solemn bargain made atween me and God. He who thinks that he can say what he pleases, in his distress, and that 't will all pass for nothing, because 't is uttered in the forest, and into red-men's ears, knows little of his situation, and hopes, and wants. The words are said to the ears of the Almighty. The air is his breath, and the light of the sun is little more than a glance of his eye. Farewell, Harry; we may not

meet agin ; but I would never wish you to treat a furlough, or any other solemn thing that your Christian God has been called on to witness, as a duty so light that it may be forgotten according to the wants of the body, or even according to the cravings of the spirit."

March was now glad again to escape. Deerslayer stood calmly on the shore, listening to the reckless tread with which Hurry betrayed his progress through the bushes, shook his head in dissatisfaction at the want of caution, and then stepped quietly into his canoe. Before he dropped the paddle again into the water, the young man gazed about him at the scene presented by the starlit night. This was the spot where not four days ago he had first laid his eyes on the beautiful sheet of water on which he floated. If it was then glorious in the bright light of summer's noontide, it was now sad and melancholy under the shadows of night. The mountains rose around it, like black barriers to exclude the outer world ; and the gleams of pale light that rested on the broader parts of the basin were no bad symbols of the faintness of the hopes that were so dimly visible in his own future. Sighing heavily, he pushed the canoe from the land, and took his way back with steady diligence towards the ark and the castle.

## CHAPTER II

Judith was waiting the return of Deerslayer, on the platform, with stifled impatience, when the latter reached the ark. As soon as she got a glimpse of the canoe, she ceased her hurried walk up and down the platform, and stood ready to receive the young man, helping him to fasten

the canoe. When this was done she led him into the cabin of the ark, where a lamp was burning. All padlocks had been removed from the chest, and it only remained for Deerslayer to raise the heavy lid. This Judith desired him to do, as she was going to make a search of the contents, even to the bottom, in the hope of finding out more of the history of Thomas Hutter and her mother. This was the first intimation that Deerslayer had had that Hutter was not her father, and he listened with close attention to the account of the dying moments of the old man.

It was even as Judith suspected. When the articles that had been previously examined had been laid aside, they found a small trunk nearly filled with papers. The hawk does not pounce upon the chicken with a more sudden swoop than Judith sprang forward to seize this mine of hitherto concealed knowledge, glancing over page after page of letters until she had read one hundred or more. At first it was evident to Deerslayer that the girl was much gratified with the letters, but as she went on, her countenance grew more and more sober, and at last she burst into tears, although she still kept on reading until she had reached the end. Then, leaning wearily back in her seat, she desired her companion to finish the examination of the other articles in the chest, as it might yet contain something of importance.

"I'll do it, Judith; I'll do it," returned the patient Deerslayer; "but if there's many more letters to read, we shall see the sun agin afore you've got through with the reading of them! Two good hours have you been looking at them bits of papers!"

"They tell me of my parents, Deerslayer, and have

settled my plans for life. A girl may be excused, who reads about her *own* father and mother, and that too for the first time in her life! I am sorry to have kept you waiting."

"Never mind me, gal; never mind me. It matters little whether I sleep or watch; but though you be pleasant to look at, and are so handsome, Judith, it is not altogether agreeable to sit so long to behold you shedding tears. I know that tears don't kill, and that some people are better for shedding a few now and then, especially women; but I'd rather see you smile any time, Judith, than see you weep."

This gallant speech was rewarded with a sweet, though a melancholy, smile; and then the girl again desired her companion to finish the examination of the chest. The search necessarily continued some time, during which Judith collected her thoughts and related to her companion a brief summary of the information, pitifully scant as it was, which she had derived from the letters. All signatures and names had been carefully cut out and erased, but aside from this the girl had been able to gain a fairly connected history of her mother's life. A young girl coming to America, she had been loved and betrayed by an officer from Europe, who had finally deserted her, leaving their infant daughters, Judith and Hetty, with her. Of this episode Judith could learn nothing more from the letters, but the next bundle had proved to be the correspondence between Thomas Hutter and her mother. What had brought the two together she could not tell, but Hutter's communications, coarse and illiterate though they were, manifested a desire to obtain the hand of a woman of

singular personal attractions, and whose great error he was willing to overlook, for the advantage of possessing one who was in every way his superior.

Nothing else was found among the papers that could lead to a discovery of the name or place of residence of the wife of Hutter ; but an old newspaper came to light among the loose fragments, which contained a proclamation offering a reward for the apprehension of certain freebooters, by name, among which was that of Thomas Hovey. The attention of the girl was drawn to the proclamation, and to this particular name, by the circumstance that black lines had been drawn under both in ink. This, and many hints that had come to the girl's ears during his life-time, convinced her that Thomas Hutter and Thomas Hovey were the same, and that he had hidden himself in the wilderness to avoid capture and conviction as a pirate. Judith's recollection of her mother's manners, conversation, and sufferings filled up many a gap in the historical facts she had now discovered, and made her story more vivid and sympathetic.

"And so," she concluded sadly, "I am Judith, and Judith only, and know not what else to call myself. I had a mother, it is true ; but of her name, even, I am ignorant ; and as for my father, it is better, perhaps, that I should never know who he was, lest I speak too bitterly of him !"

"Judith," said Deerslayer, taking her hand kindly, and with a manly sincerity that went directly to the girl's heart, "'t is better to say no more to-night. Sleep on what you've seen and felt ; in the morning, things that now look gloomy may look more cheerful. It is time to get a little rest, for to-morrow is like to prove a trying day to all of us."

Deerslayer arose as he spoke, and Judith followed his example. The chest was closed and secured, and they parted in silence; she to take her place by the side of Hist and Hetty, and he to seek a blanket on the floor of the cabin he was in.

### CHAPTER III

Hist and Hetty arose with the return of light, leaving Judith still buried in sleep. It took but a minute for the first to complete her toilet. Her long coal-black hair was soon adjusted in a simple knot, the calico dress belted tight to her slender waist, and her little feet concealed in their gaudily ornamented moccasins. When attired, she left her companion employed in household affairs, and went herself on the platform, to breathe the pure air of the morning. Here she found Chingachgook studying the shores of the lake, the mountains, and the heavens.

When the first greetings had been exchanged, the young chief spoke.

"When the sun is thus," he said, pointing to the zenith, "the great hunter of our tribe will go back to the Hurons to be treated like a bear, that they roast and skin even on full stomachs."

"The Great Spirit may soften their hearts, and not suffer them to be so bloody-minded. I have lived among the Hurons, and know them. They have hearts, and will not forget their own children, should they fall into the hands of the Delawares."

"A wolf is forever howling; a hog will always eat. They have lost warriors; even their women will call out for vengeance. The paleface has the eyes of an eagle, and

can see into a Mingo's heart; he looks for no mercy. There is a cloud over his spirit, though it is not before his face."

A long, thoughtful pause succeeded.

"What will the son of Uncas do?" the girl at length timidly asked. "He is a chief, and is already celebrated in council, though so young; what does his heart tell him is wisest? does the head, too, speak the same words as the heart?"

"What does Wah-ta-Wah say, at a moment when my dearest friend is in danger? The smallest birds sing the sweetest; it is always pleasant to hearken to their songs. I wish I could hear the Wren of the Woods in my difficulty; its note would reach deeper than the ear."

"Wah-ta-Wah says that neither she nor the Great Serpent could ever laugh again, or ever sleep without dreaming of the Hurons, should the Deerslayer die under a Mingo tomahawk, and they do nothing to save him. She would rather go back, and start on her long path alone, than let such a dark cloud pass before her happiness."

"Good! The husband and the wife will have but one heart; they will see with the same eyes, and feel with the same feelings."

Just at this instant Deerslayer came out of the cabin of the ark, and stepped upon the platform. His first look was at the cloudless heavens, then his rapid glance took in the entire panorama of land and water, when he had leisure for a friendly nod at his friends, and a cheerful smile for Hist.

"Well," he said, in his usual composed manner, and pleasant voice; "he that sees the sun set in the west, and wakes 'arly enough in the morning, will be sartain to find

him coming back agin in the east, like a buck that is hunted round his ha'nts."

"Aye," said Chingachgook, "but when the sun is in the top of that pine to-morrow where will my brother Deerslayer be?"

The hunter started, and looked intently at his friend. Then he signed for him to follow, and led the way into the ark.

"'T was a little onreasonable in you, Sarpent," he said, "to bring up such a subject afore Hist, for you know the question is easier put than answered. No mortal can say where he will be when the sun rises to-morrow. I will ask you the same question, Sarpent, and should like to hear what answer you can give."

"Chingachgook will be with his friend, Deerslayer; if he be in the land of spirits, the Great Serpent will crawl at his side; if beneath yonder sun, its warmth and light shall fall on both."

"I understand you, Delaware," returned the other, touched with the simple self-devotion of his friend. "Such language is as plain in one tongue as in another; it comes from the heart, and goes to the heart, too. 'T is well to think so, and it may be well to *say* so, for that matter, but it would not be well to *do* so, Sarpent. You are no longer alone in life; for, though you have the lodges to change, and other ceremonies to go through, afore Hist becomes your lawful wife, yet are you as good as married, in all that bears on the feelin's, and joy, and misery. No, no — Hist must not be deserted, because a cloud is passing atween you and me, a little onexpectedly, and a little darker than we may have looked for."



"Hist is a daughter of the Mohicans; she knows how to obey her husband. Where he goes she will follow. *Both* will be with the Great Hunter of the Delawares, when the sun shall be in the pine to-morrow."

"The Lord bless and protect you! Chief, this is downright madness. Can either or both of you alter a Mingo natur'? Will your grand looks, or Hist's tears and beauty, change a wolf into a squirrel, or make a catamount as innocent as a faan? No, Sarpent, you will think better of this matter, and leave me in the hands of God. A'ter all, it's by no means sartain that the scamps design the torments. No one knows to a sartainty what will happen; and young creatur's, like Hist, are n't to be risked on unsartainties. Now, if you was single, or as good as single, Delaware, I should expect you to be actyve and stirring about the camp of the vagabonds, from sunrise to sunset, sarcumventing, and contriving, as restless as a hound off the scent, and doing all manner of things to help me, and to distract the inimy; but two are often feebler than one, and we must take things as they are, and not as we want 'em to be."

"Listen, Deerslayer," returned the Indian, with an emphasis so decided as to show how much he was in earnest. "If Chingachgook was in the hands of the Hurons, what would my paleface brother do? Sneak off to the Delaware villages, and say to the chiefs, and old men, and young warriors, — 'See! here is Wah-ta-Wah; she is safe, but a little tired; and here is the Son of Uncas, not as tired as the Honeysuckle, being stronger, but just as safe.' Would he do this?"

"Well, that's oncommon ingen'ous — it's cunning

enough for a Mingo himself. The Lord only knows what put it into your head to ask such a question. What would I do? Why, in the first place, Hist would n't be likely to be in my company at all, for she would stay as near you as possible, and therefore all that part about *her* could n't be said without talking nonsense. As for her being tired, that would fall through too, if she did n't go, and no part of your speech would be likely to come from me: so, you see, Sarpent, reason is agin you, and you may as well give it up, since to hold out agin reason is no way becoming a chief of your character and reputation."

"My brother is not himself; he forgets that he is talking to one who has sat at the council-fires of his nation," returned the other, kindly. "When men speak, they should say that which does not go in at one side of the head, and out at the other. Their words should n't be feathers, so light that a wind, which does not ruffle the water, can blow them away. He has not answered my question; when a chief puts a question, his friend should not talk of other things."

"I understand you, Delaware, — I understand well enough what you mean, and truth won't allow me to say otherwise. Still, it's not as easy to answer as you seem to think, for this plain reason. You wish me to say what I would do if I had a betrothed, as you have, here on the lake, and a fri'nd yonder in the Huron camp, in danger of the torments. That's it, is n't it?"

The Indian bowed his head silently, and always with unmoved gravity, though his eye twinkled at the sight of the other's embarrassment.

"Well, I never had a betrothed; never had the kind of

feelin's towards any young woman that you have towards Hist; though the Lord knows my feelin' 's kind enough towards 'em all! Still, my heart, as they call it, in such matters is n't touched, and therefore I can't say what I would do. A fri'nd pulls strong, that I know by exper'ence, Sarpent; but, by all that I've seen and heard consarning love, I'm led to think that a betrothed pulls stronger."

"True; but the betrothed of Chingachgook does not pull towards the lodges of the Delawares; she pulls towards the camp of the Hurons."

"She's a noble gal, for all her little feet and hands that ain't bigger than a child's, and a voice that's as pleasant as a mocker's; she's a noble gal, and like the stock of her sires! Well, attempt nothing heedlessly, Sarpent. I suppose you must and will have your way; and, on the whole, it's right you should; for you'd neither be happy unless something was undertaken. But attempt nothing heedlessly. I did n't expect you'd quit the lake while my matter remained in unsartainty; but remember, Sarpent, that no torments that Mingo ingenuity can invent, no ta'ntings and revilings, no burnings and roastings and nail-tearings, nor any other onhuman contrivance, can so soon break down my spirit, as to find that you and Hist have fallen into the power of the inimy, in striving to 'do something for my good."

"The Delawares are prudent. The Deerslayer will not find them running into a strange camp with their eyes shut."

Here the dialogue terminated. Hetty announced that the breakfast was ready, and the whole party were soon seated around the simple board. Judith was the last to take her

seat, pale, silent, and betraying in her countenance that she had passed a painful if not a sleepless night. At this meal scarce a syllable was exchanged, all the females manifesting want of appetite, though the two men were unchanged in this particular. It was early when the party arose, and there still remained several hours before it would be necessary for the prisoner to leave his friends.

Deerslayer himself, so far as human eyes could penetrate, was wholly unmoved, conversing cheerfully and naturally, though he avoided any direct allusion to the expected and great event of the day. His first act on leaving the table was to ask Judith to step into the ark with him. When both had entered the cabin, the young man brought Killdeer, the rifle she had given him, out of a corner, and after turning the piece round and round and examining it affectionately, he proceeded to the subject for which he had sought this interview.

"I understand you, Judith, to say that you gave me this rifle," he said. "I agreed to take it because a young woman can have no particular use for firearms. The we'pon has a great name, and it deserves it, and ought of right to be carried by some known and sure hand, for the best reputation may be lost by careless and thoughtless handling."

"Can it be in better hands than those in which it is now, Deerslayer? Thomas Hutter seldom missed with it; with you it must turn out to be" —

"Sartain death!" interrupted the hunter, laughing. "I once know'd a beaver man that had a piece he called by that very name, but 't was all boastfulness, for I've seen Delawares that were as true with arrows at a short

range. Hows'ever, I'll not deny my gifts — for *this* is a gift, Judith, and not natur' — but I'll not deny my gifts, and therefore allow that the rifle could n't well be in better hands than it is at present. But how long will it be likely to remain there? Atween us the truth may be said, though I should n't like to have it known to the Sarpent and Hist; but to *you* the truth may be spoken, since *your* feelin's will not be as likely to be tormented by it as those of them that have known me longer and better. How long am I like to own this rifle or any other? That is a serious question for our thoughts to rest on, and should that happen which is so likely to happen, Killdeer would be without an owner."

Appreciating the singular character of her companion, Judith listened and responded with apparent composure; though, had not his attention been drawn exclusively to the rifle, Deerslayer could scarce have failed to notice the effort she was making for self-command.

"What would you have me do with the weapon," she asked, "should that which you seem to expect take place?"

"That's just what I wanted to speak to you about, Judith — that's just it. There's Chingachgook, now, though far from being perfect sartainty with a rifle — for few redskins ever get to be *that* — though far from being perfect sartainty, he is respectable, and is coming on. Nevertheless, he is my fri'nd; and all the better fri'nd, perhaps, because there never can be any hard feelin's atween us, touchin' our gifts; his'n bein' red, and mine bein' altogether white. Now, I should like to leave Killdeer to the Sarpent, should anything happen to keep me from doing credit and honor to your precious gift, Judith."

"Leave it to whom you please, Deerslayer; the rifle is your own, to do with as you please; Chingachgook shall have it, should you never return to claim it, if that be your wish."

"Has Hetty been consulted in this matter? Property goes from the parent to the children, and not to one child in partic'lar."

The girl made no answer; but, placing herself at a window, she summoned her sister to her side. When the question was put to Hetty, her simple-minded and affectionate nature cheerfully assented to the proposal to confer on Deerslayer a full right of ownership to the much-coveted rifle. The latter now seemed perfectly happy, examining and reexamining his prize. Returning to the platform, he took the Delaware aside and informed him that this celebrated piece was to become his property, in the event of anything serious befalling himself.

"This is a new reason why you should be wary, Sarpent, and not run into any oncalculated danger," the hunter added, "for it will be victory of itself, to a tribe, to own such a piece as this! The Mingos will turn green with envy; and, what is more, they will not ventur' heedlessly near a village where it is known to be kept. So look well to it, Delaware, and remember that you've now to watch over a thing that has all the valie of a creatur', without its failin's. Hist may be and should be precious to you, but Killdeer will have the love and veneration of your whole people."

The hours passed all too quickly for the party in the ark, and soon the sun had ascended so high in the heavens that Deerslayer began to prepare for his departure. Tenderly

and calmly he spoke a few farewell words to each of the group, the others withdrawing in order that the conversation might be held unheard; but at last the canoe was ready, and the time had come to set forth. Judith had insisted that the hunter allow Hetty to accompany him to the camp, arguing that her presence could do no harm and might do great good to Deerslayer, while the girl herself was perfectly safe from any danger.

"The best fri'nds must often part," Deerslayer began, when he and Hetty were in the canoe, and the whole party was grouped around him, — "Yes, fri'ndship can't alter the ways of Providence; and let our feelin's be as they may, we must part. God bless you, Judith, and you, Hist! Sarpent — God bless you!" cried the hunter, as the canoe left the side of the platform. "Your Manitou and my God only knows when and where we shall meet agin; I shall count it a great blessing, and a full reward for any little good I may have done on 'arth, if we shall be permitted to know each other, and to consort together, hereafter, as we have so long done in these pleasant woods afore us!"

The canoe now glided ahead, holding its way towards the point where Deerslayer well knew that his enemies expected him, and where he now began to be afraid he might not arrive in season to redeem his plighted faith. Hetty perceiving his impatience, without very clearly comprehending its cause, however, seconded his efforts in a way that soon rendered their timely return no longer a matter of doubt. Even then the sun wanted but two or three minutes of the zenith when Deerslayer landed on the point where the Hurons were encamped.

If it was a point of honor with the Indian warrior to redeem his word, when pledged to return and meet his death at a given hour, so was it a point of characteristic pride to show no womanish impatience, but to reappear as nearly as possible at the appointed moment. The Hurons had been divided in their opinions concerning the probability of their captive's return. Most among them, indeed, had not expected it possible for a paleface to come back voluntarily, and meet the known penalties of an Indian torture ; but a few of the seniors expected better things from one who had already shown himself so singularly cool, brave, and upright. With a view to render the triumph as signal as possible, in the event of the hour's passing without the reappearance of the hunter, all the warriors and scouts of the party had been called in ; and the whole band, men, women, and children, was now assembled at this single point, — to be a witness of the expected scene.

When the young man put his foot on the point and advanced with a steady tread towards the group of chiefs that was seated in grave array on a fallen tree, the oldest of their number cast his eye upward at an opening in the trees, and pointed out to his companions the startling fact that the sun was just entering a space that was known to mark the zenith. A common, but low, exclamation of surprise escaped every mouth, and the grim warriors looked at each other ; some with astonishment, and all with admiration. The paleface had kept his word, and Deerslayer's furlough was over.



## PART VI. THE DELIVERANCE

### CHAPTER I

It was an imposing scene into which Deerslayer now found himself advancing. All the older warriors were seated on the trunk of the fallen tree, waiting his approach with grave decorum. On the right stood the young men, armed, while the left was occupied by the women and children. In the centre was an open space of considerable extent, always canopied by leaves, but from which the underbrush, dead wood, and other obstacles had been carefully removed. The more open area had probably been much used by former parties, for this was the place where the appearance of a sward was the most decided. The arches of the woods, even at high noon, cast their sombre shadows on the spot, which the brilliant rays of the sun that struggled through the leaves contributed to light.

As was not unusual among the Indians, two chiefs shared the principal authority over the tribe, Rivenoak, the senior, whom the reader has already met, taking the leadership in council on account of his eloquence, wisdom, and prudence, and the Panther, as his rival was called, being distinguished for his courage and ferocity and cunning on the warpath. The two sat side by side, awaiting the approach of their prisoner, as Deerslayer put his moccasined foot on the strand ; nor did either move or utter a syllable

until the young man had advanced into the centre of the area, and proclaimed his presence with his voice.

"Here I am, Mingos," he said, in the dialect of the Delawares, a language that most present understood; "here I am, and there is the sun. One is not more true to the laws of natur' than the other has proved true to his word. I am your prisoner; do with me what you please. My business with man and 'arth is settled; nothing remains now but to meet the white man's God, accordin' to a white man's duties and gifts."

A murmur of approbation escaped even the women at this address, and, for an instant, there was a strong and pretty general desire to adopt into the tribe one who owned so brave a spirit. Still there were dissenters from this wish, among the principal of whom might be classed the Panther, and his sister, Le Sumach, the widow of Le Loup Cervier, who had fallen by the hand of the captive. Not so with Rivenoak. This chief arose, stretched his arm before him, in a gesture of courtesy, and paid his compliments with an ease and dignity that a prince might have envied.

"Paleface, you are honest," said the Huron orator. "My people are happy in having captured a man, and not a skulking fox. We now know you; we shall treat you like a brave. If you have slain one of our warriors, and helped to kill others, you have a life of your own ready to give away in return. Some of my young men thought that the blood of a paleface was too thin; that it would refuse to run under the Huron knife. You will show them it is not so; your heart is stout as well as your body. It is a pleasure to make such a prisoner; should my warriors

say that the death of Le Loup Cervier ought not to be forgotten, and that he cannot travel towards the land of spirits alone, that his enemy must be sent to overtake him, they will remember that he fell by the hand of a brave, and send you after him with such signs of our friendship as shall not make him ashamed to keep your company. I have spoken ; you know what I have said."

" True enough, Mingo, all true as the gospel," returned the simple-minded hunter ; " you *have* spoken, and I *do* know not only what you have *said*, but, what is still more important, what you *mean*. I dare say your warrior, the Lynx, was a stout-hearted brave, and worthy of your fri'ndship and respect, but I do not feel unworthy to keep his company without any passport from your hands. But words are useless, and lead to braggin' feelin's ; here I am ; act your will on me."

Rivenoak made a sign of acquiescence, and then a short conference was privately held among the chiefs. As soon as the latter ended, three or four young men fell back from among the armed group, and disappeared. Then it was signified to the prisoner that he was at liberty to go at large on the point, until a council was held concerning his fate. There was more of seeming, than of real confidence, however, in this apparent liberality, inasmuch as the young men mentioned already formed a line of sentinels across the breadth of the point, inland, and escape from any other part was out of the question. Even the canoe was removed beyond this line of sentinels, to a spot where it was considered safe from any sudden attempt. As Deerslayer walked about, he examined all possibilities of escape or concealment, but no opening presented itself.

In the meantime the business of the camp appeared to proceed in its regular train. The chiefs consulted apart, admitting no one but the Sumach to their councils ; for she, the widow of the fallen warrior, had an exclusive right to be heard on such an occasion. The young men strolled about in indolent listlessness, awaiting the result, while the females prepared the feast that was to celebrate the termination of the affair, whether it proved fortunate or otherwise for our hero. No one betrayed feeling — and an indifferent observer, beyond the extreme watchfulness of the sentinels, would have detected no extraordinary movement or sensation to denote the real state of things. In this manner an hour glided away.

Suspense is, perhaps, the feeling, of all others, that is most difficult to be supported. When Deerslayer landed, he fully expected in the course of a few minutes to undergo the tortures of an Indian revenge, and he was prepared to meet his fate manfully ; but the delay proved far more trying than the nearer approach of suffering, and the intended victim began seriously to meditate some desperate effort at escape, as it might be from sheer anxiety to terminate the scene, when he was suddenly summoned to appear once more in front of his judges, who had already arranged the band in its former order, in readiness to receive him.

“ Killer of the Deer,” commenced Rivenoak, as soon as his captive stood before him, “ my aged men have listened to wise words ; they are ready to speak. You are a man whose fathers came from beyond the rising sun ; we are children of the setting sun ; we turn our faces towards the Great Sweet Lakes when we look towards our villages.

It may be a wise country and full of riches towards the morning, but it is very pleasant towards the evening. We love most to look in that direction. When we gaze at the east we feel afraid, canoe after canoe bringing more and more of your people in the track of the sun, as if their land was so full as to run over. The red-men are few already; they have need of help. One of our best lodges has lately been emptied by the death of its master; it will be a long time before his son can grow big enough to sit in his place. There is his widow! she will want venison to feed her and her children, for her sons are yet like the young of the robin before they quit the nest. By your hand has this great calamity befallen her. She has two duties; one to Le Loup Cervier, and one to his children. Scalp for scalp, life for life, blood for blood, is one law; to feed her young another. We know you, Killer of the Deer. You are honest; when you say a thing it is so. You have but one tongue, and that is not forked like a snake's. Your head is never hid in the grass; all can see it. What you say, that will you do. You are just. When you have done wrong, it is your wish to do right again as soon as you can. Here is the Sumach; she is alone in her wigwam, with children crying around her for food; yonder is a rifle, it is loaded and ready to be fired. Take the gun; go forth and shoot a deer; bring the venison and lay it before the widow of Le Loup Cervier, — feed her children; call yourself her husband. After which, your heart will no longer be Delaware, but Huron; Le Sumach's ears will not hear the cries of her children; my people will count the proper number of warriors."

"I feared this, Rivenoak," answered Deerslayer, when

the other had ceased speaking; "yes, I did dread that it would come to this. Hows'ever, the truth is soon told, and that will put an end to all expectations on this head. Mingo, I'm white, and Christian-born. I may never marry; but should such a thing come to pass, none but a woman of my own color and gifts shall darken the door of my wigwam. As for feeding the young of your dead warrior, I would do that cheerfully, could it be done without discredit; but it cannot, seeing that I can never live in a Huron village. Your own young men must find the Sumach in venison, and the next time she marries, let her take a husband whose legs are not long enough to overrun territory that don't belong to him. We fou't a fair battle, and he fell, — in this there is nothin' but what a brave expects, and should be ready to meet. As for getting a Mingo heart, as well might you expect to see gray hairs on a boy, or the blackberry growing on the pine. No, no, Huron; my gifts are white, so far as wives are consarned; it is Delaware in all things touchin' Injins."

These words were scarcely out of the mouth of Deerslayer before a common murmur betrayed the dissatisfaction with which they had been heard. The aged women, in particular, were loud in their expressions of disgust; and the Sumach herself, an ugly middle-aged woman old enough to be our hero's mother, was not the least pacific in her denunciations. But all the other manifestations of disappointment and discontent were thrown into the background by the fierce resentment of the Panther. This grim chief had thought it a degradation to permit his sister to become the wife of a paleface of the Yengeese at all, and had only given a reluctant consent to the arrangement

at the earnest solicitations of the bereaved widow ; and it goaded him to the quick to find his condescension slighted, the honor he with so much regret had been persuaded to accord, contemned. The animal from which he got his name does not glare on his intended prey with more frightful ferocity than his eyes gleamed on the captive.

“ Dog of the palefaces ! ” he exclaimed, “ go yell among the curs of your own evil hunting-grounds ! ”

Even while speaking his arm was lifted and the tomahawk hurled. Luckily the loud tones of the speaker had drawn the eye of Deerslayer towards him. So great was the dexterity with which this dangerous weapon was thrown, and so deadly the intent, that it would have riven the skull of the prisoner, had he not stretched forth an arm and caught the handle in one of its turns, with a readiness quite as remarkable as the skill with which the missile had been hurled. The projectile force was so great, notwithstanding, that when Deerslayer's arm was arrested his hand was raised above and behind his own head, and in the very attitude necessary to return the attack. Throwing prudence and forbearance to the winds, he cast all his energy into the effort of his arm, and threw back the weapon at his assailant. The unexpectedness of this blow contributed to its success — the Panther neither raising an arm nor bending his head to avoid it. The keen little axe struck the victim in a perpendicular line with the nose, directly between the eyes, and he fell his length into the open arena, quivering in death. A common rush to his relief left the captive, for a single instant, quite without the crowd ; and, willing to make one desperate effort for

life, he bounded off with the activity of a deer. There was but a breathless instant, when the whole band, old and young, women and children, abandoning the lifeless body of the Panther where it lay, raised the yell of alarm, and followed in pursuit.

Sudden as had been the event which induced Deerslayer to make this desperate trial of speed, his mind was not wholly unprepared for the fearful emergency. In the course of the past hour, he had pondered well on the chances of such an experiment, and had shrewdly calculated all the details of success and failure. At the first leap, therefore, he held his way in the direction he had decided upon as best to avoid the sentinels. This was straight into the water, in which he ran for some forty or fifty yards along the edge, where it was barely knee-deep. Then as soon as a favorable spot presented, he darted through the bushes that fringed the shore and into the open woods.

Several rifles were discharged at Deerslayer while in the water, and more followed as he came out into the comparative exposure of the clear forest. But the direction of his line of flight, which partially crossed that of the fire, the haste with which the weapons had been aimed, and the general confusion that prevailed in the camp, prevented any harm from being done. Bullets whistled past him, and many cut twigs from the branches at his side, but not one touched even his dress. The delay caused by these fruitless attempts was of great service to the fugitive, who had gained more than a hundred yards on even the leading men of the Hurons, ere something like concert and order had entered into the chase. Deerslayer held his way steadily up the hill behind the point, although he



had to slacken his speed as he ascended, in order to recover breath. The Hurons were whooping and leaping behind him; but this he disregarded, well knowing they must overcome the difficulties he had surmounted ere they could reach the elevation to which he had attained. The summit of the first hill was now quite near him, and he saw, by the formation of the land, that a deep glen intervened before the base of a second hill could be reached. Walking deliberately to the summit, he glanced eagerly about him, in every direction, in quest of a cover. None offered in the ground — but a fallen tree lay near him, and desperate circumstances required desperate remedies. This tree lay in a line parallel to the glen, at the brow of the hill; to leap on it, and then to force his person as close as possible under its lower side, took but a moment. Previously to disappearing from his pursuers, however, Deerslayer stood on the height, and gave a cry of triumph, as if exulting at the sight of the descent that lay before him. In the next instant he was stretched beneath the tree.

No sooner was this expedient adopted than the young man ascertained how desperate had been his own efforts by the violence of the pulsation in his frame. He could hear his heart beat, and his breathing was like the action of a bellows in quick motion. The footsteps of those who toiled up the opposite side of the acclivity were now audible, and presently voices and treads announced the arrival of the pursuers. The foremost shouted as they reached the height; then, fearful that their enemy would escape under favor of the descent, each leaped upon the fallen tree, and plunged into the ravine, trusting to get a

sight of the pursued ere he reached the bottom. In this manner Huron followed Huron, until Natty began to hope the whole had passed. Others succeeded, however, until quite forty had leaped over the tree ; and then he counted them, as the surest mode of ascertaining how many could be behind. Presently all were in the bottom of the glen, quite a hundred feet below him, and some had even ascended part of the opposite hill, when it became evident an inquiry was making, as to the direction he had taken. This was the critical moment ; and one of nerves less steady, or of a training that had been neglected, would have seized it to rise and fly. Not so with Deerslayer. He still lay quiet, watching with jealous vigilance every movement below, and fast regaining his breath.

The Hurons now resembled a pack of hounds at fault. Little was said, but each man ran about, examining the dead leaves as the hound hunts for the lost scent. The great number of moccasins that had passed made the examination difficult, though the in-toe of an Indian was easily to be distinguished from the freer and wider step of a white man. Believing that no more pursuers remained behind, and hoping to steal away unseen, Deerslayer suddenly threw himself over the tree, and fell on the upper side. This achievement appeared to be effected successfully, and hope beat high in the bosom of the fugitive. Rising to his hands and feet, after a moment lost in listening to the sounds in the glen in order to ascertain if he had been seen, the young man next scrambled to the top of the hill, a distance of only ten yards, in the expectation of getting its brow between him and his pursuers, and himself so far under cover. Even this

was effected, and he rose to his feet, walking swiftly but steadily along the summit, in a direction opposite to that in which he had first fled. The nature of the calls in the glen, however, soon made him uneasy, and he sprang upon the summit, again, in order to reconnoitre. No sooner did he reach the height than he was seen, and the chase renewed. As it was better footing on the level ground, Deerslayer now avoided the side-hill, holding his flight along the ridge; while the Hurons, judging from the general formation of the land, saw that the ridge would soon melt into the hollow, and kept to the latter as the easiest mode of heading the fugitive.

When Deerslayer found that he was descending towards the glen, by the melting away of the ridge, he turned short, at right angles to his previous course, and went down the declivity with tremendous velocity, holding his way towards the shore. Some of his pursuers came panting up the hill, in direct chase, while most still kept on, in the ravine, intending to head him at its termination. Deerslayer had now a different, though a desperate, project in view. Abandoning all thoughts of escape by the woods, he made the best of his way towards the canoe. He knew where it lay; could it be reached, he had only to run the gauntlet of a few rifles, and success would be certain.

As Deerslayer approached the point, several women and children were passed, but, though the former endeavored to cast dried branches between his legs, the terror inspired by his bold retaliation on the redoubted Panther was so great that none dared come near enough seriously to molest him. He went by all triumphantly, and reached the fringe of bushes. Plunging through these, our hero

found himself once more in the lake and within fifty feet of the canoe. Here he ceased to run, for he well understood that his breath was now all-important to him. He even stooped, as he advanced, and cooled his parched mouth, by scooping up water in his hand to drink. Still the moments pressed, and he soon stood at the side of the canoe. The first glance told him that the paddles had been removed! This was a sore disappointment after all his efforts, and, for a single moment, he thought of turning and of facing his foes by walking with dignity into the centre of the camp again. But an infernal yell proclaimed the quick approach of the nearest of his pursuers, and the instinct of life triumphed. Preparing himself duly, and giving a right direction to its bows, he ran off into the water bearing the canoe before him, threw all his strength and skill into a last effort, and cast himself forward so as to fall into the bottom of the light craft, without materially impeding its way. Here he remained on his back, both to regain his breath and to cover his person from the deadly rifle. The lightness, which was such an advantage in paddling the canoe, now operated unfavorably. The material was so like a feather that the boat had no momentum; else would the impulse in that smooth and placid sheet have impelled it to a distance from the shore that would have rendered paddling with the hands safe. Could such a point once be reached, Deerslayer thought he might get far enough out to attract the attention of Chingachgook and Judith, who would not fail to come to his relief with other canoes, — a circumstance that promised everything. As the young man lay in the bottom of the canoe he watched its movements, by studying the tops of the

trees on the mountain-side, and judged of his distance by the time and the motion. Voices on the shore were now numerous, and he heard something said about manning the raft, which fortunately for the fugitive lay at a considerable distance on the other side of the point.

Perhaps the situation of Deerslayer had not been more critical that day than it was at this moment. It certainly had not been one half as tantalizing. He lay perfectly quiet for two or three minutes, trusting to the single sense of hearing, confident that the noise on the lake would reach his ears did any one venture to approach by swimming. Once or twice he fancied that the element was stirred by the cautious movement of an arm, and then he perceived it was the wash of the water on the pebbles of the strand. Suddenly all the voices ceased, and a death-like stillness pervaded the spot. By this time the canoe had drifted so far as to render nothing visible to Deerslayer, as he lay on his back, except the blue void of space, and a few of those brighter rays that proceed from the effulgence of the sun, marking his proximity. It was not possible to endure this uncertainty long. The young man well knew that the profound stillness foreboded evil, the savages never being so silent as when about to strike a blow — resembling the stealthy foot of the panther ere he takes his leap. He took out a knife, and was about to cut a hole through the bark in order to get a view of the shore, when he paused from a dread of being seen in the operation, which would direct the enemy where to aim their bullets. At this instant a rifle *was* fired, and the ball pierced both sides of the canoe within eighteen inches of the spot where his head lay.

Deerslayer now felt the urgent necessity of resorting to some expedient to get further from his foes, and if possible to apprise his friends of his situation. Before quitting the shore, and as soon as he perceived that the paddles were gone, Deerslayer had thrown a bit of dead branch into the canoe, and this was within reach of his arm. With this he attempted to row, and was succeeding even better than he hoped, though still under the necessity of lying flat on his back. That his present manoeuvre was seen soon became apparent by the clamor on the shore, and a bullet, entering the stern of the canoe, traversed its length, whistling between the arms of our hero, and passed out at the head. He was making a stronger push than common, when another messenger from the point broke the stick, and at once deprived him of his oar. As the sound of voices seemed to grow more and more distant, however, Deerslayer determined to leave all to the drift, until he believed himself beyond the reach of bullets. This was nervous work, but it was the wisest of all the expedients that offered; and the young man was encouraged to persevere in it by the circumstance that he felt his face fanned by the air, a proof that there was a little more wind.

## CHAPTER II

By this time Deerslayer had been twenty minutes in the canoe, and he began to grow a little impatient. The position of the boat still prevented his seeing in any direction, unless it were up or down the lake. The profound stillness troubled him also, for he knew not whether to ascribe it to the increasing space between him and the Indians or to some new artifice.

Some additional ten minutes may have passed in this quiescent manner on both sides, when Deerslayer thought he heard a slight noise, like a low rubbing against the bottom of his canoe. He opened his eyes of course, in expectation of seeing the face or arm of an Indian rising from the water, and found that a canopy of leaves was impending directly over his head. Starting to his feet, the first object that met his eye was Rivenoak, who had so far aided the slow progress of the boat as to draw it on the point, the grating on the strand being the sound that had first given our hero the alarm. The change in the drift of the canoe had been altogether owing to the baffling nature of the light currents of air, aided by some eddies in the water.

"Come," said the Huron, with a quiet gesture of authority to order his prisoner to land; "my young friend has sailed about till he is tired; he will forget how to run again, unless he uses his legs."

"You've the best of it, Huron," returned Deerslayer, stepping steadily from the canoe; "Providence has helped you in an unexpected manner. I'm your prisoner again, and I hope you'll allow that I'm as good at breaking jail as I am at keeping furloughs."

"My brother has had a long run on the hills, and a pleasant sail on the water," returned Rivenoak, smiling. "He has seen the woods; he has seen the water. Now let him wait; when we want him, the name of Deerslayer will be called."

This conversation had been held with no one near but the speakers. As soon as Rivenoak had ceased speaking, he walked towards the line of trees, and disappeared shortly behind the covers of the forest, leaving Deerslayer

by himself. Affecting an indifference he was far from feeling, the young man strolled about the area until he had ascertained that the canoe had been removed, and that he was a prisoner on the narrow tongue of land, vigilantly watched beyond a question, and with no other means of escape than that of swimming. He again thought of this last expedient, but the certainty that the canoe would be sent in chase, and the desperate nature of the chances of success, deterred him from the undertaking. He gazed wistfully towards the castle — but there all seemed to be silent and desolate ; and a feeling of loneliness and desertion came over him to increase the gloom of the moment.

“ God’s will be done ! ” murmured the young man, as he walked sorrowfully away from the beach, entering again beneath the arches of the wood ; “ God’s will be done on ’arth as it is in heaven ! I did hope that my days would not be numbered so soon ! but it matters little, a’ter all. A few more winters and a few more summers, and ’t would have been over accordin’ to natur’. Ah ’s me ! the young and actyve seldom think death possible, till he grins in their faces and tells ’em the hour is come ! ”

For half an hour or more the young man was left alone, and unbroken stillness prevailed. Then the stirring of leaves and the cracking of twigs apprised Deerslayer of the approach of his enemies. The Hurons closed in a circle around the spot where the prisoner stood, Rivenoak occupying alone the place of authority, now that the Panther had fallen.

When the whole band was arrayed around the captive, a grave silence, so much the more threatening from its



profound quiet, pervaded the place. Deerslayer perceived that the women and boys had been preparing splinters of the fat pine roots, which he well knew were to be stuck into his flesh and set in flames, while two or three of the young men held the thongs of bark with which he was to be bound. The smoke of a distant fire announced that the burning brands were in preparation, and several of the elder warriors passed their fingers over the edges of their tomahawks, as if to prove their keenness and temper. Even the knives seemed loosened in their sheaths, impatient for the bloody and merciless work to begin.

“Killer of the Deer,” recommenced Rivenoak, certainly without any signs of sympathy or pity in his manner, though with calmness and dignity, “Killer of the Deer, it is time that my people knew their minds. The sun is no longer over our heads; tired of waiting on the Hurons, he has begun to fall near the pines on this side of the valley. He is traveling fast towards the country of our French fathers; it is to warn his children that their lodges are empty and that they ought to be at home. The roaming wolf has his den, and he goes to it when he wishes to see his young. The Iroquois are not poorer than the wolves. They have villages, and wigwams, and fields of corn; the good spirits will be tired of watching them alone. My people must go back and see to their own business. There will be joy in the lodges when they hear our whoop from the forest! It will be a sorrowful whoop; when it is understood, grief will come after it. There will be one scalp-whoop, but there will be only one. We have the fur of the Muskrat; his body is among the fishes. Deerslayer must say whether another scalp shall be on our pole. Two

lodges are empty ; a scalp, living or dead, is wanted at each door."

"Then take 'em dead, Huron," firmly, but altogether without dramatic boasting, returned the captive. "My hour is come, I do suppose ; and what must be, must. If you are bent on the tortur', I'll do my indivors to bear up agin it, though no man can say how far his natur' will stand pain, until he's been tried."

"The paleface cur begins to put his tail between his legs !" cried a young and garrulous savage, who bore the title of the Red Crow ; "he is no warrior ; when the Huron women begin to torment him, he will cry like the young of the catamount. He is a Delaware woman dressed in the skin of a Yengeese !"

"Have your say, young man — have your say," returned Deerslayer, unmoved ; "you know no better, and I can overlook it. Talking may aggravate women, but can hardly make knives sharper, fire hotter, or rifles more sartain."

Rivenoak now interfered, reproving the Red Crow for his premature interference, and then directing the proper persons to bind the captive. This expedient was adopted, not from any apprehensions that he would escape, but from an ingenious design of making him feel his helplessness, and of gradually sapping his resolution by undermining it, as it might be, little by little. Deerslayer offered no resistance. He submitted his arms and legs readily to the ligaments of bark, which were bound around them. As soon as the body of Deerslayer was withed in bark sufficiently to create a lively sense of helplessness, he was carried to a young tree, and bound against it in a way

that effectually prevented him from moving as well as from falling. The hands were laid flat against the legs, and thongs were passed over all, in a way nearly to incorporate the prisoner with the tree. His cap was then removed, and he was left half-standing, half-sustained by his bonds, to face the coming scene in the best manner he could.

Previously to proceeding to anything like extremities, it was the wish of Rivenoak to put his captive's resolution to the proof, by renewing the attempt at a compromise. In conformity with this scheme the Sumach had been secretly advised to advance into the circle and to make her appeal to the prisoner's sense of justice before the band had recourse to the last experiment. The woman, nothing loath, consented ; for there was some attraction in becoming the wife of a noted hunter. As the duties of a mother were thought to be paramount to all other considerations, she led by the hand her children, whose presence should emphasize her position.

"You see me before you, cruel paleface," the woman commenced ; "your spirit must tell you my errand. I have found *you* ; I cannot find Le Loup Cervier, nor the Panther ; I have looked for them in the lake, in the woods, in the clouds. I cannot say where they have gone. Cruel paleface, what had my warriors done that you should slay them ? They were the best hunters and the boldest young men of their tribe ; the Great Spirit intended that they should live until they withered like the branches of the hemlock, and fell of their own weight."

"Nay, nay, good Sumach," interrupted Deerslayer, "this is a little outdoing redskin privileges. Young man

was neither, any more than you can be called a young woman ; and as to the Great Spirit's intending that they should fall otherwise than they did, that's a grievous mistake, inasmuch as what the Great Spirit intends is certain to come to pass. Then, agin, it's plain enough that though neither of your warriors did me any harm, I raised my hand against them on account of what they were *striving* to do, which amounts to the same thing."

"It is so. Sumach has but one tongue ; she can tell but one story. The paleface struck the Hurons, lest the Hurons should strike him. The Hurons are a just nation ; they will forget it. The chiefs will shut their eyes, and pretend not to have seen it. The young men will believe the Panther and the Lynx have gone to far-off hunts ; and the Sumach will take her children by the hand, and go into the lodge of the paleface, and say, ' See ! these are *your* children — they are also mine ; feed us, and we will live with you.' "

"The tarms are onadmissible, woman ; and though I feel for your losses, which must be hard to bear, the tarms cannot be accepted. As to givin' you ven'son, in case we lived near enough together, that would be no great explite ; but as for becomin' your husband, and the father of your children, to be honest with you, I feel no callin' that-away."

"Look at this boy, cruel paleface ; he has no father to teach him to kill the deer, or to take scalps. See this girl ; what young man will come to look for a wife in a lodge that has no head ? There are more among my people in the Canadas, and the Killer of Deer will find as many mouths to feed as his heart can wish for."

"I tell you, woman," exclaimed Deerslayer, "all this is nothing to me. People and kindred must take care of their own fatherless, leaving them that have no children to their own loneliness. As for me, I have no offspring, and I want no wife. Now, go away, Sumach; leave me in the hands of your chiefs; for my color, and gifts, and natur' itself, cry out agin the idee of taking you for a wife."

It is unnecessary to expatiate on the effect of this downright refusal of the woman's proposals. Fury, rage, mortified pride, and a volcano of wrath, burst out at one explosion, converting her into a sort of maniac, as it might be at the touch of a magician's wand. Without deigning a reply in words, she made the arches of the forest ring with screams, and then flew forward at her victim, seizing him by the hair, which she appeared resolute to draw out by the roots. It was some time before her grasp could be loosened. Fortunately for the prisoner her rage was blind, since his total helplessness left him entirely at her mercy. As it was, she did succeed in wrenching out two or three handfuls of hair before the young men could tear her away from her victim.

The insult that had been offered to the Sumach was deemed an insult to the whole tribe; not so much, however, on account of any respect that was felt for the woman as on account of the honor of the Huron nation. The young men showed an impatience to begin the torture, and Rivenoak gave the signal for the infernal work to begin.

## CHAPTER III

No sooner did the young men understand that they were at liberty to commence, than some of the boldest and most forward among them sprang into the arena, tomahawk in hand. Here they prepared to throw that dangerous weapon, the object being to strike the tree as near as possible to the victim's head without absolutely hitting him. This was so hazardous an experiment that none but those who were known to be exceedingly expert with the weapon were allowed to enter the lists at all, lest an early death might interfere with the expected entertainment.

The first youth who presented himself for the trial was called the Raven. After a suitable number of flourishes and gesticulations the Raven let the tomahawk quit his hand. The weapon whirled through the air, with the usual evolutions, cut a chip from the sapling to which the prisoner was bound, within a few inches of his cheek, and stuck in a large oak that grew several yards behind him. This was decidedly a bad effort, and a common sneer proclaimed as much, to the great mortification of the young man. On the other hand, there was a general but suppressed murmur of admiration at the steadiness with which the captive stood the trial. The head was the only part he could move, and this had been purposely left free, that the tormentors might have the amusement, and the tormented endure the shame, of dodging, and otherwise attempting to avoid the blows. Deerslayer disappointed these hopes, by a command of nerve that rendered his whole body as immovable as the tree to which he was bound. Nor did he even adopt the natural and usual expedient of shutting his

eyes, — the firmest and oldest warrior of the red-men never having more disdainfully denied himself this advantage, under similar circumstances.

The Raven had no sooner made his unsuccessful and puerile effort than he was succeeded by the Moose, a middle-aged warrior. He took his stand quietly, but with an air of confidence, poised his little axe but a single instant, advanced a foot with a quick motion, and threw. Deerslayer saw the keen instrument whirling towards him, and believed all was over; still he was not touched. The tomahawk had actually bound the head of the captive to the tree, by carrying before it some of his hair; having buried itself deep beneath the soft bark. A general yell expressed the delight of the spectators, and the Moose felt his heart soften a little towards the prisoner, whose steadiness of nerve alone enabled him to give this evidence of his consummate skill.

The Moose was succeeded by the Bounding Boy, as one of the youths was always called because of his antics. He skipped about in front of the captive, menacing him with his tomahawk, now on one side and now on another and then again in front, in the vain hope of being able to extort some sign of fear by this parade of danger. At length Deerslayer's patience became exhausted, and he spoke for the first time since the trial had actually commenced.

“Throw away, Huron!” he cried, “or your tomahawk will forget its arr'nd. Why do you keep loping about like a faan that's showing its dam how well it can skip, when you're a warrior grown, yourself, and a warrior grown defies you and all your silly antics? Throw, or the Huron gals will laugh in your face.”

The last words aroused the " Bounding " warrior to fury. The same nervous excitability which rendered him so active in his person made it difficult to repress his feelings, and the words were scarcely past the lips of the speaker than the tomahawk left the hand of the Indian. Nor was it cast without good-will, and a fierce determination to slay. Had the intention been less deadly, the danger might have been greater. The aim was uncertain, and the weapon glanced near the cheek of the captive, slightly cutting the shoulder in its evolutions. This was the first instance in which any other object than that of terrifying the prisoner and of displaying skill had been manifested; and the Bounding Boy was immediately led from the arena, and was warmly rebuked for his intemperate haste, which had come so near defeating all the hopes of the band.

To this irritable person succeeded several other young warriors, who not only hurled the tomahawk, but who cast the knife — a far more dangerous experiment — with reckless indifference; yet they always manifested a skill that prevented any injury to the captive. Several times Deerslayer was grazed, but in no instance did he receive what might be termed a wound. The unflinching firmness with which he faced his assailants, more especially in the sort of rally with which this trial terminated, excited a profound respect in the spectators; and when the chiefs announced that the prisoner had well withstood the trials of the knife and the tomahawk, there was not a single individual in the band who really felt any hostility towards him, with the exception of Sumach and the Bounding Boy.

Rivenoak, who still cherished a hope that the celebrated hunter might be saved to become a member of the tribe,



now told his people that the paleface had proved himself a man, and wished to know whether it was the desire of the Hurons to proceed any further. Even the gentlest of the females, however, had received too much satisfaction in the late trials to forego their expectations of a gratifying exhibition; and there was but one voice in the request to proceed. The chief therefore called four or five of the best marksmen to him and bid them put the captive to the proof of the rifle, while, at the same time, he cautioned them touching the necessity of their maintaining their own credit, by the closest attention to the manner of exhibiting their skill.

When Deerslayer saw the chosen warriors step into the circle, with their arms prepared for service, he felt some such relief as the miserable sufferer who has long endured the agonies of disease feels at the certain approach of death. Any trifling variance in the aim of this formidable weapon would prove fatal; since, the head being the target, or rather the point it was desired to graze without injury, an inch or two of difference in the line of projection must at once determine the question of life or death. He now fully expected the end of his career, and experienced a sort of melancholy pleasure in the idea that he was to fall by a weapon as much beloved as the rifle. A slight interruption, however, took place before the business was allowed to proceed.

Hetty Hutter, who, the reader will remember, had come ashore with Deerslayer, and had since that time been in her accustomed place with the females of the party, had been a puzzled spectator of all that had passed. The present scene at first had pressed upon her feeble mind in a

way to paralyze it entirely ; but by this time she had rallied, and was growing indignant at the unmerited suffering the Indians were inflicting on her friend. She now appeared in the circle and spoke earnestly.

“Why do you torment Deerslayer, red-men?” she asked. “Suppose one of your knives or tomahawks had hit him ; what Indian among you could cure the wound you would make?”

The Hurons listened with grave attention, and when the speech had been interpreted to them, Rivenoak answered her.

“My daughter is very welcome to speak,” said the stern old orator, using gentle intonations, and smiling as kindly as if addressing a child ; “the Hurons are glad to hear her voice ; they listen to what she says. But this time her eyes have not been open wide enough to see all that has happened. Two of my warriors have fallen by the blows of our prisoner ; their grave is too small to hold a third. The Hurons do not like to crowd their dead. If there is another spirit about to set out for the far-off world, it must not be the spirit of a Huron ; it must be the spirit of a paleface. Go, daughter, and sit by Sumach, who is in grief : let the Huron warriors show how well they can shoot ; let the paleface show how little he cares for their bullets.”

Hetty's mind was unequal to a sustained discussion, and, accustomed to defer to the directions of her seniors, she did as told, seating herself passively on a log by the side of the Sumach and averting her face from the painful scene that was occurring within the circle.

The warriors, as soon as this interruption had ceased, resumed their places, and again prepared to exhibit their

skill. This time the marksmen stood several yards nearer their victim. In diminishing the distance taken by the tormentors, the trial to the nerves of the captive was essentially increased. The face of Deerslayer, indeed, was just removed sufficiently from the ends of the guns to escape the effects of the flash, and his steady eye was enabled to look directly into their muzzles, as it might be in anticipation of the fatal messenger that was to issue from each. The cunning Hurons well knew this fact ; and scarce one leveled his piece without first causing it to point as near as possible at the forehead of the prisoner, in the hope that his fortitude would fail him, and that the band would enjoy the triumph of seeing a victim quail under their ingenious cruelty. Nevertheless, each of the competitors was still careful not to injure ; the disgrace of striking prematurely being second only to that of failing altogether in attaining the object. Shot after shot was made ; all the bullets coming in close proximity to the Deerslayer's head without touching it. Still, no one could detect even the twitching of a muscle on the part of the captive or the slightest winking of an eye. This indomitable resolution, which so much exceeded everything of its kind that any present had before witnessed, might be referred to three distinct causes. The first was resignation to his fate, blended with natural steadiness of deportment ; for our hero had calmly made up his mind that he must die and preferred this mode to any other ; the second was his great familiarity with this particular weapon, which deprived it of all the terror that is usually connected with the mere form of the danger ; and the third was this familiarity carried out in practice, to a degree so nice as to

enable the intended victim to tell, within an inch, the precise spot where each bullet must strike, for he calculated its range by looking in at the bore of the piece. So exact was Deerslayer's estimation of the line of fire, that his pride of feeling finally got the better of his resignation, and, when five or six had discharged their bullets into the trees, he could not refrain from expressing his contempt at their want of hand and eye.

"You may call this shooting, Mingos," he exclaimed, "but we've squaws among the Delawares, and I have known Dutch gals on the Mohawk, that could outdo your greatest indivors. Ondo these arms of mine, put a rifle into my hands, and I'll pin the thinnest warlock in your party to any tree you can show me ; and this at a hundred yards, — aye, or at two hundred, if the object can be seen, nineteen shots in twenty : or, for that matter, twenty in twenty, if the piece is creditable and trusty !"

A low, menacing murmur followed this cool taunt ; the ire of the warriors kindled at listening to such a reproach from one who so far disdained their efforts as to refuse even to wink when a rifle was discharged as near his face as could be done without burning it. Rivenoak perceived that the moment was critical, and, still retaining his hope of adopting so noted a hunter into his tribe, the politic old chief interposed in time, probably, to prevent an immediate resort to that portion of the torture which must necessarily have produced death, through extreme bodily suffering, if in no other manner. Moving into the centre of the irritated group, he addressed them with his usual wily logic and plausible manner, at once suppressing the fierce movement that had commenced.

"I see how it is," he said. "We have been like the palefaces when they fasten their doors at night, out of fear of the red-man. They use so many bars, that the fire comes and burns them before they can get out. We have bound the Deerslayer too tight; the thongs keep his limbs from shaking, and his eyes from shutting. Loosen him; let us see what his own body is really made of."

The proposal of the chief found instant favor; and several hands were immediately at work cutting and tearing the ropes of bark from the body of our hero. In half a minute Deerslayer stood as free from bonds as when, an hour before, he had commenced his flight on the side of the mountain. Some little time was necessary that he should recover the use of his limbs, the circulation of the blood having been checked by the tightness of the ligatures; and this was accorded to him. It is seldom men think of death in the pride of their health and strength. So it was with Deerslayer. Having been helplessly bound, and, as he had every reason to suppose, so lately on the very verge of the other world, to find himself so unexpectedly liberated, in possession of his strength, and with a full command of limb, acted on him like a sudden restoration to life, reanimating hopes that he had once absolutely abandoned. From that instant all his plans changed. In this he simply obeyed a law of nature; for while we have wished to represent our hero as being resigned to his fate, it has been far from our intention to represent him as anxious to die. From the instant that his buoyancy of feeling revived, his thoughts were keenly bent on the various projects that presented themselves as modes of evading the designs of his enemies; and he again became the

quick-witted, ingenious, and determined woodsman, alive to all his own powers and resources.

The warriors were meanwhile making preparations for the commencement of the real tortures, or that which would put the fortitude of the sufferer to the test of severe bodily pain, when a sudden and unlooked-for announcement that proceeded from one of the lookouts, a boy ten or twelve years old, put a momentary check to the whole proceedings.

#### CHAPTER IV

It required but a minute or two to bring an explanation of the singular and mysterious pause, caused by the coming in of the lookout, for it was soon terminated by the appearance of Judith. If Deerslayer was startled by this unexpected arrival, well knowing that the quick-witted girl could claim none of that exemption from the penalties of captivity that was so cheerfully accorded to her feeble-minded sister, he was equally astonished at the guise in which she came. All her ordinary forest attire, neat and becoming as this usually was, had been laid aside for the brocade which had been found at the opening of the chest. Accustomed to see the ladies of the garrison in the formal gala attire of the day, and familiar with the more critical niceties of these matters, the girl had managed to complete her dress in a way to leave nothing strikingly defective in its details. Nor was this all. Judith, in addition to her rare beauty, had a singular grace of person, which enabled her to carry herself with a dignity of bearing that accorded well with her costume.

The effect of such an apparition had not been miscalculated. The instant Judith found herself within the circle,

she was, in a degree, compensated for the fearful personal risk she ran, by the unequivocal sensation of surprise and admiration produced by her appearance. The grim old warriors uttered their favorite exclamation, "Hugh!" The younger men were still more sensibly overcome, and even the women were not backward in letting open manifestations of pleasure escape them. It was seldom that these untutored children of the forest had ever seen any white female above the commonest sort, and as to dress, never before had so much splendor shone before their eyes. The gayest uniforms of both French and English seemed dull compared with the lustre of the brocade; and while the rare personal beauty of the wearer added to the effect produced by its hues, the attire did not fail to adorn that beauty in a way which surpassed even the hopes of its wearer. Deerslayer himself was astounded, and this quite as much by the brilliant picture the girl presented, as at the indifference to consequences with which she had braved the danger of the step she had taken.

The quick eye of Judith at once detected, by Rivenoak's position in the circle and his bearing, that he was the chief, and striving to impart to her manner an air of condescending courtesy she approached him, saying,

"This is the principal person of the party? It is to you, then, I must make my communication."

"Let the Flower of the Woods speak," returned the old chief, courteously, as soon as her address had been translated so that all might understand it. "If her words are as pleasant as her looks, they will never quit my ears; I shall hear them long after the winter in Canada has killed the flowers, and frozen all the speeches of summer."

"Now, Huron," she continued, "listen to my words. Your eyes tell you that I am no common woman. I will not say I am queen of this country; *she* is afar off, in a distant land; but under our gracious monarchs there are many degrees of rank; one of these I fill. What that rank is precisely it is unnecessary for me to say, since you would not understand it. For that information you must trust your eyes. You *see* what I am; you must *feel* that in listening to my words, you listen to one who can be your friend or your enemy, as you treat her."

"My daughter is handsomer than the wild roses of Ontario; her voice is pleasant to the ear as the song of the wren," answered the cautious and wily chief, who of all the band stood alone in not being fully imposed on by the magnificent and unusual appearance of Judith; but who distrusted even while he wondered; "the humming-bird is not much larger than the bee; yet its feathers are as gay as the tail of the peacock. The Great Spirit sometimes puts very bright clothes on very little animals. Still, he covers the moose with coarse hair. These things are beyond the understanding of poor Indians, who can only comprehend what they see and hear. No doubt my daughter has a very large wigwam somewhere about the lake; the Hurons have not found it on account of their ignorance?"

"I have told you, chief, that it would be useless to state my rank and residence, inasmuch as you would not comprehend them. You must trust to your eyes for this knowledge; what red-man is there that cannot see? This blanket that I wear is not the blanket of a common squaw; these ornaments are such as the wives and daughters of chiefs only appear in. Now listen and hear why I have



come alone among your people, and hearken to the errand that has brought me here. The Yengeese have young men as well as the Hurons ; and plenty of them, too ; this you well know."

"The Yengeese are as plenty as the leaves on the trees ! This every Huron knows and feels."

"I understand you, chief. Had I brought a party with me it might have caused trouble. My young men and your young men would have looked angrily at each other ; especially had my young men seen that paleface bound for the tortures. He is a great hunter, and is much loved by all the garrisons, far and near. There would have been blows about him, and the trail of the Iroquois back to the Canadas would have been marked with blood."

"There is so much blood on it now," returned the chief, gloomily, "that it blinds our eyes. My young men see that it is all Huron."

"No doubt ; and more Huron blood would be spilt, had I come surrounded with palefaces. I have heard of Riven-oak, and have thought it would be better to send him back in peace to his village, that he might leave his women and children behind him ; if he then wished to come for our scalps, we would meet him. But I will lead back with me this great hunter, of whom I have need to keep my house in venison."

"This hunter cannot quit my young men now ; they wish to know if he is stout-hearted," returned the crafty chief. "I hear a strange bird singing. It has very rich feathers. No Huron ever before saw such feathers. They will be ashamed to go back to their village and tell their people that they let their prisoner go on account of the

song of this strange bird, and not be able to give the *name* of the bird. They do not know how to say whether it is a wren or a cat-bird. This would be a great disgrace ; my young men would not be allowed to travel in the woods, without taking their mothers with them to tell them the names of the birds."

"You can ask my name of your prisoner," returned the girl. "It is Judith ; and there is a great deal of the history of Judith in the palefaces' best book, the Bible. If I am a bird of fine feathers, I have also my name."

"No," answered the wily Huron, betraying the artifice he had so long practiced, by speaking in English, with tolerable accuracy ; "I not ask prisoner. He tired ; he want rest. I ask my daughter, with feeble-mind. She speak truth. Come here, daughter ; you answer. *Your* name Hetty ?"

"Yes, that's what they call me," returned the girl, "though it's written Esther in the Bible."

"He write *him* in Bible, too ? All write in Bible. No matter — what *her* name ?"

"That's Judith, and it's so written in the Bible, though father sometimes called her Jude. That's my sister Judith, Thomas Hutter's daughter — Thomas Hutter, whom you called the Muskrat ; though he was *no* muskrat, but a man, like yourselves — he lived in a house on the water, and that was enough for *you*."

A smile of triumph gleamed on the hard, wrinkled countenance of the chief, when he found how completely his appeal to the truth-loving Hetty had succeeded. As for Judith herself, the moment her sister was questioned, she saw that all was lost ; for no sign, or even treaty,

could have induced the right-feeling girl to utter a falsehood. As Judith had sat in the castle revolving schemes by which she might aid the prisoner, his words spoken when he first saw her in the brocade, that he knew no better way to treat the Mingos than to send her ashore and tell them a queen had come, had flashed into her mind, and she had adopted as a last hope this bold and ingenious expedient. Now she saw her plan fail through the simplest of causes.

"It will not do," said Deerslayer, sympathetically, as she turned to him with a gesture of despair. "'T was a bold idee, and fit for a general's lady; but yonder Mingo" — Rivenoak had withdrawn to a little distance, and was out of ear-shot — "but yonder Mingo is an oncommon man, and not to be deceived by any unnat'ral sarcumventions. I wish you were safe out of the camp, Judith, though I appreciate your generosity in running such a risk. But I fear for you, Judith. I fear for you."

"At all events I can share your fate, Deerslayer," replied the girl, earnestly, "and perhaps my presence here will save you for a time."

At this moment the consultation of the Indians broke up, and Rivenoak faced his captive again, though this time with an altered countenance. He had abandoned the wish of saving him, and was no longer disposed to retard the more serious part of the torture. The young men were already making preparations. Fragments of dried wood were rapidly collected near the sapling, the splinters which it was intended to thrust into the flesh of the victim, previously to lighting, were all collected, and warriors advanced and bound him to the tree.

It was not the intention of the Hurons absolutely to destroy the life of their victim by means of fire. They designed merely to put his physical fortitude to the severest proofs it could endure, short of that extremity. In the end, they fully intended to carry his scalp with them into their village, but it was their wish first to break down his resolution, and to reduce him to the level of a complaining sufferer.

The fire was lighted, and the flames began to wave their forked tongues in dangerous proximity to the victim when a young Indian came bounding through the Huron ranks, leaping into the very centre of the circle. Three leaps carried the warrior to the side of Deerslayer, and it took but a moment for him to scatter the burning brands and cut the withes that bound him. In the first dash, it had been impossible to tell whether the new-comer was friend or foe. Now he turned and showed the astonished Hurons the noble brow, fine person, and eagle eye of a young warrior, in the paint and panoply of a Delaware. He held a rifle in each hand, the butts of both resting on the earth, while from one dangled its proper pouch and horn. The reader will have already surmised that the Delaware was Chingachgook, and that the second weapon which he bore was Killdeer, which even as he looked boldly and in defiance on the crowd around him, he suffered to fall back into the hands of the proper owner. The presence of two armed men, though it was in their midst, startled the Hurons. Their rifles were scattered about against the different trees, and their only weapons were their knives and tomahawks. The rapidity of events had prevented the Hurons from acting; but in a twinkling of an eye

the whole party was in motion. At this instant, however, a sound unusual to the woods was heard, and every Huron, male and female, paused to listen, with ears erect and faces filled with expectation. The sound was regular and heavy, as if the earth were struck with blows. Objects became visible among the trees of the background, and a body of troops was seen advancing with measured tread. They came upon the charge, the scarlet of the king's livery shining among the bright green foliage of the forest.

The scene that followed is not easily described. It was one in which wild confusion, despair, and frenzied efforts were blended. A general yell burst from the inclosed Hurons; it was succeeded by the hearty cheers of England. Still not a musket or rifle was fired, though that steady, measured tramp continued, and the bayonet was seen gleaming in advance of a line that counted nearly sixty men. The Hurons were taken at a fearful disadvantage. On three sides was the water, while their formidable and trained foes cut them off from flight on the fourth. Each warrior rushed for his arms, and then all on the point, man, woman, and child, eagerly sought the covers. In this scene of confusion and dismay, however, nothing could surpass the discretion and coolness of Deerslayer. His first care was to place Judith and Hist, who had followed her lover unnoticed in his bold entrance to the camp, behind trees, and he looked for Hetty; but she had been hurried away in the crowd of Huron women. This effected, he threw himself on a flank of the retiring Hurons, who were inclining off towards the southern margin of the point, in the hope of escaping through the water. Still

the troops advanced with a heavy, measured, and menacing tread. Presently the shrieks, groans, and denunciations that usually accompany the use of the bayonet, followed. That terrible and deadly weapon was glutted in vengeance. The scene that succeeded was one of those of which so many have occurred in our own times, in which neither age nor sex forms an exemption to the lot of a savage warfare.

#### CHAPTER V

Night shortly after drew its veil over the horrible picture presented in our last chapter, and when the sun rose on the following morning, every sign of hostility and alarm had vanished from the basin of the Glimmerglass. The frightful event of the preceding evening had left no impression on the placid sheet. The birds were again skimming the water, or were seen poised on the wing high above the tops of the tallest pines of the mountains. In a word, nothing was changed but the air of movement and life that prevailed in and around the castle. A sentinel, who wore the light infantry uniform of a royal regiment, paced the platform with measured tread, and some twenty men of the same corps lounged about the place, or were seated in the ark. Their arms were stacked under the eye of their comrade on post. Two officers stood examining the shore with the ship's glass so often mentioned. Their looks were directed to that fatal point where scarlet coats were still to be seen gliding among the trees, and where the magnifying power of the instrument also showed spades at work and the sad duty of interment going on. Several of the common men bore proof on their persons

that their enemies had not been overcome entirely without resistance ; and the youngest of the two officers on the platform wore an arm in a sling.

At a little distance from the soldiers Rivenoak could be seen, seated in dignified silence, his head and leg bound in such a manner as to indicate that he was injured, but betraying no visible signs of despondency or despair. That he mourned the loss of his tribe is certain ; still, he did it in a manner that best became a warrior and a chief.

But our interest is not in the soldiers or even in the few surviving Indians, but rather in a sad scene that is taking place within the castle. When the assault was over, poor Hetty had been found among the wounded, and now she lay upon her own simple bed, with the approaches of death plainly visible on her countenance. Judith and Hist were near her, the former seated in deep grief, the latter standing, in readiness to offer any of the gentle attentions of feminine care. Deerslayer stood at the end of the pallet, leaning on Killdeer, unharmed in person ; all the fine, martial ardor that had so lately glowed in his countenance having given place to an expression of manly regret and pity. The Serpent was in the background of the picture, erect and motionless as a statue ; and Hurry completed the group, being seated on a stool near the door, like one who felt himself out of place in such a scene, but who was ashamed to quit it unbidden.

An officer entered the room for a moment.

" Who is that in scarlet ? " asked Hetty, as soon as the captain's uniform caught her eye. " Tell me, Judith, is it the friend of Hurry ? "

" 'T is the officer who commands the troops that have

rescued us all from the hands of the Hurons," was the low answer of the sister.

"Are you the officer that came with Hurry?" Hetty asked. "If you are, we ought all to thank you; for though I am hurt, the rest have saved their lives. Did Harry March tell you where to find us, and how much need there was for your services?"

"The news of the party reached us by means of a friendly runner," returned the captain; "and I was immediately sent out to cut it off. It was fortunate, certainly, that we met Hurry Harry, as you call him, for he acted as a guide; and it was not less fortunate that we heard a firing, which I now understand was merely a shooting at the mark, for it not only quickened our march, but called us to the right side of the lake."

Hetty's mind now reverted to the future.

"We shall not long be parted, Judith," she said; "when *you* die, you must be brought and buried in the lake, by the side of mother, too."

"Would to God, Hetty, that I lay there at this moment!"

"No; that cannot be, Judith; people must die before they have any right to be buried. 'T would be wicked to bury you, or for you to bury yourself while living."

Judith hid her face in her hands and groaned.

"Don't grieve for me so much, Judith," said the gentle sufferer, after a pause in her remarks; "I shall soon see mother; I think I see her *now*; her face is just as sweet and smiling as it used to be! Perhaps when I'm dead, God will give me all my mind, and I shall become a more fitting companion for mother than I ever was before."



"You will be an angel in heaven, Hetty," sobbed the sister; "no spirit there will be more worthy of its holy residence!"

"I don't understand it quite; still I know it must be all true; I've read it in the Bible. How dark it's becoming! Can it be night so soon? I can hardly see you at all; where is Hist?"

"I here, poor girl; why you no see me?"

"I do see you; but I could n't tell whether 't was you or Judith. I believe I shan't see you much longer, Hist."

"Sorry for that, poor Hetty. Never mind; paleface got a heaven for girl as well as for warrior."

"Where's the Serpent? Let me speak to him; give me his hand; so; I feel it. Delaware, you will love and cherish this young Indian woman; I know how fond she is of *you*; and you must be fond of *her*. Don't treat her as some people treat their wives; be a real husband to her. Now bring Deerslayer near me — give me *his* hand."

This request was complied with, and the hunter stood by the side of the pallet, submitting to the wishes of the girl with the docility of a child.

"I feel, Deerslayer," she resumed, "though I could n't tell why — but I feel that you and I are not going to part forever. 'T is a strange feeling! I never had it before; I wonder what it comes from!"

"'T is God encouraging you in extremity, Hetty; as such it ought to be harbored and respected. Yes, we *shall* meet agin, though it may be a long time first, and in a far distant land."

"Do you mean to be buried in the lake, too? If so, that may account for the feeling."

"'T is little likely, gal ; 't is little likely ; but there 's a region for Christian souls where there 's no lakes nor woods, they say ; though why there should be none of the *last* is more than I can account for ; seeing that pleasantness and peace is the object in view. My grave will be found in the forest, most likely, but I hope my spirit will not be far from your'n."

"So it must be, then. I am too weak-minded to understand these things, but I *feel* that you and I will meet again. Sister, where are you ? I can't see now anything but darkness. It must be night, surely !"

"Oh Hetty, I am here at your side ; these are my arms that are round you," sobbed Judith. "Speak, dearest ; is there anything you wish to say, or have done, in this awful moment ?"

By this time Hetty's sight had entirely failed her. Nevertheless, death approached with less than usual of its horrors, as if in tenderness to one of her half-endowed faculties. She was pale as a corpse, but her breathing was easy and unbroken, while her voice, though lowered almost to a whisper, remained clear and distinct. When her sister put this question, she roused herself a little, and Judith, thinking she understood her wish, bent nearer.

"Hurry is here, dearest Hetty," whispered the sister. "Shall I tell him to come and receive your good wishes ?"

A gentle pressure of the hand answered in the affirmative, — and then Hurry was brought to the side of the pallet. It is probable that this handsome but rude woodsman had never before found himself so awkwardly placed. He allowed Judith to put his big hard hand between those of Hetty, and stood waiting the result in awkward silence.

"This is Hurry, dearest," whispered Judith, bending over her sister; "speak to him, and let him go."

"Good-by, Hurry," murmured the girl, with a gentle pressure of his hand. "I wish you would try and be more like Deerslayer."

These words were uttered with difficulty; a faint flush succeeded them for a single instant, then the hand was relinquished, and Hetty turned her face aside as if done with the world.

"Of what are you thinking, my sweet sister?" whispered Judith. "Tell me, that I may aid you at this moment."

"Mother — I see mother, now, and bright beings around her in the lake. Why is n't father there? It's odd that I can see mother when I can't see *you!* Farewell, Judith."

The last words were uttered after a pause, and her sister had hung over her some time, in anxious watchfulness, before she perceived that the gentle spirit had departed. Thus died Hetty Hutter, one of those mysterious links between the material and immaterial world, which, while they appear to be deprived of so much that is esteemed and necessary for this state of being, draw so near to, and offer so beautiful an illustration of, the truth, purity, and simplicity of another.

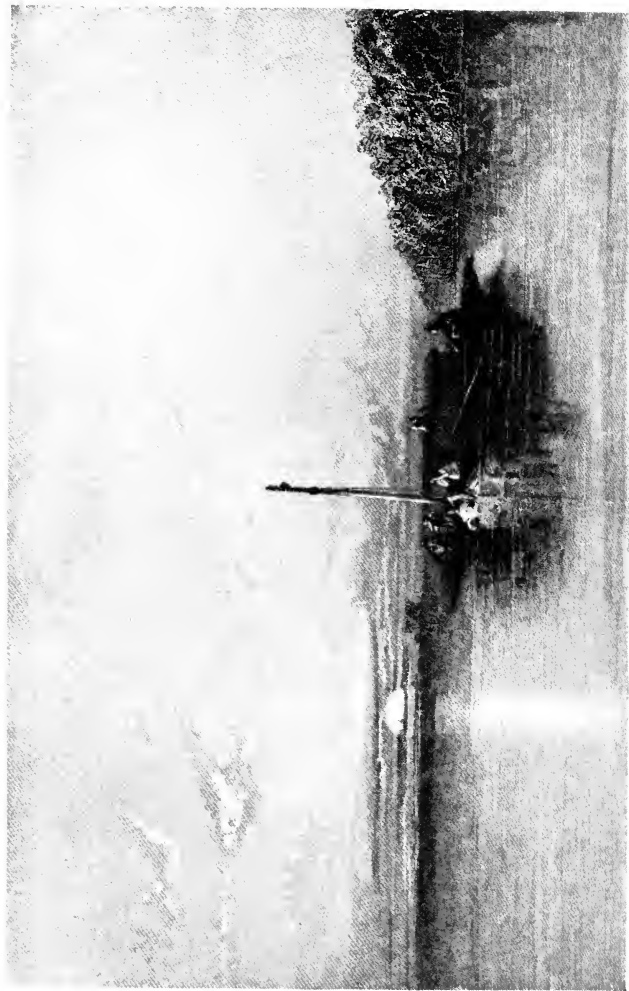
## CHAPTER VI

The day that followed proved to be melancholy, though one of much activity. The soldiers, who had so lately been employed in interring their victims, were now called on to

bury their own dead. Hour dragged on after hour until evening arrived, and then came the last melancholy offices in honor of poor Hetty Hutter. Her body was laid in the lake by the side of that of the mother she had so loved and revered; and the simple rites of Christian burial were performed by the officer in command. The tears of Judith and Hist were shed freely, and Deerslayer gazed upon the limpid water, that now flowed over one whose spirit was even purer than its own mountain springs, with glistening eyes. Even the Delaware turned aside to conceal his weakness, while the common men gazed on the ceremony with wondering eyes and chastened feelings.

The business of the day closed with this pious office. It was intended to begin the march homewards with the return of light. One party indeed, bearing the wounded, the prisoners, and the trophies, had left the castle in the middle of the day, under the guidance of Hurry, intending to reach the fort by shorter marches. The rattling of the drum broke the silence of the tranquil lake as soon as the ceremony was over, and one solitary sentinel paced the platform throughout the night.

With the morning the party began its movement towards the shore. The soldiers embarked in the ark, and by the wish of Judith, Chingachgook and Deerslayer were left to take the two girls ashore in the canoes. Judith had held no communication with anyone but Hist, after the death of her sister, and all had respected her sorrow. Now Hist entered one canoe, where the Delaware immediately joined her, and paddled away, leaving Judith standing alone on the platform. Owing to this prompt proceeding Deerslayer found himself alone with the beautiful and



THE BURIAL OF HETTY HUTTER



still weeping mourner. The young man swept the light boat round, and received its mistress in it, when he followed the course already taken by his friend.

The direction to the point led diagonally past, and at no great distance from, the graves of the dead. As the canoe glided by, Judith, for the first time that morning, spoke to her companion. She said but little, — merely uttering a simple request to stop for a minute or two, ere she left the place.

“ I may never see this spot again, Deerslayer,” she said, “ and it contains the bodies of my mother and sister ! ”

The girl gazed a minute in silent attention ; then she turned her eyes backward, at the castle.

“ This lake will soon be entirely deserted,” she said, “ and this, too, at a moment when it will be a more secure dwelling-place than ever. What has so lately happened will prevent the Iroquois from venturing again to visit it for a long time to come.”

“ That it will ! — yes, that may be set down as settled. I do not mean to pass this-a-way agin, so long as the war lasts ; for, to my mind, no Huron moccasin will leave its print on the leaves of this forest, until their traditions have forgotten to tell their young men of their disgrace and rout.”

“ Deerslayer,” said Judith, after a considerable pause, her cheeks flushed and her eyes lighted with some of their former brilliancy, “ this is not a moment for affectation, deception, or a want of frankness of any sort. Here, over my mother’s grave, and over the grave of truth-loving, truth-telling Hetty, everything like unfair dealing seems to be out of place. I will therefore speak to you without

any reserve, and without any dread of being misunderstood. You are an acquaintance of not a week, but it appears to me as if I had known you for years. So much, and so much that is important, has taken place within that short time, that the sorrows, and dangers, and escapes of a whole life have been crowded into a few days; and they who have suffered and acted together in such scenes ought not to feel like strangers. I know that what I am about to say might be misunderstood by most men, but I hope for a generous construction of my course from you. We are not here dwelling among the arts and deceptions of the settlements, but young people who have no occasion to deceive each other, in any manner or form. I hope I make myself understood?"

"Sartain, Judith; few converse better than yourself, and none more agreeable-like. Your words are as pleasant as your looks."

"Still, Deerslayer, it is not easy for one of my sex and years to forget all her lessons of infancy, all her habits, and her natural diffidence, and say openly what her heart feels!"

"Why not, Judith? Why should n't women as well as men deal fairly and honestly by their fellow-creatur's? I see no reason why you should not speak as plainly as myself, when there is anything raally important to be said."

"I will — I *must* deal as plainly with you, as I would with poor, dear Hetty, were that sweet child living!" she continued, turning pale; "yes, I will smother all other feelings, in the one that is now uppermost! You love the woods and the life that we pass, here, in the wilderness, away from the dwellings and towns of the whites."



“As I loved my parents, Judith, when they was living! This very spot would be all creation to me, could this war be fairly over, once, and the settlers kept at a distance.”

“Why quit it, then? It has no owner — at least none who can claim a better right than mine, and *that* I freely give to you. Were it a kingdom, Deerslayer, I think I should delight to say the same. Let us then return to it, after we have seen the priest at the fort, and never quit it again, until God calls us away to that world where we shall find the spirits of my poor mother and sister.”

A long, thoughtful pause succeeded; Judith having covered her face with both her hands, after forcing herself to utter so plain a proposal, and Deerslayer musing equally in sorrow and surprise, on the meaning of the language he had just heard. At length the hunter broke the silence, speaking in a tone that was softened to gentleness by his desire not to offend.

“You have n’t thought well of this, Judith,” he said; “no, your feelin’s are awakened by all that has lately happened, and believin’ yourself to be without kindred in the world, you are in too great haste to find some to fill the places of them that’s lost.”

“Were I living in a crowd of friends, Deerslayer, I should still think as I now think, — say as I now say,” returned Judith, speaking with her hands still shading her lovely face.

“Thank you, gal — thank you from the bottom of my heart. Hows’ever, I am not one to take advantage of a weak moment, when you’re forgetful of your own great advantages, and fancy ’arth and all it holds is in this little canoe. No — no — Judith, ’t would be onginerous in me;

what you've offered can never come to pass! Forget it all, therefore, and let us paddle after the Sarpent and Hist, as if nothing had been said on the subject."

Judith was deeply mortified, and what is more, she was profoundly grieved. Still there was a steadiness and quiet in the manner of Deerslayer that calmed her.

"God forbid that we lay up regrets in after-life, through any want of sincerity now," she said. "I hope we understand each other at least. You will not accept me for a wife, Deerslayer?"

"'T is better for both that I should n't take advantage of your own forgetfulness, Judith. We can never marry."

"You do not love me, — cannot find it in your heart, perhaps, to esteem me, Deerslayer?"

"Everything in the way of fri'ndship, Judith — everything, even to sarvices and life itself. Yes, I'd risk as much for you, at this moment, as I would risk in behalf of Hist; and that is sayin' as much as I can say of any darter of woman. I do not think I feel towards either — mind I say *either*, Judith — as if I wished to quit father and mother — if father and mother was livin'; which, however, neither is — but if both was livin', I do not feel towards any woman as if I wish'd to quit 'em in order to cleave unto *her*."

"This is enough!" answered Judith, in a rebuked and smothered voice; "I understand all that you mean. Marry you cannot, without loving; and that love you do not feel for me. Make no answer if I am right, for I shall understand your silence. *That* will be painful enough of itself."

Deerslayer obeyed her, and he made no reply. For more

than a minute the girl waited. Then she dropped the end of her paddle, and urged the canoe away from the spot. Deerslayer quietly aided the effort, and they were soon on the trackless line taken by the Delaware.

In their way to the point, not another syllable was exchanged between Deerslayer and his fair companion. As neither labored hard at the paddle, the ark had already arrived and the soldiers had disembarked before the canoe of the two loiterers reached the point. Chingachgook had preceded it, and was already some distance in the wood, at a spot where the two trails, that to the garrison and that to the villages of the Delawares, separated. The soldiers, too, had taken up their line of march, first setting the ark adrift again. All this Judith saw, but she heeded it not. The Glimmerglass had no longer any charms for her; and when she put her foot on the strand, she immediately proceeded on the trail of the soldiers. Deerslayer would have escorted her to the soldiers, but when he had proceeded a hundred yards, she stopped.

"This will do, Deerslayer," she said, sadly. "I understand your kindness, but shall not need it. In a few minutes I shall reach the soldiers. As you cannot go with me on the journey of life, I do not wish you to go further on this. Farewell, and may all good fortune attend you, as you deserve that it shall."

With a gesture of adieu she signed to him to return, and buried herself in the woods. For some time Deerslayer was irresolute as to his course; but in the end, he retraced his steps and joined the Delaware. That night, the three "camped" on the head-waters of their own river, and the succeeding evening they entered

the village of the tribe — Chingachgook and his betrothed in triumph ; their companion honored and admired, but in a sorrow that it required months of activity to remove.

### EPILOGUE

Fifteen years had passed away ere it was in the power of Deerslayer, or Hawkeye, as he was then universally called, to revisit the Glimmerglass. In the war that had had its rise at the time of our narrative, his fame had spread far and near, until the crack of his rifle became as terrible to the ears of the Mingos as the thunders of the Manitou. The Delaware chief, too, had risen among his people, until his name was never mentioned without eulogiums ; while another Uncas, the last of his race, was added to the long line of warriors who bore that distinguished appellation.

A long peace had intervened, and now it was on the eve of another, and still more important war, when he and his constant friend, Chingachgook, were hastening to the forts to join their allies. They reached the lake just as the sun was setting. Here all was unchanged ; the river still rushed through its bower of trees ; the little rock was wasting away by the slow action of the waves in the course of centuries ; the mountains stood in their native dress, dark, rich, and mysterious ; while the sheet glistened in its solitude, a beautiful gem of the forest.

The following morning they discovered one of the canoes drifted on the shore, in a state of decay. A little labor put it in a state for service, and they embarked, with a desire to examine the remains of the castle which were

still visible, a picturesque ruin. The storms of winter had long since unroofed the house, and decay had eaten into the logs. All the fastenings were untouched, but the seasons rioted in the place, as if in mockery at the attempt to exclude them. The palisades were rotting, as were the piles; and it was evident that a few more recurrences of winter, a few more gales and tempests, would sweep all into the lake, and blot the building from the face of that magnificent solitude. The graves could not be found. Either the elements had obliterated their traces, or time had caused those who looked for them to forget their position.

The ark was discovered stranded on the eastern shore, where it had long before been driven, with the prevalent northwest winds. It lay on the sandy extremity of a long, low point, that was situated about two miles from the outlet, and which was itself fast disappearing before the action of the elements. The scow was filled with water, the cabin unroofed, and the logs were decaying. Some of its coarser furniture still remained, and the heart of Deerslayer beat quick as he found a ribbon of Judith's fluttering from a log. Although the girl had never touched his heart, the Hawkeye, for so we ought now to call him, still retained a kind and sincere interest in her welfare. It had been many years after their parting by the lake shore before Hawkeye visited the garrison. There he had made many inquiries, but had been unable to get any news of Judith. None knew her; after the lapse of years even her person was no longer remembered in the rapidly changing population of the frontier fort. Now he tore away the ribbon and knotted it to the stock of Killdeer, which had been the gift of the girl herself.

the

A few miles further up the lake another of the canoes was discovered ; and on the point where the party finally landed were found those which had been left there upon the shore. That in which the present navigation was made, and the one discovered on the eastern shore, had dropped through the decayed floor of the castle, drifted past the falling palisades, and had been thrown as waifs upon the beach.

From all these signs, it was probable the lake had not been visited since the occurrence of the final scene of our tale. Accident or tradition had rendered it again a spot sacred to nature ; the frequent wars, and the feeble population of the colonies, still confining the settlements within narrow boundaries. Chingachgook and his friend left the spot with melancholy feelings. It had been the region of their First War-Path, and it carried back the minds of both to scenes of tenderness as well as to hours of triumph. They held their way towards the Mohawk in silence, however, to rush into new adventures, as stirring and as remarkable as those which had attended their opening career on this lovely lake.

# APPENDIX

## I

### EXTRACTS FROM COOPER'S PREFACES

In this book the hero is represented as just arriving at manhood, with the freshness of feeling that belongs to that interesting period of life, and with the power to please that properly characterizes youth. As a consequence, he is loved; and, what denotes the real waywardness of humanity, more than it corresponds with theories and moral propositions, perhaps, he is loved by one full of art, vanity, and weakness, and loved principally for his sincerity, his modesty, and his unerring truth and probity. The preference he gives to the high qualities named, over beauty, delirious passion, and sin, it is hoped, will offer a lesson that can injure none. This portion of the book is intentionally kept down, though it is thought to be sufficiently distinct to convey its moral.

The intention has been to put the sisters in strong contrast; one, admirable in person, clever, filled with the pride of beauty, erring, and fallen; the other, barely provided with sufficient capacity to know good from evil, instinct, notwithstanding, with the virtues of woman, reverencing and loving God, and yielding only to the weakness of her sex, in admiring personal attractions in one too coarse and unobservant to distinguish or to understand her quiet, gentle feeling in his favor.

As for the scene of this tale, it is intended for, and believed to be, a close description of the Otsego, prior to the year 1760, when the first rude settlement was commenced on its banks, at that time only an insignificant clearing near the outlet, with a small hut of squared logs, for the temporary dwelling of the Deputy Superintendent of Indian affairs. The recollections of the writer carry him back distinctly to a time when nine-tenths of the shores of this lake were in

the virgin forest, a peculiarity that was owing to the circumstance of the roads running through the first range of valleys removed from the water side. The woods and the mountains have ever formed a principal source of beauty with this charming sheet of water, enough of the former remaining to this day to relieve the open grounds from monotony and tameness.

In most respects the descriptions of scenery in the tale are reasonably accurate. The rock appointed for the rendezvous between the Deerslayer and his friend the Delaware still remains, bearing the name of the Otsego Rock. The shoal on which Hutter is represented as having built his "castle" is a little misplaced, lying, in fact, nearer to the northern end of the lake, as well as to the eastern shore, than is stated in this book. Such a shoal, however, exists, surrounded on all sides by deep water. In the dryest season a few rocks are seen above the surface of the lake, and rushes, at most periods of the year, mark its locality. In a word, in all but precise position, even this feature of the book is accurate. The same is true of the several points introduced, — of the bay, of the river, of the mountains, and of all the other accessories of the place. The legend is purely fiction, no authority existing for any of its facts, characters, or other peculiarities, beyond that which was thought necessary to secure the semblance of reality.

The author has often been asked if he had any original in his mind for the character of Leatherstocking. In a physical sense, different individuals known to the writer in early life certainly presented themselves as models, through his recollections; but in a moral sense this man of the forest is purely a creation. The idea of delineating a character that possessed little of civilization but its highest principles as they are exhibited in the uneducated, and all of savage life that is not incompatible with these great rules of conduct, is perhaps natural to the situation in which Natty was placed. He is too proud of his origin to sink into the condition of the wild Indian, and too much a man of the woods not to imbibe as much as was at all desirable, from his friends and companions. In a moral point of view it was the intention to illustrate the effect of seed scattered by the wayside. To use his own language, his "gifts" were "white gifts," and he was not disposed to bring on them discredit.



On the other hand, removed from nearly all the temptations of civilized life, placed in the best associations of that which is deemed savage, and favorably disposed by nature to improve such advantages, it appeared to the writer that his hero was a fit subject to represent the better qualities of both conditions, without pushing either to extremes.

A leading character in a work of fiction has a fair right to the aid which can be obtained from a poetical view of the subject. It is in this view, rather than in one more strictly circumstantial, that *Leatherstocking* has been drawn. The imagination has no great task in portraying to itself a being removed from the every-day inducements to err, which abound in civilized life, while he retains the best and simplest of his early impressions; who sees God in the forest; hears Him in the winds; bows to Him in the firmament that o'ercanopies all; submits to his sway in a humble belief of his justice and mercy; in a word, a being who finds the impress of the Deity in all the works of nature, without any of the blots produced by the expedients, and passions, and mistakes of man. This is the most that has been attempted in the character of *Leatherstocking*. Had this been done without any of the drawbacks of humanity, the picture would have been, in all probability, more pleasing than just. In order to preserve the *vrai-semblable*, therefore, traits derived from the prejudices, tastes, and even the weaknesses of his youth, have been mixed up with these higher qualities and longings, in a way, it is hoped, to represent a reasonable picture of human nature, without offering to the spectator a "monster of goodness."

It has been objected to these books that they give a more favorable picture of the red-man than he deserves. It is the privilege of all writers of fiction, more particularly when their works aspire to the elevation of romances, to present the *beau-idéal* of their characters to the reader. This it is which constitutes poetry, and to suppose that the red-man is to be represented only in the squalid misery or in the degraded moral state that certainly more or less belongs to his condition, is, we apprehend, taking a very narrow view of an author's privileges. Such criticism would have deprived the world of even Homer.

## II

## IMPORTANT DATES IN COOPER'S LIFE

Born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789.

Family settled in Cooperstown, New York, in 1790, his childhood thus being passed on the shores of the beautiful Otsego Lake, which is the scene of our story.

Entered Yale College in 1802.

Spent the years from 1806 to 1811 at sea, which accounts for his nautical interest, shown in his descriptions of the ark and the castle.

Wrote "The Deerslayer" in 1841.

Died at Cooperstown, September 14, 1851.

## III

## THE PLOT OF "THE DEERSLAYER"

As has been indicated in the Preface, this novel lends itself to a most rewarding plot study, especially in this simplified form. Of the three unities of time and place and action, Cooper observed each with sufficient care, but was particularly zealous for an accurate basis of time. In order to bring this out more clearly the following analysis of the plot from the point of view of the time occupied and the exact manner in which it was spent, has been prepared. Unity of scene is also adhered to, the lake with its two dwellings, the shore, and the Indian camp being the only places between which the action shifts.

To study the unity of the action, which is as carefully worked out, if not as concise, as in any modern drama, the reader should make a brief synopsis of each of the six parts. Shorn of conversations and of incidents which contribute to the exposition of character but not to the progress of the story, — such as Judith's discovery that Hutter is not her real father, — the framework will stand out as plainly as that of a peaked house, with its ascending action until the climax,







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