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# THE PATHFINDER;

OR,

THE INLAND SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE PIONEERS,” “THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS,”  
“THE PRAIRIE,” ETC.

Here the heart  
May give a useful lesson to the head,  
And Learning wiser grow without his books.

COWPER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# THE PATHFINDER.

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## CHAPTER I.

Compel the hawke, to sit that is unmann'd,  
Or make the hound, untaught, to draw the deere,  
Or bring the free against his will in band,  
Or move the sad a pleasant tale to heere,  
Your time is lost, and you no whit the neerè!  
So love ne learnes, of force the heart to knit:  
She serves but those, that feel sweet fancies' fit.

*Mirror for Magistrates.*

IT is not often that hope is rewarded by fruition, as completely as the wishes of the young men of the garrison were met by the state of the weather, on the succeeding day. It may be no more than the ordinary waywardness of man, but the Americans are a little accustomed to taking pride in things, that the means of intelligent companions would probably show were, in reality, of a very inferior quality;

while they overlook, or undervalue advantages that place them certainly on a level with, if not above most of their fellow-creatures. Among the latter is the climate which, as a whole, though far from perfect, is infinitely more agreeable, and quite as healthy as those of most of the countries which are loudest in their denunciations of it.

The heats of summer were little felt at Oswego, at the period of which we are writing; for the shade of the forest, added to the refreshing breezes from the lake, so far reduced the influence of the sun, as to render the nights always cool, and the days seldom oppressive.

It was now September, a month in which the strong gales of the coast often appear to force themselves across the country as far as the great lakes, where the inland sailor sometimes feels that genial influence which characterises the winds of the ocean, invigorating his frame, cheering his spirits, and arousing his moral force. Such a day was that on which the garrison of Oswego assembled, to witness what its commander had jocularly called a

“passage of arms.” Lundie was a scholar, in military matters at least, and it was one of his sources of honest pride to direct the reading and thoughts of the young men under his orders, to the more intellectual parts of their profession. For one in his situation his library was both good and extensive, and its books were freely lent to all who desired to use them. Among other whims that had found their way into the garrison through these means, was a relish for the sort of amusement in which it was now about to indulge; and around which some chronicles of the days of chivalry had induced them to throw a parade and romance that were not unsuited to the characters and habits of soldiers, or to the insulated and wild post occupied by this particular garrison. While so earnestly bent on pleasure, however, they on whom that duty devolved, did not neglect the safety of the garrison. One standing on the ramparts of the fort, and gazing on the waste of glittering water that bounded the view all along the northern horizon, and on the slumbering and

seemingly boundless forest that filled the other half of the panorama, would have fancied the spot the very abode of peacefulness and security; but Duncan of Lundie too well knew that the woods might, at any moment, give up their hundreds, bent on the destruction of the fort and all it contained; and that even the treacherous lake offered a highway of easy approach, by which his more civilized, and scarcely less wily foes, the French, could come upon him, at an unwelcome and unguarded moment. Parties were sent out under old and vigilant officers, men who cared little for the sports of the day, to scour the forest; and one entire company held the fort, under arms, with orders to maintain a vigilance as strict as if an enemy of superior force was known to be near. With these precautions the remainder of the officers and men abandoned themselves, without apprehension, to the business of the morning.

The spot selected for the sports was a sort of esplanade, a little west of the fort, and on the immediate bank of the lake. It had been

cleared of its trees and stumps, that it might answer the purpose of a parade-ground, as it possessed the advantages of having its rear protected by the water, and one of its flanks by the works. Men drilling on it could be attacked, consequently, on two sides only; and as the cleared space beyond it, in the direction of the west and south, was large, any assailants would be compelled to quit the cover of the woods, before they could make an approach sufficiently near to render them dangerous.

Although the regular arms of the regiment were muskets, some fifty rifles were produced on the present occasion. Every officer had one, as a part of his private provision for amusement; many belonged to the scouts and friendly Indians, of whom more or less were always hanging about the fort; and there was a public provision of them, for the use of those who followed the game with the express object of obtaining supplies. Among those who carried the weapon, were some five or six, who had reputations for knowing how to use it particularly well — so well, indeed, as to have

given them a celebrity on the frontier,—twice that number who were believed to be much better than common; and many who would have been thought expert, in almost any situation, but the precise one in which they now happened to be placed.

The distance was a hundred yards, and the weapon was to be used without a rest; the target, a board, with the customary circular lines in white paint, having the bull's-eye in the centre. The first trials in skill commenced with challenges among the more ignoble of the competitors, to display their steadiness and dexterity in idle competition. None but the common men engaged in this strife, which had little to interest the spectators, among whom no officer had yet appeared.

Most of the soldiers were Scotch, the regiment having been raised at Stirling and its vicinity, not many years before, though, as in the case of Sergeant Dunham, many Americans had joined it since its arrival in the colonies. As a matter of course, the provincials were generally the most expert marksmen; and after



a desultory trial of half an hour, it was necessarily conceded, that a youth who had been born in the colony of New York, and who, coming of Dutch extraction, bore the euphonious name of Van Valtenburg, but was familiarly called Follock, was the most expert of all who had yet tried their skill. It was just as this opinion prevailed, that the oldest captain accompanied by most of the gentlemen and ladies of the fort, appeared on the parade. A train of some twenty females of humbler condition followed, among whom was seen the well-turned form, intelligent, blooming, animated countenance, and neat becoming attire of Mabel Dunham.

Of females who were officially recognised as belonging to the class of ladies, there were but three in the fort, all of whom were officers' wives; staid matronly women, with the simplicity of the habits of middle life singularly mixed in their deportment with their notions of professional superiority, the rights and duties of caste, and the etiquette of rank. The other women were the wives of non-commis-

sioned officers and privates; Mabel being strictly, as had been stated by the Quarter-Master, the only real candidate for matrimony among her sex. There were a dozen other girls, it is true; but they were still classed among the children, none of them being yet of an age to elevate them into objects of legitimate admiration.

Some little preparation had been made for the proper reception of the females, who were placed on a low staging of planks, near the immediate bank of the lake. In this vicinity the prizes were suspended from a post. Great care was taken to reserve the front seat of the stage for the three ladies and their children; while Mabel, and those who belonged to the non-commissioned officers of the regiment, occupied the second. The wives and daughters of the privates were huddled together in the rear, some standing, and some sitting, as they could find room. Mabel, who had already been admitted to the society of the officers' wives, on the footing of an humble companion, was a good deal noticed by the ladies in front, who

had a proper appreciation of modest self-respect and gentle refinement, though they were all fully aware of the value of rank, more particularly in a garrison.

As soon as this important portion of the spectators had got into their places, Lundie gave orders for the trial of skill to proceed, in the manner that had been prescribed in his previous orders. Some eight or ten of the best marksmen of the garrison now took possession of the stand, and began to fire in succession. Among them were officers and men indiscriminately placed, nor were the casual visitors in the fort excluded from the competition. As might have been expected of men whose amusements and comfortable subsistence equally depended on skill in the use of their weapons, it was soon found that they were all sufficiently expert to hit the bull's-eye, or the white spot in the centre of the target. Others who succeeded them, it is true, were less sure, their bullets striking in the different circles that surrounded the centre of the target, without touching it.

According to the rules of the day, none could proceed to the second trial who had failed in the first, and the Adjutant of the place, who acted as Master of the Ceremonies, or Marshal of the day, called upon the successful adventurers by name to get ready for the next effort, while he gave notice that those who failed to present themselves for the shot at the bull's-eye, would necessarily be excluded from all the higher trials. Just at this moment Lundie, the Quarter-Master, and Jasper Eau-douce appeared in the group at the stand, while the Pathfinder walked leisurely on the ground, without his beloved rifle, for him a measure so unusual as to be understood by all present, as a proof that he did not consider himself a competitor for the honours of the day. All made way for Major Duncan, who, as he approached the stand in a good-humoured way, took his station, levelled his rifle carelessly, and fired. The bullet missed the required mark by several inches.

“Major Duncan is excluded from the other trials!” proclaimed the Adjutant, in a voice so

strong and confident, that all the elder officers and the sergeants well understood that this failure was preconcerted, while all the younger gentlemen and the privates felt new encouragement to proceed, on account of the evident impartiality with which the laws of the sports were administered, nothing being so attractive to the unsophisticated as the appearance of rigorous justice, and nothing so rare as its actual administration.

“Now, Master Eau-douce, comes your turn,” said Muir, “and if you do not beat the Major, I shall say that your hand is better skilled with the oar than with the rifle.”

Jasper's handsome face flushed, he stepped upon the stand, cast a hasty glance at Mabel whose pretty form he ascertained was bending eagerly forward as if to note the result, dropped the barrel of his rifle with but little apparent care, into the palm of his left hand, raised the muzzle for a single instant with exceeding steadiness, and fired. The bullet passed directly through the centre of the bull's-eye, much the best shot of the morn-

ing, since the others had merely touched the paint.

“Well performed, Master Jasper,” said Muir, as soon as the result was declared; “and a shot that might have done credit to an older head and a more experienced eye. I’m thinking, notwithstanding, there was some of a youngster’s luck in it; for ye were no partic’lar in the aim ye took. Ye may be quick, Eau-douce, in the movement, but ye’r not philosophic, nor scientific in ye’r management of the weepin. Now, Sergeant Dunham, I’ll thank you to request the ladies to give a closer attention than common; for I’m about to make that use of the rifle which may be called the intellectual. Jasper would have killed, I allow; but then there would not have been half the satisfaction in receiving such a shot, as in receiving one that is discharged scientifically.”

All this time, the Quarter-Master was preparing himself for the scientific trial; but he delayed his aim until he saw that the eye of

Mabel, in common with those of her companions, was fastened on him in curiosity. As the others left him room, out of respect to his rank, no one stood near the competitor but his commanding officer, to whom he now said, in his familiar manner,—

“Ye see, Lundie, that something is to be gained by exciting a female’s curiosity. It’s an active sentiment is curiosity, and properly improved may lead to gentler innovations in the end.”

“Very true, Davy; but ye keep us all waiting while ye make your preparations; and here is Pathfinder drawing near to catch a lesson from your greater experience.”

“Well, Pathfinder, and so *you* have come to get an idea too, concerning the philosophy of shooting. I do not wish to hide my light under a bushel, and ye’r welcome to all ye’ll learn. Do ye no mean to try a shot yersel, man?”

“Why should I, Quarter-Master? why should I? I want none of the prizes; and as

for honour, I have had enough of that, if it's any honour to shoot better than yourself. I'm not a woman to wear a calash."

"Very true; but ye might find a woman that is precious in your eyes, to wear it for ye, as —"

"Come, Davy," interrupted the Major, "your shot or a retreat. The Adjutant is getting to be impatient."

"The quarter-master's department, and the adjutant's department, are seldom compliable, Lundie; but I'm ready; stand a little aside, Pathfinder, and give the ladies an opportunity."

Lieutenant Muir now took his attitude with a good deal of studied elegance, raised his rifle slowly, lowered it, raised it again, repeated the manœuvres, and fired.

"Missed the target altogether!" shouted the man, whose duty it was to mark the bullets, and who had little relish for the Quarter-Master's tedious science. "Missed the target!"

"It cannot be!" cried Muir, his face flushing equally with indignation and shame; "it



cannot be, Adjutant; for I never did so awkward a thing in my life. I appeal to the ladies for a juster judgment."

"The ladies shut their eyes when you fired," exclaimed the regimental wags. "Your preparations alarmed them."

"I will na believe such calumny of the ladies, nor sic' a reproach on my own skill," returned the Quarter-Master, growing more and more Scotch, as he warmed with his feelings; "it's a conspiracy to rob a meritorious man of his dues."

"It's a dead miss, Muir," said the laughing Lundie, "and ye'll jist sit down quietly with the disgrace."

"No, no, major," Pathfinder at length observed, "the Quarter-Master *is* a good shot, for a slow one and a measured distance; though nothing extr'ordinary for real service. He has covered Jasper's bullet, as will be seen, if any one will take the trouble to examine the target."

The respect for Pathfinder's skill, and for his quickness and accuracy of sight, was so pro-

found and general, that the instant he made this declaration, the spectators began to distrust their own opinions, and a dozen rushed to the target, in order to ascertain the fact. There, sure enough, it was found that the Quarter-Master's bullet had gone through the hole made by Jasper's, and that too, so accurately, as to require a minute examination to be certain of the circumstance; which, however, was soon clearly established, by discovering one bullet over the other, in the stump against which the target was placed.

“ I told ye, ladies, ye were about to witness the influence of science on gunnery,” said the Quarter-Master, advancing towards the staging occupied by the females. “ Major Duncan derides the idea of mathematics entering into target shooting; but I tell him, philosophy colours, and enlarges, and improves, and dilates, and explains everything that belongs to human life, whether it be a shooting-match or a sermon. In a word, philosophy is philosophy, and that is saying all that the subject requires.”

“ I trust you exclude love from the catalogue,” observed the wife of a captain, who knew the history of the Quarter-Master’s marriages, and who had a woman’s malice against the monopolizer of her sex,—“ it seems that philosophy has little in common with love.”

“ You wouldn’t say that, madam, if your heart had experienced many trials. It’s the man or the woman that has had many occasions to improve the affections, that can best speak of such matters; and, believe me, of all love, philosophical is the most lasting, as it is the most rational.”

“ You would then recommend experience as an improvement on the passion?”

“ Your quick mind has conceived the idea at a glance. The happiest marriages are those in which youth and beauty, and confidence on one side, rely on the sagacity, moderation, and prudence of years,—middle age, I mean, madam; for I’ll no deny that there is such a thing as a husband’s being too old for a wife. Here is Sergeant Dunham’s charming daughter, now, to approve of such sentiments, I’m cer-

tain ; her character for discretion being already well established in the garrison, short as has been her residence among us."

"Sergeant Dunham's daughter is scarcely a fitting interlocutor in a discourse between you and me, Lieutenant Muir," rejoined the captain's lady, with careful respect for her own dignity ; "and yonder is the Pathfinder about to take his chance, by way of changing the subject."

"I protest, Major Duncan, I protest —" cried Muir, hurrying back towards the stand, with both arms elevated by way of enforcing his words,— "I protest, in the strongest terms, gentlemen, against Pathfinder's being admitted into these sports with kildeer, which is a piece, to say nothing of long habit, that is altogether out of proportion for a trial of skill against government rifles."

"Kildeer is taking its rest, Quarter-Master," returned Pathfinder, calmly, "and no one here thinks of disturbing it. I did not think, myself, of pulling a trigger to-day ; but Sergeant Dunham has been persuading me that I

shall not do proper honour to his handsome daughter, who came in under my care, if I am backward on such an occasion. I'm using Jasper's rifle, Quarter-Master, as you may see, and that is no better than your own."

Lieutenant Muir was now obliged to acquiesce, and every eye turned towards the Pathfinder, as he took the required station. The air and attitude of this celebrated guide and hunter were extremely fine, as he raised his tall form, and levelled the piece, showing perfect self-command, and a thorough knowledge of the power of the human frame, as well as of the weapon. Pathfinder was not what is usually termed a handsome man, though his appearance excited so much confidence, and commanded respect. Tall, and even muscular, his frame might have been esteemed nearly perfect, were it not for the total absence of everything like flesh. Whipcord was scarcely more rigid than his arms and legs, or at need, more pliable; but the outlines of his person were rather too angular for the proportion that the eye most approves. Still, his motions being

natural, were graceful, and being calm and regulated, they gave him an air of dignity that associated well with the idea, that was so prevalent, of his services and peculiar merits. His honest open features were burnt to a bright red, that comported well with the notion of exposure and hardships, while his sinewy hands denoted force, and a species of use that was removed from the stiffening and deforming effects of labour. Although no one perceived any of those gentler or more insinuating qualities which are apt to win upon a woman's affections, as he raised his rifle not a female eye was fastened on him, without a silent approbation of the freedom of his movements and the manliness of his air. Thought was scarcely quicker than his aim; and, as the smoke floated above his head, the but-end of the rifle was seen on the ground, the hand of the Pathfinder was leaning on the barrel, and his honest countenance was illuminated by his usual silent hearty laugh.

“If one dared to hint at such a thing,” cried

Major Duncan, "I should say that the Pathfinder had also missed the target!"

"No, no, Major," returned the guide, confidently, "that *would* be a risky declaration. I didn't load the piece, and can't say what was in it; but if it was lead, you will find the bullet driving down those of the Quarter-Master and Jasper; else is not my name Pathfinder."

A shout from the target announced the truth of this assertion.

"That's not all, that's not all, boys," called out the guide, who was now slowly advancing towards the stage occupied by the females; "if you find the target touched at all, I'll own to a miss. The Quarter-Master cut the wood, but you'll find no wood cut by that last messenger."

"Very true, Pathfinder, very true," answered Muir, who was lingering near Mabel, though ashamed to address her particularly, in the presence of the officers' wives. "The Quarter-Master did cut the wood, and by that means

he opened a passage for your bullet, which went through the hole he had made.”

“ Well, Quarter-Master, there goes the nail, and we’ll see who can drive it closer, you or I ; for, though I did not think of showing what a rifle can do to-day, now my hand is in, I’ll turn my back to no man that carries King George’s commission. Chingachgook is out-lying, or he might force me into some of the niceties of the art ; but as for you, Quarter-Master, if the nail don’t stop you, the potato will.”

“ You’re over boastful this morning, Pathfinder ; but you’ll find you’ve no green boy fresh from the settlements and the towns to deal with, I will assure ye ! ”

“ I know that well, Quarter-Master ; I know that well, and shall not deny your experience. You’ve lived many years on the frontiers, and I’ve heard of you in the colonies, and among the Indians, too, quite a human life ago.”

“ Na, na,” interrupted Muir, in his broadest Scotch, “ this is injustice, man. I’ve no lived so very long, neither.”



“ I’ll do you justice, Lieutenant, even if you get the best in the potato trial. I say you’ve passed a good human life, for a soldier, in places where the rifle is daily used, and I know you are a creditable and ingenious marksman ; but then you are not a true rifle-shooter. As for boasting, I hope I’m not a vain talker about my own exploits ; but a man’s gifts are his gifts, and it’s flying in the face of Providence to deny them. The Sergeant’s daughter, here, shall judge between us, if you have the stomach to submit to so pretty a judge.”

The Pathfinder had named Mabel as the arbiter, because he admired her, and because, in his eyes, rank had little or no value ; but Lieutenant Muir shrunk at such a reference in the presence of the wives of the officers. He would gladly keep himself constantly before the eyes and the imagination of the object of his wishes ; but he was still too much under the influence of old prejudices, and perhaps too wary, to appear openly as her suitor, unless he saw something very like a certainty of success. On the discretion of Major Duncan

he had a full reliance, and he apprehended no betrayal from that quarter ; but he was quite aware, should it ever get abroad that he had been refused by the child of a non-commissioned officer, he would find great difficulty in making his approaches to any other woman of a condition to which he might reasonably aspire. Notwithstanding these doubts and misgivings, Mabel looked so prettily, blushed so charmingly, smiled so sweetly, and altogether presented so winning a picture of youth, spirit, modesty, and beauty, that he found it exceedingly tempting to be kept so prominently before her imagination, and to be able to address her freely.

“ You shall have it your own way, Pathfinder,” he answered as soon as his doubts had settled down into determination ; “ let the sergeant’s daughter,—his charming daughter, I should have termed her,—be the umpire then ; and to her we will both dedicate the prize, that one or the other must certainly win. Pathfinder must be humoured, ladies, as you perceive, else, no doubt, we should have had the

honour to submit ourselves to one of your charming society.”

A call for the competitors now drew the Quarter-Master and his adversary away; and in a few moments the second trial of skill commenced. A common wrought nail was driven lightly into the target, its head having been first touched with paint, and the marksman was required to hit it, or he lost his chances in the succeeding trials. No one was permitted to enter, on this occasion, who had already failed in the essay against the bull's-eye.

There might have been half a dozen aspirants for the honours of this trial; one or two, who had barely succeeded in touching the spot of paint in the previous strife, preferring to rest their reputations there, feeling certain that they could not succeed in the greater effort that was now exacted of them. The three first adventurers failed, all coming quite near the mark, but neither touching it. The fourth person who presented himself was the Quarter-Master, who, after going through his

usual attitudes, so far succeeded as to carry away a small portion of the head of the nail, planting his bullet by the side of its point. This was not considered an extraordinary shot, though it brought the adventurer within the category.

“ You’ve saved your bacon, Quarter-Master, as they say in the settlements of their creatures,” cried Pathfinder, laughing; “ but it would take a long time to build a house with a hammer no better than yours. Jasper, here, will show you how a nail is to be started, or the lad has lost some of his steadiness of hand and sartainty of eye. You would have done better yourself, Lieutenant, had you not been so much bent on soldierizing your figure. Shooting is a natural gift, and is to be exercised in a natural way.”

“ We shall see, Pathfinder; I call that a pretty attempt at a nail; and I doubt if the 55th has another hammer, as you call it, that can do just that same thing over again.”

“ Jasper is not in the 55th, but there goes his rap.”

As the Pathfinder spoke, the bullet of Eau-douce hit the nail square, and drove it into the target, within an inch of the head.

“Be all ready to clench it, boys,” cried out Pathfinder, stepping into his friend’s tracks the instant they were vacant. “Never mind a new nail; I can see that, though the paint is gone, and what I can see I can hit, at a hundred yards, though it were only a mosquito’s eye. Be ready to clench!”

The rifle cracked, the bullet sped its way, and the head of the nail was buried in the wood, covered by the piece of flattened lead.

“Well, Jasper, lad,” continued Pathfinder, dropping the but-end of his rifle to the ground, and resuming the discourse, as if he thought nothing of his own exploit, “you improve daily. A few more tramps on land in my company, and the best marksman on the frontiers will have occasion to look keenly when he takes his stand ag’in you. The Quartermaster is respectable, but he will never get any further; whereas you, Jasper, have the

♦ gift, and may one day defy any who pull trigger.”

“Hoot, hoot!” exclaimed Muir, “do you call hitting the head of the nail respectable only, when it’s the perfection of the art? Any one the least refined and elevated in sentiment, knows that the delicate touches denote the master; whereas your sledge-hammer blows come from the rude and uninstructed. If ‘a miss is as good as a mile,’ a hit ought to be better, Pathfinder, whether it wound or kill.”

“The surest way of settling this rivalry will be to make another trial,” observed Lundy, “and that will be of the potato. You’re Scotch, Mr. Muir, and might fare better were it a cake or a thistle; but frontier law has declared for the American fruit, and the potato it shall be.”

As Major Duncan manifested some impatience of manner, Muir had too much tact to delay the sports any longer with his discursive remarks, but judiciously prepared himself for the next appeal. To say the truth, the Quar-

ter-Master had little or no faith in his own success in the trial of skill that was to follow, nor would he have been so free in presenting himself as a competitor at all, had he anticipated it would have been made: but Major Duncan, who was somewhat of a humorist in his own quiet Scotch way, had secretly ordered it to be introduced, expressly to mortify him; for, a laird himself, Lundie did not relish the notion that one who might claim to be a gentleman, should bring discredit on his caste by forming an unequal alliance. As soon as everything was prepared, Muir was summoned to the stand, and the potato was held in readiness to be thrown. As the sort of feat we are about to offer to the reader, however, may be new to him, a word in explanation will render the matter more clear. A potato of large size was selected, and given to one who stood at the distance of twenty yards from the stand. At the word "heave," which was given by the marksman, the vegetable was thrown with a gentle toss into the air, and it was the business of the adventurer to cause a

ball to pass through it, before it reached the ground.

The Quarter-Master, in a hundred experiments, had once succeeded in accomplishing this difficult feat; but he now essayed to perform it again, with a sort of blind hope that was fated to be disappointed. The potato was thrown in the usual manner, the rifle was discharged, but the flying target was untouched.

“To the right-about, and fall out, Quarter-Master,” said Lundie, smiling at the success of the artifice, — “the honour of the silken calash will lie between Jasper Eau-douce and Pathfinder.”

“And how is the trial to end, Major?” inquired the latter. “Are we to have the two-potato trial, or is it to be settled by centre and skin?”

“By centre and skin, if there is any perceptible difference; otherwise the double shot must follow.”

“This is an awful moment to me, Pathfinder,” observed Jasper, as he moved towards



the stand, his face actually losing its colour in intensity of feeling.

Pathfinder gazed earnestly at the young man; and then begging Major Duncan to have patience for a moment, he led his friend out of the hearing of all near him before he spoke.

“You seem to take this matter to heart, Jasper?” the hunter remarked, keeping his eyes fastened on those of the youth.

“I must own, Pathfinder, that my feelings were never before so much bound up in success.”

“And do you so much crave to outdo me, an old and tried friend?—and that, as it might be, in my own way? Shooting is my gift, boy, and no common hand can equal mine.”

“I know it—I know it, Pathfinder; but yet —”

“But what, Jasper, boy?—speak freely; you talk to a friend.”

The young man compressed his lips, dashed a hand across his eye, and flushed and paled

alternately, like a girl confessing her love. Then squeezing the other's hand, he said calmly, like one whose manhood has overcome all other sensations—

“I would lose an arm, Pathfinder, to be able to make an offering of that calash to Mabel Dunham.”

The hunter dropped his eyes to the ground, and as he walked slowly back towards the stand, he seemed to ponder deeply on what he had just heard.

“You never could succeed in the double trial, Jasper!” he suddenly remarked.

“Of that I am certain, and it troubles me.”

“What a creature is mortal man! he pines for things which are not of his gift, and treats the bounties of Providence lightly. No matter—no matter. Take your station, Jasper, for the Major is waiting—and, harkee, lad—I must touch the skin, for I could not show my face in the garrison with less than that.”

“I suppose I must submit to my fate,” returned Jasper, flushing and losing his colour,

as before ;—“but I will make the effort, if I die.”

“What a thing is mortal man !” repeated Pathfinder, falling back to allow his friend room to take his aim—“he overlooks his own gifts, and craves those of another !”

The potato was thrown, Jasper fired, and the shout that followed preceded the announcement of the fact, that he had driven his bullet through its centre, or so nearly so as to merit that award.”

“Here is a competitor worthy of you, Pathfinder,” cried Major Duncan, with delight, as the former took his station ; “and we may look to some fine shooting in the double trial.”

“What a thing is mortal man !” repeated the hunter, scarcely seeming to notice what was passing around him, so much were his thoughts absorbed in his own reflections. “Toss !”

The potato was tossed, the rifle cracked—it was remarked just as the little black ball seemed stationary in the air, for the marksman evidently took unusual heed to his aim—and then a look of disappointment and wonder suc-

ceeded among those who caught the falling target.

“Two holes in one?” called out the Major.

“The skin, the skin,” was the answer; “only the skin!”

“How’s this, Pathfinder! Is Jasper Eau-douce to carry off the honours of the day?”

“The calash is his,” returned the other, shaking his head, and walking quietly away from the stand. “What a creature is mortal man! never satisfied with his own gifts, but for ever craving that which Providence denies!”

As Pathfinder had not buried his bullet in the potato, but had cut through the skin, the prize was immediately adjudged to Jasper. The calash was in the hands of the latter, when the Quarter-Master approached, and with a polite air of cordiality he wished his successful rival joy of his victory.

“But now you’ve got the calash, lad, it’s of no use to you,” he added; “it will never make a sail, nor even an ensign. I’m think-

ing, Eau-douce, you 'd no be sorry to see its value in good siller of the king?"

"Money cannot buy it, Lieutenant," returned Jasper, whose eye lighted with all the fire of success and joy. "I would rather have won this calash, than have obtained fifty new suits of sails for the Scud!"

"Hoot, hoot, lad! you are going mad like all the rest of them. I 'd even venture to offer half a guinea for the trifle, rather than it should lie kicking about in the cabin of your cutter, and, in the end, become an ornament for the head of a squaw."

Although Jasper did not know that the wary Quarter-Master had not offered half the actual cost of the prize, he heard the proposition with indifference. Shaking his head in the negative, he advanced towards the stage where his approach excited a little commotion, the officers' ladies, one and all, having determined to accept the present, should the gallantry of the young sailor induce him to offer it. But Jasper's diffidence, no less than admiration for

another, would have prevented him from aspiring to the honour of complimenting any whom he thought so much his superiors.

“Mabel,” he said, “this prize is for you, unless —”

“Unless what, Jasper?” answered the girl, losing her own bashfulness, in the natural and generous wish to relieve his embarrassment, though both reddened in a way to betray strong feeling.

“Unless you may think too indifferently of it, because it is offered by one who may have no right to believe his gift will be accepted.”

“I do accept it, Jasper; and it shall be a sign of the danger I have passed in your company, and of the gratitude I feel for your care of me—your care, and that of the Pathfinder.”

“Never mind me—never mind me,” exclaimed the latter; “this is Jasper’s luck, and Jasper’s gift: give him full credit for both. My turn may come another day; mine and the Quarter-Master’s, who seems to grudge the boy the calash; though what *he* can want of it I cannot understand, for he has no wife.”

“And has Jasper Eau-douce a wife? or have you a wife yourself, Pathfinder? I may want it to help to get a wife, or as a memorial that I have had a wife, or as proof how much I admire the sex, or because it is a female garment, or for some other equally respectable motive. It’s not the unreflecting that are the most prized by the thoughtful, and there is no surer sign that a man made a good husband to his first consort, let me tell you all, than to see him speedily looking round for a competent successor. The affections are good gifts from Providence, and they that have loved one faithfully, prove how much of this bounty has been lavished upon them, by loving another as soon as possible.”

“It may be so — it may be so. I am no practitioner in such things, and cannot gainsay it. But, Mabel, here, the Sergeant’s daughter, will give you full credit for the words. Come, Jasper, although our hands are out, let us see what the other lads can do with the rifle.”

Pathfinder and his companions retired, for the sports were about to proceed. The ladies,

however, were not so much engrossed with rifle-shooting as to neglect the calash. It passed from hand to hand; the silk was felt, the fashion criticised, and the work examined, and divers opinions were privately ventured concerning the fitness of so handsome a thing passing into the possession of a non-commissioned officer's child.

“Perhaps you will be disposed to sell that calash, Mabel, when it has been a short time in your possession?” inquired the captain's lady. “Wear it, I should think, you never can.”

“I may not wear it, madam,” returned our heroine modestly; “but I should not like to part with it either.”

“I dare say Sergeant Dunham keeps you above the necessity of selling your clothes, child; but, at the same time, it is money thrown away to keep an article of dress you can never wear.”

“I should be unwilling to part with the gift of a friend.”

“But the young man himself will think all



the better of you, for your prudence, after the triumph of the day is forgotten. It is a pretty and a becoming calash, and ought not to be thrown away."

"I've no intention to throw it away, ma'am; and, if you please, would rather keep it."

"As you will, child; girls of your age often overlook their real advantages. Remember, however, if you do determine to dispose of the thing, that it is bespoke, and that I will not take it, if you ever even put it on your own head."

"Yes, ma'am," said Mabel, in the meekest voice imaginable, though her eyes looked like diamonds, and her cheeks reddened to the tints of two roses, as she placed the forbidden garment over her well-turned shoulders, where she kept it a minute, as if to try its fitness, and then quietly removed it again.

The remainder of the sports offered nothing of interest. The shooting was reasonably good; but the trials were all of a scale lower than those related, and the competitors were soon left to themselves. The ladies and most of

the officers withdrew, and the remainder of the females soon followed their example. Mabel was returning along the low flat rocks that line the shore of the lake, dangling her pretty calash from a prettier finger, when Pathfinder met her. He carried the rifle which he had used that day; but his manner had less of the frank ease of the hunter about it than usual, while his eye seemed roving and uneasy. After a few unmeaning words concerning the noble sheet of water before them, he turned towards his companion with strong interest in his countenance, and said,—

“Jasper earned that calash for you, Mabel, without much trial of his gifts.”

“It was fairly done, Pathfinder.”

“No doubt — no doubt. The bullet passed neatly through the potato, and no man could have done more; though others might have done as much.”

“But no one did as much!” exclaimed Mabel, with an animation that she instantly regretted; for she saw by the pained look of the guide, that he was mortified equally by the

remark, and by the feeling with which it was uttered.

“It is true — it is true, Mabel, no one did as much then; but — yet there is no reason I should deny my gifts which come from Providence — yes, yes; no one did as much there, but you shall know what *can* be done here. Do you observe the gulls that are flying over our heads?”

“Certainly, Pathfinder; there are too many to escape notice.”

“Here, where they cross each other, in sailing about,” he added, cocking and raising his rifle; “the two — the two: now look!”

The piece was presented quick as thought, as two of the birds came in a line, though distant from each other many yards; the report followed, and the bullet passed through the bodies of both the victims. No sooner had the gulls fallen into the lake, than Pathfinder dropped the but-end of the rifle, and laughed in his own peculiar manner, every shade of dissatisfaction and mortified pride having left his honest face.

“That is something, Mabel — that is something; although I’ve no calash to give you! But ask Jasper himself; I’ll leave it all to Jasper, for a truer tongue and heart are not in America.”

“Then it was not Jasper’s fault that he gained the prize?”

“Not it. He did his best, and he did well. For one that has water gifts, rather than land gifts, Jasper is uncommonly expert, and a better backer no one need wish, ashore or afloat. But it was my fault, Mabel, that he got the calash; though it makes no difference — it makes no difference, for the thing has gone to the right person.”

“I believe I understand you, Pathfinder,” said Mabel, blushing in spite of herself, “and I look upon the calash as the joint gift of yourself and Jasper.”

“That would not be doing justice to the lad, neither. He won the garment, and had a right to give it away. The most you may think, Mabel, is to believe that had I won it, it would have gone to the same person.”

“I will remember that, Pathfinder, and take care that others know your skill, as it has been proved upon the poor gulls, in my presence.”

“Lord bless you, Mabel, there is no more need of your talking in favour of my shooting, on this frontier, than of your talking about the water in the lake, or the sun in the heavens. Everybody knows what I can do in that way, and your words would be thrown away, as much as French would be thrown away on an American bear.”

“Then you think that Jasper knew you were giving him this advantage, of which he has so unhandsomely availed himself?” said Mabel, the colour which had imparted so much lustre to her eyes, gradually leaving her face, which became grave and thoughtful.

“I do not say that, but very far from it. We all forget things that we have known, when eager after our wishes. Jasper is satisfied that I can pass one bullet through two potatoes, as I sent my bullet through the gulls; and he knows no other man on the frontier can do the same thing. But with the

calash before his eyes, and the hope of giving it to you, the lad was inclined to think better of himself, just at that moment, perhaps, than he ought. No, no, there's nothing mean or distrustful about Jasper Eau-douce, though it is a gift natural to all young men, to wish to appear well in the eyes of handsome young women."

"I'll try to forget all, but the kindness you've both shown to a poor motherless girl," said Mabel, struggling to keep down emotions that she scarcely knew how to account for herself. "Believe me, Pathfinder, I can never forget all you have already done for me — you and Jasper; and this new proof of your regard is not thrown away. Here, here is a brooch that is of silver, and I offer it as a token that I owe you life or liberty."

"What shall I do with this, Mabel?" asked the bewildered hunter, holding the simple trinket in his hand. "I have neither buckle nor button about me, for I wear nothing but leathern strings, and them of good deer-skins. It's pretty to the eye, but it is prettier far

on the spot it came from, than it can be about me."

"Nay, put it in your hunting-shirt; it will become it well. Remember, Pathfinder, that it is a token of friendship between us, and a sign that I can never forget you or your services."

Mabel then smiled an adieu; and bounding up the bank, she was soon lost to view behind the mound of the fort.

## CHAPTER II.

Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight,  
Along the leaguer'd wall, and bristling bank,  
Of the arm'd river; while with straggling light,  
The stars peep through the vapour, dim and dank.

BYRON.

A FEW hours later Mabel Dunham was on the bastion that overlooked the river and the lake, seemingly in deep thought. The evening was calm and soft, and the question had arisen, whether the party for the Thousand Islands would be able to get out that night or not, on account of the total absence of wind. The stores, arms, and ammunition were already shipped, and even Mabel's effects were on board; but the small draft of men that was to go was still ashore, there being no apparent prospect of the cutter's getting under way. Jasper had warped the Scud out of the cove,



and so far up the stream as to enable him to pass through the outlet of the river whenever he chose; but there he still lay, riding at single anchor. The drafted men were lounging about the shore of the cove, undecided whether or not to pull off.

The sports of the morning had left a quiet in the garrison that was in harmony with the whole of the beautiful scene, and Mabel felt its influence on her feelings, though, probably too little accustomed to speculate on such sensations, to be aware of the cause. Everything near appeared lovely and soothing, while the solemn grandeur of the silent forest and placid expanse of the lake lent a sublimity that other scenes might have wanted. For the first time, Mabel felt the hold that the towns and civilisation had gained on her habits sensibly weakened; and the warm-hearted girl began to think that a life passed amid objects such as those around her, might be happy. How far the experience of the last ten days came in aid of the calm and holy eventide, and contributed towards producing that young con-

viction, may be suspected, rather than affirmed, in this early portion of our legend.

“A charming sunset! Mabel,” said the hearty voice of her uncle, so close to the ear of our heroine as to cause her to start,—“a charming sunset! girl, for a fresh-water concern, though we should think but little of it at sea.”

“And is not nature the same, on shore, or at sea; on a lake like this, or on the ocean? Does not the sun shine on all alike, dear uncle; and can we not feel gratitude for the blessings of Providence, as strongly on this remote frontier as in our own Manhattan?”

“The girl has fallen in with some of her mother’s books — though I should think the Sergeant would scarcely make a second march with such trumpery among his baggage. Is not nature the same, indeed!—Now, Mabel, do you imagine that the nature of a soldier is the same as that of a seafaring-man? You’ve relations in both callings, and ought to be able to answer.”

“But, uncle, I mean human nature—”

“So do I, girl; the human nature of a

seaman, and the human nature of one of these fellows of the 55th, not even excepting your own father. Here have they had a shooting-match—target-firing I should call it—this day, and what a different thing has it been from a target-firing afloat! There we should have sprung our broadside, sported with round shot, at an object half a mile off, at the very nearest; and the potatoes, if there happened to be any on board, as quite likely would not have been the case, would have been left in the cook's coppers. It may be an honourable calling, that of a soldier, Mabel; but an experienced hand sees many follies and weaknesses in one of these forts. As for that bit of a lake, you know my opinion of it already, and I wish to disparage nothing. No real seafarer disparages anything; but d—me, if I regard this here Ontario as they call it, as more than so much water in a ship's scuttle butt. Now, look you here, Mabel, if you wish to understand the difference between the ocean and a lake, I can make you comprehend it, with a single look: this is what

one may call a calm, seeing that there is no wind; though, to own the truth, I do not think the calms are as calm as them we get outside—”

“Uncle, there is not a breath of air. I do not think it possible for the leaves to be more immovably still, than those of the entire forest are at this very moment.”

“Leaves! what are leaves, child? there are no leaves at sea. If you wish to know whether it is a dead calm, or not, try a mould candle—your dips flaring too much—and then you may be certain whether there is, or is not, any wind. If you were in a latitude where the air was so still that you found a difficulty in stirring it to draw it in, in breathing, you might fancy it a calm. People are often on a short allowance of air, in the calm latitudes. Here, again, look at that water!—It is like milk in a pan, with no more motion, now, than there is in a full hogshead before the bung is started. On the ocean, the water is never still, let the air be as quiet as it may.”

“The water of the ocean never still, Uncle Cap? not even in a calm?”

“Bless your heart, no, child. The ocean breathes like a living being, and its bosom is always heaving, as the poetizers call it, though there be no more air than is to be found in a siphon. No man ever saw the ocean still, like this lake; but it heaves and sets, as if it had lungs.”

“And this lake is not absolutely still, for you perceive there is a little ripple on the shore, and you may even hear the surf plunging, at moments, against the rocks.”

“All d—d poetry! One may call a bubble a ripple if he will, and washing decks a surf; but Lake Ontario is no more the Atlantic, than a Powles Hook periagua is a first-rate. That Jasper, notwithstanding, is a fine lad, and wants instruction only to make a man of him.”

“Do you think him ignorant, uncle,” answered Mabel, prettily adjusting her hair, in order to do which she was obliged, or fancied she was obliged, to turn away her face. “To

me Jasper Eau-douce appears to know more than most of the young men of his class. He has read but little, for books are not plenty in this part of the world ; but he has thought much, at least so it seems to me, for one so young."

" He is ignorant, he is ignorant, as all must be who navigate an inland water like this. He can make a flat knot and a timber hitch, it is true ; but he has no more notion of crowning a cable now, or of a carrick bend, than you have of catting an anchor. No, no, Mabel ; we both owe something to Jasper and the Pathfinder, and I have been thinking how I can best serve them, for I hold ingratitude to be the vice of a hog. Some people say it is the vice of a king ; but I say it is the failing of a hog ; for treat the animal to your own dinner, and he would eat you for the dessert."

" Very true, dear uncle, and we ought indeed to do all we can to express our proper sense of the services of both these brave men."

" Spoken like your mother's daughter, girl, and in a way to do credit to the Cap family. Now, I've hit upon a traverse that will just

suit all parties; and as soon as we get back from this little expedition down the lake, among them there Thousand Islands, and I am ready to return, it is my intention to propose it."

"Dearest uncle! this is so considerate in you, and will be so just! May I ask what your intentions are?"

"I see no reason for keeping them a secret from you, Mabel, though nothing need be said to your father about them; for the Sergeant has his prejudices, and might throw difficulties in the way. Neither Jasper, nor his friend, Pathfinder, can ever make anything hereabouts, and I propose to take both with me down to the coast, and get them fairly afloat. Jasper would find his sea-legs in a fortnight, and a twelvemonth's v'y'ge would make him a man. Although Pathfinder might take more time, or never get to be rated able; yet one could make something of him, too, particularly as a look-out, for he has unusually good eyes."

"Uncle, do you think either would consent to this?" said Mabel, smiling.

“Do I suppose them simpletons? What rational being would neglect his own advancement? Let Jasper alone to push his way, and the lad may yet die the master of some square-rigged craft.”

“And would he be any the happier for it, dear uncle? How much better is it to be the master of a square-rigged craft, than to be master of a round-rigged craft?”

“Pooh, pooh! Magnet; you are just fit to read lectures about ships before some hysterical society, you don't know what you are talking about; leave these things to me, and they'll be properly managed. Ah! here is the Pathfinder himself, and I may just as well drop him a hint of my benevolent intentions, as regards himself. Hope is a great encourager of our exertions.”

Cap nodded his head and then ceased to speak, while the hunter approached, not with his usual frank and easy manner, but in a way to show that he was slightly embarrassed, if not distrustful of his reception.

“Uncle and niece make a family party,” said



Pathfinder, when near the two, "and a stranger may not prove a welcome companion?"

"You are no stranger, Master Pathfinder," returned Cap, "and no one can be more welcome than yourself. We were talking of you but a moment ago, and when friends speak of an absent man, he can guess what they have said."

"I ask no secrets, I ask no secrets. Every man has his enemies, and I have mine, though I count neither you, Master Cap, nor pretty Mabel here, among the number. As for the Mingos I will say nothing, though they have no just cause to hate me."

"That I'll answer for, Pathfinder; for you strike my fancy as being well disposed and upright. There is a method, however, of getting away from the enmity of even these Mingos; and if you choose to take it, no one will more willingly point it out than myself, without a charge for my advice either."

"I wish no enemies, Saltwater," for so the Pathfinder had begun to call Cap, having, insensibly to himself, adopted the term by trans-

lating the name given him by the Indians in and about the fort ; “ I wish no enemies. I’m as ready to bury the hatchet with the Mingos as with the French, though you know that it depends on One greater than either of us so to turn the heart, as to leave a man without enemies.”

“ By lifting your anchor, and accompanying me down to the coast, friend Pathfinder, when we get back from this short cruise on which we are bound, you will find yourself beyond the sound of the war-whoop, and safe enough from any Indian bullet.”

“ And what should I do on the salt water ? Hunt in your towns ? Follow the trails of people going and coming from market, and ambush dogs and poultry ? You are no friend to my happiness, Master Cap, if you would lead me out of the shade of the woods, to put me in the sun of the clearings.”

“ I did not propose to leave you in the settlements, Pathfinder ; but to carry you out to sea, where a man can only be said to breathe freely. Mabel will tell you that such was

my intention, before a word was said on the subject."

"And what does Mabel think would come of such a change? She knows that a man has his gifts, and that it is as useless to pretend to others, as to withstand them that come from Providence. I am a hunter, and a scout, or a guide, Saltwater, and it is not in me to fly so much in the face of Heaven, as to try to become anything else. Am I right, Mabel, or are you so much a woman as to wish to see a natur' altered?"

"I would wish to see no change in you, Pathfinder," Mabel answered with a cordial sincerity and frankness, that went directly to the hunter's heart; "and much as my uncle admires the sea, and great as is all the good that he thinks may come of it, I could not wish to see the best and noblest hunter of the woods transformed into an admiral. Remain what you are, my brave friend, and you need fear nothing, short of the anger of God."

"Do you hear this, Saltwater? do you

hear what the Sergeant's daughter is saying, and she is much too upright and fair-minded, and pretty, not to think what she says. So long as she is satisfied with me as I am, I shall not fly in the face of the gifts of Providence, by striving to become anything else. I may seem useless here in a garrison; but when we get down among the Thousand Islands, there may be an opportunity to prove that a sure rifle is sometimes a God-send."

"You are then to be of our party?" said Mabel, smiling so frankly and so sweetly on the guide, that he would have followed her to the end of the earth. "I shall be the only female with the exception of one soldier's wife; and shall feel none the less secure, Pathfinder, because you will be among our protectors."

"The Sergeant would do that, Mabel, the Sergeant would do that, though you were not of his kin. No one will overlook you. I should think your uncle, here, would like an expedition of this sort, where we shall go with sails, and have a look at an inland sea?"

"Your inland sea is no great matter, Master

Pathfinder, and I expect nothing from it. I confess, however, I should like to know the object of the cruise; for one does not wish to be idle, and my brother-in-law, the Sergeant, is as close-mouthed as a freemason. Do you know, Mabel, what all this means?"

"Not in the least, uncle. I dare not ask my father any questions about his duty, for he thinks it is not a woman's business; and all I can say is, that we are to sail as soon as the wind will permit, and that we are to be absent a month."

"Perhaps, Master Pathfinder can give me a useful hint; for a v'y'ge without an object is never pleasant to an old sailor."

"There is no great secret, Saltwater, concerning our port and object, though it is forbidden to talk much about either in the garrison. I am no soldier, however, and can use my tongue as I please, though as little given as another to idle conversation I hope; still, as we sail so soon, and you are both to be of the party, you may as well be told where you are to be carried. You know that there are such

things as the Thousand Islands, I suppose, Master Cap?"

"Ay, what are so called, hereaway, though I take it for granted that they are not real islands, such as we fall in with on the ocean; and that the thousand means some such matter as two or three, like the killed and wounded of a great battle."

"My eyes are good, and yet have I often been foiled in trying to count them very islands."

"Ay, ay, I've known people who couldn't count beyond a certain number. Your real land-birds never know their own roosts, even in a land-fall at sea; they are what I call all things to all men. How many times have I seen the beach, and houses, and churches, when the passengers have not been able to see anything but water! I have no idea that a man can get fairly out of sight of land, on fresh-water. The thing appears to me to be irrational and impossible."

"You don't know the lakes, Master Cap, or you would not say that. Before we get to

the Thousand Islands, you will have other notions of what natur' has done in this wilderness."

"I have my doubts whether you have such a thing as a real island in all this region. To my notion, fresh-water can't make a bony fidy island;—not what *I* call an island."

"We'll show you hundreds of them; not exactly a thousand, perhaps, but so many that eye cannot see them all, nor tongue count them."

"And what sort of things may they be?"

"Land with water entirely around them."

"Ay, but what sort of land, and what sort of water? I'll engage, when the truth comes to be known, they'll turn out to be nothing but peninsulas, or promontories, or continents; though these are matters, I dare say, of which you know little or nothing. But, islands or no islands, what is the object of the cruise, Master Pathfinder?"

"Why, as you are the Sergeant's brother, and pretty Mabel here is his daughter, and we are all to be of the party, there can be no harm

in giving you some idea of what we are going to do. Being so old a sailor, Master Cap, you've heard, no doubt, of such a port as Frontenac?"

"Who hasn't? I will not say I've ever been inside the harbour, but I've frequently been off the place."

"Then you are about to go upon ground with which you are acquainted, though how you could ever have got there, from the ocean, I do not understand. These great lakes, you must know, make a chain, the water passing out of one into the other, until it reaches Erie, which is a sheet off here to the westward, as large as Ontario itself. Well, out of Erie the water comes, until it reaches a low mountain like, over the edge of which it passes —"

"I should like to know how the devil it can do that?"

"Why easy enough, Master Cap," returned Pathfinder laughing, "seeing that it has only to fall down hill. Had I said the water went *up* the mountain, there would have been natur'



ag'in it; but we hold it no great matter for water to run down hill — that is, *fresh* water."

"Ay, ay, but you speak of the water of a lake's coming down the side of a mountain; it's in the teeth of reason, if reason has any teeth."

"Well, well, we will not dispute the point; but what I've seen, I've seen: as for reason having any teeth, I'll say nothing; but conscience has, and sharp ones too. After getting into Ontario, all the water of *all* the lakes passes down into the sea, by a river; and in the narrow part of the sheet where it is neither river nor lake, lie the islands spoken of. Now, Frontenac is a post of the Frenchers above these same islands; and as they hold the garrison below, their stores and ammunition are sent up the river to Frontenac, to be forwarded along the shores of this and the other lakes, in order to enable the enemy to play his devilries among the savages, and to take Christian scalps."

“And will our presence prevent these horrible acts?” demanded Mabel, with interest.

“It may or it may not, as Providence wills. Lundie, as they call him, he who commands this garrison, sent a party down to take a station among the islands, to cut off some of the French boats; and this expedition of ours will be the second relief. As yet they’ve not done much, though two bateaux loaded with Indian goods have been taken; but a runner came in last week, and brought such tidings that the Major is about to make a last effort to circumvent the knaves. Jasper knows the way, and we shall be in good hands, for the Sergeant is prudent, and of the first quality at an ambushment; yes, he is both prudent and alert.”

“Is this all!” said Cap, contemptuously; “by the preparations and equipments I had thought there was a forced trade in the wind, and that an honest penny might be turned by taking an adventure. I suppose there are no shares in your fresh-water prize-money?”

“Anan?”

“I take it for granted the King gets all, in these soldiering parties, and ambushments, as you call them?”

“I know nothing about that, Master Cap. I take my share of the lead and powder if any falls into our hands, and say nothing to the King about it. If any one fares better, it is not I; though it is time I did begin to think of a house, and furniture, and a home.”

Although the Pathfinder did not dare to look at Mabel, while he made this direct allusion to his change of life, he would have given the world to know whether she was listening, and what was the expression of her countenance. Mabel little suspected the nature of the allusion, however; and her countenance was perfectly unembarrassed, as she turned her eyes towards the river, where the appearance of some movement on board the Scud began to be visible.

“Jasper is bringing the cutter out,” observed the guide, whose look was drawn in the same direction, by the fall of some heavy article on the deck. “The lad sees the signs

of wind, no doubt, and wishes to be ready for it."

"Ay, now we shall have an opportunity of learning seamanship," returned Cap, with a sneer. "There is a nicety in getting a craft under her canvas, that shows the thoroughbred mariner as much as anything else. It's like a soldier buttoning his coat, and one can see whether he begins at the top, or the bottom."

"I will not say that Jasper is equal to your seafarers below," observed Pathfinder, across whose upright mind an unworthy feeling of envy, or of jealousy, never passed; "but he is a bold boy, and manages his cutter as skilfully as any man can desire, on this lake at least. You didn't find him backwards at the Oswego Falls, Master Cap, where fresh-water contrives to tumble down hill with little difficulty."

Cap made no other answer than a dissatisfied ejaculation, and then a general silence followed, all on the bastion studying the movements of the cutter, with the interest that was natural

to their own future connection with the vessel. It was still a dead calm, the surface of the lake literally glittering with the last rays of the sun. The Scud had been warped up to a kedge, that lay a hundred yards above the points of the outlet, where she had room to manœuvre in the river which then formed the harbour of Oswego. But the total want of air prevented any such attempt, and it was soon evident that the light vessel was to be taken through the passage, under her sweeps. Not a sail was loosened ; but as soon as the kedge was tripped, the heavy fall of the sweeps was heard, when the cutter, with her head up stream, began to sheer towards the centre of the current ; on reaching which, the efforts of the men ceased, and she drifted towards the outlet. In the narrow pass itself her movement was rapid, and in less than five minutes, the Scud was floating outside of the two low gravelly points that intercepted the waves of the lake. No anchor was let go, but the vessel continued to set off from the land, until her dark hull was seen resting on the glossy sur-

face of the lake, fully a quarter of a mile beyond the low bluff which formed the eastern extremity of what might be called the outer harbour, or roadstead. Here the influence of the river current ceased, and she became, virtually, stationary.

“She seems very beautiful to me, uncle,” said Mabel, whose gaze had not been averted from the cutter for a single moment, while it had thus been changing its position; “I dare say you can find faults in her appearance, and in the way she is managed; but to my ignorance both are perfect.”

“Ay, ay; she drops down with a current well enough, girl, and so would a chip. But when you come to niceties, an old tar, like myself, has no need of spectacles to find fault.”

“Well, Master Cap,” put in the guide, who seldom heard anything to Jasper’s prejudice without manifesting a disposition to interfere, “I’ve heard old and experienced salt-water mariners confess, that the Scud is as pretty a craft as floats. I know nothing

of such matters myself; but one may have his own notions about a ship, even though they be wrong notions; and it would take more than one witness to persuade me, Jasper does not keep his boat in good order."

"I do not say that the cutter is downright lubberly, Master Pathfinder; but she has faults, and great faults."

"And what are they, uncle? If he knew them, Jasper would be glad to mend them."

"What are they? why fifty; ay, for that matter, a hundred. Very material and manifest faults."

"Do name them, sir, and Pathfinder will mention them to his friend."

"Name them? it is no easy matter to call off the stars, for the simple reason that they are so numerous. Name them, indeed!—Why, my pretty niece, Miss Magnet, what do you think of that main-boom now? To my ignorant eyes it is topped at least a foot too high; and then the pennant is foul; and—and—ay, d—me, if there isn't a topsail gasket adrift—and, it wouldn't surprise me at

all, if there should prove to be a round turn in that hawser, if the kedje were to be let go this instant. Faults, indeed! No seaman could look at her a moment, without seeing that she is as full of faults as a servant that has asked for his discharge."

"This may be very true, uncle, though I much question if Jasper knows of them. I do not think he would suffer these things, Pathfinder, if they were once pointed out to him."

"Let Jasper manage his own cutter, Mabel; let him manage his own cutter. His gift lies that-a-way, and I'll answer for it, no one can teach him how to keep the Scud out of the hands of the Frontenackers or their devilish Mingo friends. Who cares for round turns in kedjes, and for hawsers that are topped too high, Master Cap, so long as the craft sails well, and keeps clear of the Frenchers? I will trust Jasper against all the seafarers of the coast, up here on the lakes; but I do not say he has any gift for the ocean, for there he has never been tried."



Cap smiled condescendingly, but he did not think it necessary to push his criticisms any further just at that moment. His air and manner gradually became more supercilious and lofty, though he now wished to seem indifferent to any discussions on points of which one of the parties was entirely ignorant. By this time the cutter had begun to drift at the mercy of the currents of the lake, her head turning in all directions, though slowly, and not in a way to attract particular attention. Just at this moment the jib was loosened and hoisted, and presently the canvass swelled towards the land, though no evidences of air were yet to be seen on the surface of the water. Slight, however, as was the impulsion, the light hull yielded; and, in another minute, the Scud was seen standing across the current of the river, with a movement so easy and moderate as to be scarcely perceptible. When out of the stream, she struck an eddy, and shot up towards the land, under the eminence where the fort stood, when Jasper dropped his kedge.

“Not lubberly done,” muttered Cap, in a sort of soliloquy, “not over lubberly, though he should have put his helm a-starboard instead of a-port; for a vessel ought always to come-to with her head off shore, whether she is a league from the land, or only a cable’s length, since it has a careful look, and looks are something in this world.”

“Jasper is a handy lad,” suddenly observed Sergeant Dunham, at his brother-in-law’s elbow; “and we place great reliance on his skill in our expeditions. But come, one and all, we have but half an hour more of daylight to embark in, and the boats will be ready for us by the time we are ready for them.”

On this intimation the whole party separated, each to find those trifles which had not been shipped already. A few taps of the drum gave the necessary signal to the soldiers, and in a minute all were in motion.

## CHAPTER III.

The goblin now the fool alarms,  
Hags meet to mumble o'er their charms,  
The night-mare rides the dreaming ass,  
And fairies trip it on the grass.

COTTON.

THE embarkation of so small a party was a matter of no great delay or embarrassment. The whole force confided to the care of Sergeant Dunham consisted of but ten privates and two non-commissioned officers, though it was soon positively known that Mr. Muir was to accompany the expedition. The Quartermaster, however, went as a volunteer, while some duty connected with his own department, as had been arranged between him and his commander, was the avowed object. To these must be added the Pathfinder and Cap, with Jasper and his subordinates, one of whom was

a boy. The males of the entire party, consequently, consisted of less than twenty men, and a lad of fourteen. Mabel and the wife of a common soldier were the only females.

Sergeant Dunham carried off his command in a large bateau, and then returned for his final orders, and to see that his brother-in-law and daughter were properly attended to. Having pointed out to Cap the boat that he and Mabel were to use, he ascended the hill to seek his last interview with Lundie. The Major was on the bastion so often mentioned; leaving him and the Sergeant together, for a short time, we will return to the beach.

It was nearly dark, when Mabel found herself in the boat that was to carry her off to the cutter. So very smooth was the surface of the lake, that it was not found necessary to bring the bateaux into the river to receive their freights; but the beach outside being totally without surf, and the water as tranquil as that of a pond, everybody embarked there. As Cap had said, there was no heaving and setting, no working of vast lungs, nor any

respiration of an ocean ; for, on Ontario, unlike the Atlantic, gales were not agitating the element at one point while calms prevailed at another. This the distances did not permit ; and it is the usual remark of mariners, that the sea got up faster and went down sooner, on all the great lakes of the West, than on the different seas of their acquaintance. When the boat left the land, therefore, Mabel would not have known that she was afloat on so broad a sheet of water by any movement that is usual to such circumstances. The oars had barely time to give a dozen strokes, when the boat lay at the cutter's side.

Jasper was in readiness to receive his passengers ; and, as the deck of the Scud was but two or three feet above the water, no difficulty was experienced in getting on board her. As soon as this was effected, the young man pointed out to Mabel and her companion the accommodations prepared for their reception, and they took possession of them. The little vessel contained four apartments below, all be-

tween decks having been expressly constructed with a view to the transportation of officers and men, with their wives and families. First in rank, was what was called the after-cabin, a small apartment that contained four berths, and which enjoyed the advantage of possessing small windows, for the admission of air and light. This was uniformly devoted to females whenever any were on board; and as Mabel and her companion were alone, they had ample space and accommodation. The main-cabin was larger, and lighted from above. It was now appropriated to the uses of the Quarter-Master, the Sergeant, Cap, and Jasper; the Pathfinder roaming through any part of the cutter he pleased, the female apartment excepted. The corporals and common soldiers occupied the space beneath the main hatch, which had a deck for such a purpose; while the crew were berthed, as usual, in the fore-castle. Although the cutter did not measure quite fifty tons, the draft of officers and men was so light, that there was ample room for

all on board, there being space enough to accommodate treble the number, if necessary.

As soon as Mabel had taken possession of her own really comfortable and pretty cabin, in doing which she could not abstain from indulging in the pleasant reflection that some of Jasper's favour had been especially manifested in her behalf, she went on deck again. Here all was momentarily in motion; the men were roving to and fro, in quest of their knapsacks and other effects; but method and habit soon reduced things to order, when the stillness on board became even imposing, for it was connected with the idea of future adventure and ominous preparation.

Darkness was now beginning to render objects on shore indistinct, the whole of the land forming one shapeless black outline of even forest summits, that was to be distinguished from the impending heavens only by the greater light of the sky. The stars, however, soon began to appear in the latter, one after another, in their usual mild placid lustre,

bringing with them that sense of quiet which ordinarily accompanies night. There was something soothing, as well as exciting in such a scene; and Mabel, who was seated on the quarter-deck, sensibly felt both influences. The Pathfinder was standing near her, leaning, as usual, on his long rifle, and she fancied that, through the growing darkness of the hour, she could trace even stronger lines of thought than usual in his rugged countenance.

“To you, Pathfinder, expeditions like this can be no great novelty,” she said, “though I am surprised to find how silent and thoughtful the men appear to be.”

“We learn this by making war ag’in Indians. Your militia are great talkers, and little doers in general; but the soldier who has often met the Mingos, learns to know the value of a prudent tongue. A silent army, in the woods, is doubly strong; and a noisy one, doubly weak. If tongues made soldiers, the women of a camp would generally carry the day.”

“But we are neither an army, nor in the



woods. There can be no danger of Mingos, in the Scud."

"Ask Jasper, how he got to be master of this cutter, and you will find yourself answered, as to that opinion. No one is safe from a Mingo, who does not understand his very natur'; and even then he must act up to his own knowledge, and that closely. Ask Jasper how he got command of this very cutter."

"And how *did* he get the command?" inquired Mabel, with an earnestness and interest that delighted her simple-minded and true-hearted companion, who was never better pleased than when he had an opportunity of saying aught in favour of a friend. "It is honourable to him, that he has reached this station, while yet so young."

"That is it; but he deserved it all, and more. A frigate wouldn't have been too much to pay for so much spirit and coolness, had there been such a thing on Ontario, as there is not, hows'ever, or likely to be."

"But Jasper, you have not yet told me how he got the command of the schooner."

“ It is a long story, Mabel, and one your father, the Sergeant, can tell much better than I ; for he was present, while I was off on a distant scouting. Jasper is not good at a story, I will own that ; I’ve heard him questioned about this affair, and he never made a good tale of it, although everybody knows it was a good thing. No, no ; Jasper is not good at a story, as his best friends must own. The Scud had near fallen into the hands of the French and the Mingos, when Jasper saved her, in a way that none but a quick-witted mind and a bold heart would have attempted. The Sergeant will tell the tale better than I can, and I wish you to question him, some day, when nothing better offers. As for Jasper himself, there will be no use in worrying the lad ; since he will make a bungling matter of it, for he don’t know how to give a history at all.”

Mabel determined to ask her father to repeat the incidents of the affair that very night ; for it struck her young fancy that nothing better could well offer, than to listen to the praises of

one who was a bad historian of his own exploits.

“Will the Scud remain with us when we reach the island?” she asked, after a little hesitation about the propriety of the question; “or shall we be left to ourselves?”

“That’s as may be: Jasper does not often keep the cutter idle, when anything is to be done; and we may expect activity on his part. My gifts, however, run so little towards the water and vessels generally, unless it be among rapids and falls, and in canoes, that I pretend to know nothing about it. We shall have all right, under Jasper, I make no doubt, who can find a trail on Ontario, as well as a Delaware can find one on the land.”

“And our own Delaware, Pathfinder—the Big Serpent—why is he not with us to-night?”

“Your question would have been more natural, had you said, Why are *you* here, Pathfinder?—The Serpent is in his place, while I am not in mine. He is out, with two or three more, scouting the lake shores, and will join us down among the islands, with the

tidings he may gather. The Sergeant is too good a soldier to forget his rear, while he is facing the enemy in front. It's a thousand pities, Mabel, your father wasn't born a general, as some of the English are who come among us; for I feel sartain he wouldn't leave a Frencher in the Canadas a week, could he have his own way with them."

"Shall we have enemies to face in front?" asked Mabel, smiling, and, for the first time, feeling a slight apprehension about the dangers of the expedition. "Are we likely to have an engagement?"

"If we have, Mabel, there will be men enough ready and willing to stand between you and harm. But you are a soldier's daughter, and, we all know, have the spirit of one. Don't let the fear of a battle keep your pretty eyes from sleeping."

"I do feel braver, out here in the woods, Pathfinder, than I ever felt before amid the weaknesses of the towns, although I have always tried to remember what I owe to my dear father."

“ Ay, your mother was so before you.— ‘ You will find Mabel, like her mother, no screamer, or a faint-hearted girl, to trouble a man in his need ; but one who would encourage her mate, and help to keep his heart up when sorest pressed by danger,’ said the Sergeant to me, before I ever laid eyes on that sweet countenance of yours,—he did !”

“ And why should my father have told you this, Pathfinder ?” the girl demanded a little earnestly. “ Perhaps he fancied you would think the better of me, if you did not believe me a silly coward, as so many of my sex love to make themselves appear.”

Deception, unless it were at the expense of his enemies in the field,—nay, concealment of even a thought, was so little in accordance with the Pathfinder’s very nature, that he was not a little embarrassed by this simple question. To own the truth openly, he felt, by a sort of instinct for which it would have puzzled him to account, would not be proper ; and to hide it agreed with neither his sense of right nor his habits. In such a strait he involuntarily

took refuge in a middle course, not revealing that which he fancied ought not to be told, nor yet absolutely concealing it.

“ You must know, Mabel,” he said, “ that the Sergeant and I are old friends, and have stood side by side—or if not actually side by side, I a little in advance, as became a scout, and your father, with his own men, as better suited a soldier of the King—on many a hard fi’t and bloody day. It’s the way of us skirmishers to think little of the fight when the rifle has done cracking; and at night, around our fires, or on our marches, we talk of the things we love, just as you young women converse about your fancies and opinions when you get together to laugh over your ideas. Now it was natural that the Sergeant, having such a daughter as you, should love her better than anything else, and that he should talk of her oftener than of anything else,—while I, having neither daughter, nor sister, nor mother, nor kith nor kin, nor anything but the Delawares to love, I naturally chimed in, as it were, and got to love you,

Mabel, before I ever saw you — yes I did — just by talking about you so much.”

“And now you *have* seen me,” returned the smiling girl, whose unmoved and natural manner proved how little she was thinking of anything more than parental or fraternal regard, “you are beginning to see the folly of forming friendships for people before you know anything about them, except by hearsay.”

“It wasn’t friendship — it isn’t friendship, Mabel, that I feel for you. I am the friend of the Delawares, and have been so from boyhood; but my feelings for them, or for the best of them, are not the same as those I got from the Sergeant for you; and, especially, now that I begin to know you better. I’m sometimes afraid it isn’t wholesome for one who is much occupied in a very manly calling, like that of a guide or a scout, or a soldier even, to form friendships for women — young women in particular — as they seem to me to lessen the love of enterprise, and to turn the feelings away from their gifts and natural occupations.”

“ You, surely, do not mean, Pathfinder, that a friendship for a girl like me, would make you less bold, and more unwilling to meet the French than you were before ? ”

“ Not so, not so. With you in danger, for instance, I fear I might become fool-hardy ; but before we became so intimate, as I may say, I loved to think of my scoutings, and of my marches, and out-lyings, and fights, and other adventures : but now my mind cares less about them ; I think more of the barracks and of evenings passed in discourse, of feelings in which there are no wranglings and bloodshed, and of young women, and of their laughs, and their cheerful soft voices, their pleasant looks, and their winning ways. I sometimes tell the Sergeant, that he and his daughter will be the spoiling of one of the best and most experienced scouts on the lines.”

“ Not they, Pathfinder ; they will try to make that which is already so excellent perfect. You do not know us, if you think that either wishes to see you, in the least, changed. Remain, as at present, the same honest, up-



right, conscientious, fearless, intelligent, trustworthy guide that you are, and neither my dear father, nor myself, can ever think of you differently from what we now do."

It was too dark for Mabel to note the workings of the countenance of her listener; but her own sweet face was turned towards him, as she spoke with an energy equal to her frankness, in a way to show how little embarrassed were her thoughts, and how sincere were her words. Her countenance was a little flushed, it is true; but it was with earnestness and truth of feeling, though no nerve thrilled, no limb trembled, no pulsation quickened. In short, her manner and appearance were those of a sincere-minded and frank girl, making such a declaration of good-will and regard for one of the other sex, as she felt that his services and good qualities merited, without any of the emotion that invariably accompanies the consciousness of an inclination which might lead to softer disclosures.

The Pathfinder was too unpractised, however, to enter into distinctions of this kind,

and his humble nature was encouraged by the directness and strength of the words he had just heard. Unwilling, if not unable to say any more, he walked away, and stood leaning on his rifle, and looking up at the stars, for quite ten minutes, in profound silence.

In the mean while, the interview on the bastion, to which we have already alluded, took place between Lundie and the Sergeant.

“Have the men’s knapsacks been examined?” demanded Major Duncan, after he had cast his eye at a written report, handed to him by the Sergeant, but which it was too dark to read.

“All, your honour; and all are right.”

“The ammunition—arms?”

“All in order, Major Duncan, and fit for any service.”

“You have the men named in my own draft, Dunham?”

“Without an exception, sir. Better men could not be found in the regiment.”

“You have need of the best of our men, Sergeant. This experiment has now been tried three times; always under one of the ensigns,

who have flattered me with success, but have as often failed. After so much preparation and expense, I do not like to abandon the project entirely; but this will be the last effort; and the result will mainly depend on you and on the Pathfinder."

"You may count on us both, Major Duncan. The duty you have given us is not above our habits and experience, and I think it will be well done. I know that the Pathfinder will not be wanting."

"On that, indeed, it will be safe to rely. He is a most extraordinary man, Dunham — one who long puzzled me; but who, now that I understand him, commands as much of my respect as any general in his Majesty's service."

"I was in hopes, sir, that you would come to look at the proposed marriage with Mabel as a thing I ought to wish and forward."

"As for that, Sergeant, time will show," returned Lundie, smiling; though here, too, the obscurity concealed the nicer shades of expression; — "one woman is sometimes more dif-

difficult to manage than a whole regiment of men. By the way, you know that your would-be son-in-law, the Quarter-Master, will be of the party; and I trust you will at least give him an equal chance in the trial, for your daughter's smiles."

"If respect for his rank, sir, did not cause me to do this, your honour's wish would be sufficient."

"I thank you, Sergeant. We have served much together, and ought to value each other in our several stations. Understand me, however; I ask no more for Davy Muir than a clear field and no favour. In love, as in war, each man must gain his own victories. Are you certain that the rations have been properly calculated?"

"I'll answer for it, Major Duncan; but if they were not, we cannot suffer with two such hunters as Pathfinder and the Serpent in company."

"That will never do, Dunham," interrupted Lundie sharply; "and it comes of your American birth, and American training. No

thorough soldier ever relies on anything but his commissary for supplies; and I beg no part of my regiment may be the first to set an example to the contrary."

"You have only to command, Major Duncan, to be obeyed: and yet, if I might presume, sir" —

"Speak freely, Sergeant; you are talking with a friend."

"I was merely about to say, that I find even the Scotch soldiers like venison and birds quite as well as pork, when they are difficult to be had."

"That may be very true; but likes and dislikes have nothing to do with system. An army can rely on nothing but its commissaries. The irregularity of the provincials has played the devil with the King's service too often to be winked at any longer."

"General Braddock, your honour, might have been advised by Colonel Washington."

"Out upon your Washington! You're all provincials together, man, and uphold each other as if you were of a sworn confederacy."

“ I believe his Majesty has no more loyal subjects than the Americans, your honour.”

“ In that, Dunham, I'm thinking you're right ; and I have been a little too warm, perhaps. I do not consider *you* a provincial, however, Sergeant ; for, though born in America, a better soldier never shouldered a musket.”

“ And Colonel Washington, your honour ? ” —

“ Well ! — and Colonel Washington may be a useful subject, too. He is the American prodigy ; and I suppose I may as well give him all the credit you ask. You have no doubt of the skill of this Jasper Eau-douce ? ”

“ The boy has been tried, sir, and found equal to all that can be required of him.”

“ He has a French name, and has passed much of his boyhood in the French colonies : — has he French blood in his veins, Sergeant ? ”

“ Not a drop, your honour. Jasper's father was an old comrade of my own, and his mother came of an honest and loyal family, in this very province.”

“ How came he then so much among the

French, and whence his name? He speaks the language of the Canadas, too, I find."

"That is easily explained, Major Duncan. The boy was left under the care of one of our mariners in the old war, and he took to the water like a duck. Your honour knows that we have no ports on Ontario that can be named as such, and he naturally passed most of his time on the other side of the lake, where the French have had a few vessels these fifty years. He learned to speak their language, as a matter of course, and got his name from the Indians and Canadians, who are fond of calling men by their qualities, as it might be."

"A French master is but a poor instructor for a British sailor, notwithstanding."

"I beg your pardon, sir; Jasper Eau-douce was brought up under a real English seaman; one that had sailed under the King's pennant, and may be called a thorough-bred: that is to say, a subject born in the colonies; but none the worse at his trade, I hope, Major Duncan, for that."

"Perhaps not, Sergeant, perhaps not; nor

any better. This Jasper behaved well, too, when I gave him the command of the Scud ; no lad could have conducted himself more loyally, or better."

" Or more bravely, Major Duncan. I am sorry to see, sir, that you have doubts as to the fidelity of Jasper."

" It is the duty of the soldier who is entrusted with the care of a distant and important post, like this, Dunham, never to relax in his vigilance. We have two of the most artful enemies that the world has ever produced, in their several ways, to contend with, — the Indians and the French ; and nothing should be overlooked that can lead to injury."

" I hope your honour considers me fit to be entrusted with any particular reason that may exist for doubting Jasper, since you have seen fit to entrust me with this command."

" It is not that I doubt you, Dunham, that I hesitate to reveal all I may happen to know ; but from a strong reluctance to circulate an evil report concerning one of whom I have hitherto thought well. You must think well



of the Pathfinder, or you would not wish to give him your daughter?"

"For the Pathfinder's honesty, I will answer with my life, sir," returned the Sergeant firmly, and not without a dignity of manner that struck his superior. "Such a man doesn't know how to be false."

"I believe you are right, Dunham; and yet this last information has unsettled all my old opinions. I have received an anonymous communication, Sergeant, advising me to be on my guard against Jasper Western, or Jasper Eau-douce, as he is called; who, it alleges, has been bought by the enemy, and giving me reason to expect that further and more precise information will soon be sent."

"Letters without signatures to them, sir, are scarcely to be regarded in war."

"Or in peace, Dunham. No one can entertain a lower opinion of the writer of an anonymous letter, in ordinary matters, than myself; the very act denotes cowardice, meanness, and baseness; and it usually is a token of falsehood, as well as of other vices. But, in mat-

ters of war, it is not exactly the same thing. Besides, several suspicious circumstances have been pointed out to me."

"Such as is fit for an orderly to hear, your honour?"

"Certainly, one in whom I confide as much as in yourself, Dunham. It is said, for instance, that your daughter and her party were permitted to escape the Iroquois, when they came in, merely to give Jasper credit with me. I am told that the gentry at Frontenac will care more for the capture of the Scud, with Sergeant Dunham and a party of men, together with the defeat of our favourite plan, than for the capture of a girl, and the scalp of her uncle."

"I understand the hint, sir, but I do not give it credit. Jasper can hardly be true, and Pathfinder false; and, as for the last, I would as soon distrust your honour, as distrust him."

"It would seem so, Sergeant; it would indeed seem so. But Jasper is not the Pathfinder after all, and I will own, Dunham, I

should put more faith in the lad, if he didn't speak French."

"It's no recommendation in my eyes, I assure your honour; but the boy learned it by compulsion, as it were, and ought not to be condemned too hastily for the circumstance, by your honour's leave. If he does speak French, it's because he can't well help it."

"It's a d—d lingo, and never did any one good—at least no British subject; for I suppose the French themselves must talk together, in some language or other. I should have much more faith in this Jasper, did he know nothing of their language. This letter has made me uneasy; and, were there another to whom I could trust the cutter, I would devise some means to detain him here. I have spoken to you already of a brother-in-law who goes with you, Sergeant, and who is a sailor?"

"A real seafaring-man, your honour, and somewhat prejudiced against fresh water. I doubt if he could be induced to risk his character on a lake, and I'm certain he never could find the station."

“The last is probably true, and then, the man cannot know enough of this treacherous lake to be fit for the employment. You will have to be doubly vigilant, Dunham. I give you full powers; and should you detect this Jasper in any treachery, make him a sacrifice at once to offended justice.”

“Being in the service of the Crown, your honour, he is amenable to martial law —”

“Very true; then iron him, from his head to his heels, and send him up here, in his own cutter. That brother-in-law of yours must be able to find the way back, after he has once travelled the road.”

“I make no doubt, Major Dunham, we shall be able to do all that will be necessary, should Jasper turn out as you seem to anticipate; though I think I would risk my life on his truth.”

“I like your confidence—it speaks well for the fellow: but that infernal letter! there is such an air of truth about it; nay, there is so much truth in it, touching other matters —”

“I think your honour said it wanted the

name at the bottom; a great omission for an honest man to make.”

“Quite right, Dunham, and no one but a rascal, and a cowardly rascal in the bargain, would write an anonymous letter on private affairs. It is different, however, in war; despatches are feigned, and artifice is generally allowed to be justifiable.”

“Military manly artifices, sir, if you will; such as ambushes, surprises, feints, false attacks, and even spies; but I never heard of a true soldier who could wish to undermine the character of an honest young man, by such means as these.”

“I have met with many strange events, and some stranger people, in the course of my experience. But fare you well, Sergeant; I must detain you no longer. You are now on your guard, and I recommend to you untiring vigilance. I think Muir means shortly to retire; and should you fully succeed in this enterprise, my influence will not be wanting, in endeavouring to put you in the vacancy, to which you have many claims.”

“I humbly thank your honour,” coolly returned the Sergeant, who had been encouraged in this manner, any time for the twenty preceding years, “and hope I shall never disgrace my station, whatever it may be. I am what nature and Providence have made me, and hope I’m satisfied.”

“You have not forgotten the howitzer?”

“Jasper took it on board this morning, sir.”

“Be wary, and do not trust that man unnecessarily. Make a confidant of Pathfinder at once; he may be of service in detecting any villany that may be stirring. His simple honesty will favour his observation, by concealing it. *He must* be true.”

“For him, sir, my own head shall answer, or even my rank in the regiment. I have seen him too often tried to doubt him.”

“Of all wretched sensations, Dunham, distrust, where one is compelled to confide, is the most painful. You have bethought you of the spare flints?”

“A sergeant is a safe commander for all such details, your honour.”

“Well, then, give me your hand, Dunham. God bless you! and may you be successful! Muir means to retire,—by the way, let the man have an equal chance with your daughter, for it may facilitate future operations about the promotion. One would retire more cheerfully with such a companion as Mabel, than in cheerless widowerhood, and with nothing but oneself to love,—and such a self, too, as Davy’s!”

“I hope, sir, my child will make a prudent choice, and I think her mind is already pretty much made up in favour of Pathfinder. Still she shall have fair play, though disobedience is the next crime to mutiny.”

“Have all the ammunition carefully examined and dried, as soon as you arrive; the damp of the lake may affect it: and now, once more, farewell, Sergeant. Beware of that Jasper, and consult with Muir in any difficulty. I shall expect you to return triumphant, this day month.”

“God bless your honour! if anything should happen to me, I trust to you, Major Duncan, to care for an old soldier’s character.”

“Rely on me, Dunham — you will rely on a friend. Be vigilant: remember you will be in the very jaws of the lion;—pshaw! of no lion neither; but of treacherous tigers: in their very jaws, and beyond support. Have the flints counted and examined in the morning,—and—farewell, Dunham, farewell!”

The Sergeant took the extended hand of his superior with proper respect, and they finally parted; Lundie hastening into his own movable abode, while the other left the fort, descended to the beach, and got into a boat.

Duncan of Lundie had said no more than the truth, when he spoke of the painful nature of distrust; of all the feelings of the human mind, it is that which is the most treacherous in its workings, the most insidious in its approaches, and the least at the command of a generous temperament. While doubt exists, everything may be suspected; the thoughts, having no definite facts to set bounds to their wanderings, and distrust once admitted, it is impossible to say to what extent conjecture may lead, or whither credulity may follow.



That which had previously seemed innocent, assumes the hue of guilt, as soon as this uneasy tenant has taken possession of the thoughts; and nothing is said or done without being subjected to the colourings and disfigurations of jealousy and apprehension. If this is true in ordinary affairs, it is doubly true when any heavy responsibility, involving life or death, weighs on the unsettled mind of its subject;—as in the case of the military commander, or the agent in the management of any great political interest. It is not to be supposed, then, that Sergeant Dunham, after he had parted from his commanding officer, was likely to forget the injunctions he had received. He thought highly of Jasper in general; but distrust had been insinuated between his former confidence and the obligations of duty; and, as he now felt that everything depended on his own vigilance, by the time the boat reached the side of the Scud, he was in a proper humour to let no suspicious circumstance go unheeded, or any unusual movement in the young sailor pass with-

out its comment. As a matter of course, he viewed things in the light suited to his peculiar mood ; and his precautions, as well as his distrust, partook of the habits, opinions, and education of the man.

The Scud's kedge was lifted, as soon as the boat with the Sergeant, who was the last person expected, was seen to quit the shore, and the head of the cutter was cast to the eastward by means of the sweeps. A few vigorous strokes of the latter, in which the soldiers aided, now sent the light craft into the line of the current that flowed from the river, when she was suffered to drift into the offing again. As yet there was no wind, the light and almost imperceptible air from the lake, that had existed previously to the setting of the sun, having entirely failed.

All this time an unusual quiet prevailed in the cutter. It appeared as if those on board of her felt that they were entering upon an uncertain enterprise, in the obscurity of night ; and that their duty, the hour, and the manner of their departure lent a solemnity to their

movements. Discipline also came in aid of these feelings. Most were silent; and those who did speak, spoke seldom and in low voices. In this manner, the cutter set slowly out into the lake, until she had got as far as the river-current would carry her, when she became stationary, waiting for the usual land-breeze. An interval of half an hour followed, during the whole of which time the Scud lay as motionless as a log, floating on the water. While the little changes just mentioned were occurring in the situation of the vessel, notwithstanding the general quiet that prevailed, all conversation had not been repressed; for Sergeant Dunham, having first ascertained that both his daughter and her female companion were on the quarter-deck, led the Pathfinder to the after-cabin, where, closing the door with great caution, and otherwise making certain he was beyond the reach of eaves-droppers, he commenced as follows:—

“It is now many years, my friend, since you began to experience the hardships and dangers of the woods in my company.”

“It is, Sergeant; yes it is. I sometimes fear I am too old for Mabel, who was not born until you and I had fought the Frenchers as comrades.”

“No fear on that account, Pathfinder. I was near your age before I prevailed on the mind of her mother; and Mabel is a steady thoughtful girl, one that will regard character more than anything else. A lad like Jasper Eau-douce, for instance, will have no chance with her, though he is both young and comely.”

“Does Jasper think of marrying?” inquired the guide, simply, but earnestly.

“I should hope not — at least, not until he has satisfied every one of his fitness to possess a wife.”

“Jasper is a gallant boy, and one of great gifts in his way; he may claim a wife as well as another.”

“To be frank with you, Pathfinder, I brought you here to talk about this very youngster. Major Duncan has received some information which has led him to suspect that

Eau-douce is false, and in the pay of the enemy; I wish to hear your opinion on the subject."

"Anan?"

"I say, the Major suspects Jasper of being a traitor — a French spy — or what is worse, of being bought to betray us. He has received a letter to this effect, and has been charging me to keep an eye on the boy's movements; for he fears we shall meet with enemies when we least suspect it, and by his means."

"Duncan of Lundie has told you this, Sergeant Dunham?"

"He has, indeed, Pathfinder; and though I have been loath to believe anything to the injury of Jasper, I have a feeling which tells me I ought to distrust him. Do you believe in presentiments, my friend?"

"In what, Sergeant?"

"Presentiments, — a sort of secret foreknowledge of events that are about to happen. The Scotch of our regiment are great sticklers for such things; and my opinion of Jasper is

changing so fast, that I begin to fear there must be some truth in their doctrines.”

“ But you ’ve been talking with Duncan of Lundie concerning Jasper, and his words have raised misgivings.”

“ Not it; not so in the least: for, while conversing with the Major, my feelings were altogether the other way; and I ’endeavoured to convince him all I could, that he did the boy injustice. But there is no use in holding out against a presentiment, I find; and I fear there is something in the suspicion after all.”

“ I know nothing of presentiments, Sergeant; but I have known Jasper Eau-douce since he was a boy, and I have as much faith in his honesty as I have in my own, or that of the Serpent himself.”

“ But the Serpent, Pathfinder, has his tricks and ambushes in war as well as another.”

“ Ay, them are his nat’ral gifts, and are such as belong to his people. Neither red-skin nor pale-face can deny natur’; but Chingachgook is not a man to feel a presentiment against.”

“That I believe; nor should I have thought ill of Jasper this very morning. It seems to me, Pathfinder, since I’ve taken up this presentiment, that the lad does not bustle about his deck naturally, as he used to do; but that he is silent, and moody, and thoughtful, like a man who has a load on his conscience.”

“Jasper is never noisy; and he tells me noisy ships are generally ill-worked ships. Master Cap agrees in this, too. No, no; I will believe nought against Jasper until I see it. Send for your brother, Sergeant, and let us question him in this matter; for to sleep with distrust of one’s friend in the heart, is like sleeping with lead there. I have no faith in your presentiments.”

The Sergeant, although he scarcely knew himself with what object, complied, and Cap was summoned to join in the consultation. As Pathfinder was more collected than his companion, and felt so strong a conviction of the good faith of the party accused, he assumed the office of spokesman.

“We have asked you to come down, Mas-

ter Cap," he commenced, "in order to inquire if you have remarked anything out of the common way in the movements of Eau-douce this evening."

"His movements are common enough, I dare say, for fresh water, Master Pathfinder, though we should think most of his proceedings irregular, down on the coast."

"Yes, yes; we know you will never agree with the lad about the manner the cutter ought to be managed; but it is on another point we wish your opinion."

The Pathfinder then explained to Cap the nature of the suspicions which the Sergeant entertained, and the reasons why they had been excited, so far as the latter had been communicated by Major Duncan.

"The youngster talks French, does he?" said Cap.

"They say he speaks it better than common," returned the Sergeant gravely. "Pathfinder knows this to be true."

"I'll not gainsay it, I'll not gainsay it," answered the guide: "at least, they tell me



such is the fact. But this would prove nothing ag'in' a Mississagua, and, least of all, ag'in' one like Jasper. I speak the Mingo dialect myself, having learnt it while a prisoner among the reptyles; but who will say I am their friend? Not that I am an enemy either, according to Indian notions; though I am their enemy, I will admit, agreeable to Christianity."

"Ay, Pathfinder; — but Jasper did not get his French as a prisoner: he took it in boyhood, when the mind is easily impressed, and gets its permanent notions; when nature has a presentiment, as it were, which way the character is likely to incline."

"A very just remark," added Cap, "for that is the time of life when we all learn the Catechism, and other moral improvements. The Sergeant's observation shows that he understands human nature, and I agree with him perfectly; it is a damnable thing for a youngster, up here, on this bit of fresh water, to talk French. If it were down on the Atlantic now, where a seafaring-man has occasion some-

times to converse with a pilot, or a linguister, in that language, I should not think so much of it, — though we always look with suspicion, even there, at a shipmate who knows too much of the tongue; but up here, on Ontario, I hold it to be a most suspicious circumstance.”

“But Jasper must talk in French to the people on the other shore,” said Pathfinder, “or hold his tongue, as there are none but French to speak to.”

“You don’t mean to tell me, Pathfinder, that France lies hereaway, on the opposite coast?” cried Cap, jerking a thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Canadas: “that one side of this bit of fresh water is York, and the other, France?”

“I mean to tell you this is York, and that is Upper Canada; and that English and Dutch and Indian are spoken in the first, and French and Indian in the last. Even the Mingos have got many of the French words in their dialect, and it is no improvement, neither.”

“Very true: — and what sort of people are the Mingos, my friend?” inquired the Ser-

geant, touching the other on his shoulder, by way of enforcing a remark, the inherent truth of which sensibly increased its value in the eyes of the speaker: "no one knows them better than yourself, and I ask you what sort of a tribe are they?"

"Jasper is no Mingo, Sergeant."

"He speaks French, and he might as well be, in that particular. Brother Cap, can you recollect no movement of this unfortunate young man in the way of his calling, that would seem to denote treachery?"

"Not distinctly, Sergeant, though he has gone to work wrong-end foremost half his time. It is true, that one of his hands coiled a rope against the sun, and he called it *querling* a rope, too, when I asked him what he was about; but I am not certain that anything was meant by it; though, I dare say, the French coil half their running rigging the wrong way, and may call it, 'querling it down,' too, for that matter. Then Jasper himself belayed the end of the jib-halyards to a stretcher in the rigging, instead of bringing

in to the mast, where they belong, at least among British sailors."

"I dare say Jasper may have got some Canada notions about working his craft, from being so much on the other side—" Pathfinder interposed; "but catching an idee, or a word, isn't treachery and bad faith. I sometimes get an idee from the Mingos themselves; but my heart has always been with the Delawares. No, no, Jasper is true; and the King might trust him with his crown, just as he would trust his eldest son, who, as he is to wear it one day, ought to be the last man to wish to steal it."

"Fine talking, fine talking!" said Cap, rising to spit out of the cabin-window, as is customary with men when they most feel their own great moral strength, and happen to chew tobacco; "all fine talking, Master Pathfinder, but d—d little logic. In the first place, the King's majesty cannot lend his crown, it being contrary to the laws of the realm, which require him to wear it at all times, in order that his sacred person may be known, just as the

silver oar is necessary to a sheriff's officer afloat. In the next place, it's high treason, by law, for the eldest son of his Majesty ever to covet the crown or to have a child, except in lawful wedlock, as either would derange the succession. Thus you see, friend Pathfinder, that in order to reason truly, one must get under way, as it might be, on the right tack. Law is reason, and reason is philosophy, and philosophy is a steady drag; whence it follows that crowns are regulated by law, reason, and philosophy."

"I know little of all this, Master Cap; but nothing short of seeing and feeling will make me think Jasper Western a traitor."

"There you are wrong again, Pathfinder; for there is a way of proving a thing much more conclusively than by either seeing or feeling, or by both together: and that is by a circumstance."

"It may be so, in the settlements; but it is not so, here, on the lines."

"It is so in nature, which is monarch over all. Now, according to our senses, young

Eau-douce is this moment on deck, and by going up there, either of us might see and feel him; but, should it afterwards appear that a fact was communicated to the French at this precise moment, which fact no one but Jasper *could* communicate; why, we should be bound to believe that the circumstance was true, and that our eyes and fingers deceived us. Any lawyer will tell you that."

"This is hardly right," said Pathfinder; "nor is it possible, seeing that it is ag'in' fact."

"It is much more than possible, my worthy guide; it is law; absolute King's law of the realm, and, as such, to be respected and obeyed. I'd hang my own brother on such testimony, no reflections on the family being meant, Sergeant."

"God knows how far all this applies to Jasper; though I do believe Mr. Cap is right, as to the law, Pathfinder; circumstances being much stronger than the senses, on such occasions. We must all of us be watchful, and nothing suspicious should be overlooked."

"Now I recollect me," continued Cap, again

using the window, "there was a circumstance, just after we came on board this evening, that is extremely suspicious, and which may be set down at once as a makeweight against this lad. Jasper bent on the King's ensign, with his own hands; and while he pretended to be looking at Mabel and the soldier's wife, giving directions about showing them below here, and all that, he got the flag union down!"

"That might have been accident," returned the Sergeant, "for such a thing has happened to myself; besides, the halyards lead to a pulley, and the flag would have come right, or not, according to the manner in which the lad hoisted it."

"A pulley!" exclaimed Cap, with strong disgust; "I wish, Sergeant Dunham, I could prevail on you to use proper terms. An ensign-halyard-block is no more a pulley, than your halbert is a boarding-pike. It is true, that by hoisting on one part, another part would go uppermost; but I look upon that affair of the ensign, now you have mentioned your suspicions, as a circumstance, and shall

bear it in mind. I trust supper is not to be overlooked, however, even if we have a hold full of traitors."

"It will be duly attended to, brother Cap; but I shall count on you, for aid in managing the Scud, should anything occur to induce me to arrest Jasper."

"I'll not fail you, Sergeant; and in such an event you'll probably learn what this cutter can really perform; for, as yet, I fancy it is pretty much matter of guess-work."

"Well, for my part," said Pathfinder, drawing a heavy sigh, "I shall cling to the hope of Jasper's innocence, and recommend plain dealing, by asking the lad himself, without further delay, whether he is or is not a traitor. I'll put Jasper Western against all the pre-sentiments and circumstances in the colony."

"That will never do," rejoined the Sergeant. "The responsibility of this affair rests with me, and I request and enjoin, that nothing be said to any one without my knowledge. We will all keep watchful eyes about us, and take proper note of circumstances."



“Ay, ay! circumstances are the things after all,” returned Cap. “One circumstance is worth fifty facts. That I know to be the law of the realm. Many a man has been hanged on circumstances.”

The conversation now ceased, and after a short delay, the whole party returned to the deck, each individual disposed to view the conduct of the suspected Jasper in the manner most suited to his own habits and character.

## CHAPTER IV.

Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,  
So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone,  
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,  
And would have told him, half his Troy was burned.

SHAKESPEARE.

ALL this time, matters were elsewhere passing in their usual train. Jasper, like the weather and his vessel, seemed to be waiting for the land-breeze; while the soldiers, accustomed to early rising, had, to a man, sought their pallets in the main hold. None remained on deck but the people of the cutter, Mr. Muir, and the two females. The Quarter-Master was endeavouring to render himself agreeable to Mabel, while our heroine herself, little affected by his assiduities, which she ascribed partly to the habitual gallantry of a soldier, and partly, perhaps, to her own pretty

face, was enjoying the peculiarities of a scene and situation that, to her, were full of the charms of novelty.

The sails had been hoisted, but as yet not a breath of air was in motion ; and so still and placid was the lake, that not the smallest motion was perceptible in the cutter. She had drifted in the river-current to a distance a little exceeding a quarter of a mile from the land, and there she lay, beautiful in her symmetry and form, but like a fixture. Young Jasper was on the quarter-deck, near enough to hear occasionally the conversation which passed ; but too diffident of his own claim, and too intent on his duties, to attempt to mingle in it. The fine blue eyes of Mabel followed his motions in curious expectation, and more than once the Quarter-Master had to repeat his compliments ere she heard them, so intent was she on the little occurrences of the vessel, and, we might add, so indifferent to the eloquence of her companion. At length, even Mr. Muir became silent, and there was a deep stillness on the water. Presently an oar-

blade fell in a boat, beneath the fort, and the sound reached the cutter as distinctly as if it had been produced on her deck. Then came a murmur, like a sigh of the night, a fluttering of the canvass, the creaking of the boom, and the flap of the jib. These well-known sounds were followed by a slight heel in the cutter, and by the bellying of all the sails.

“Here ’s the wind, Anderson,” called out Jasper to the oldest of his sailors; “take the helm.”

This brief order was obeyed; the helm was put up, the cutter’s bows fell off; and, in a few minutes, the water was heard murmuring under her head, as the Scud glanced through the lake at the rate of five miles in the hour. All this passed in profound silence, when Jasper again gave the order to “ease off the sheets a little, and keep her along the land.”

It was at this instant that the party from the after-cabin reappeared on the quarter-deck.

“You’ve no inclination, Jasper lad, to trust yourself too near our neighbours the French,”

observed Muir, who took that occasion to recommence the discourse. "Well, well, your prudence will never be questioned by me, for I like the Canadas as little as you can possibly like them yourself."

"I hug this shore, Mr. Muir, on account of the wind. The land-breeze is always freshest close in, provided you are not so near as to make a lee of the trees. We have Mexico Bay to cross; and that, on the present course, will give us quite offing enough."

"I'm right glad it's not the Bay of Mexico," put in Cap, "which is a part of the world I would rather not visit in one of your inland craft. Does your cutter bear a weather helm, Master Eau-douce?"

"She is easy on her rudder, Master Cap; but likes looking up at the breeze as well as another, when in lively motion."

"I suppose you have such things as reefs, though you can hardly have occasion to use them?"

Mabel's bright eye detected the smile that gleamed, for an instant, on Jasper's handsome

face; but no one else saw that momentary exhibition of surprise and contempt.

“We have reefs, and often have occasion to use them,” quietly returned the young man. “Before we get in, Master Cap, an opportunity may offer to show you the manner in which we do so; for there is easterly weather brewing, and the wind cannot chop, even on the ocean itself, more readily than it flies round on Lake Ontario.”

“So much for knowing no better! I have seen the wind, in the Atlantic, fly round like a coach-wheel, in a way to keep your sails shaking for an hour, and the ship would become perfectly motionless from not knowing which way to turn.”

“We have no such sudden changes here, certainly,” Jasper mildly answered; “though we think ourselves liable to unexpected shifts of wind. I hope, however, to carry this land-breeze as far as the first islands; after which, there will be less danger of our being seen and followed by any of the look-out boats from Frontenac.”

“Do you think the French keep spies out on the broad lake, Jasper?” inquired the Pathfinder.

“We know they do; one was off Oswego, during the night of Monday last. A bark canoe came close in with the eastern point, and landed an Indian and an officer. Had you been out-lying that night, as usual, we should have secured one, if not both of them.”

It was too dark to betray the colour that deepened on the weather-burnt features of the guide; for he felt the consciousness of having lingered in the fort that night, listening to the sweet tones of Mabel's voice, as she sang ballads to her father, and gazing at a countenance that, to him, was radiant with charms. Probity in thought and deed being the distinguishing quality of this extraordinary man's mind, while he felt that a sort of disgrace ought to attach to his idleness, on the occasion mentioned, the last thought that could occur would be to attempt to palliate or deny his negligence.

“I confess it, Jasper, I confess it,” he said, humbly. “Had I been out that night,—and I now recollect no sufficient reason why I was not,—it might, indeed, have turned out as you say.”

“It was the evening you passed with us, Pathfinder,” Mabel innocently remarked; “surely one who lives so much of his time in the forest, in front of the enemy, may be excused for giving a few hours of his time to an old friend and his daughter.”

“Nay, nay, I’ve done little else but idle since we reached the garrison,” returned the other, sighing; “and it is well that the lad should tell me of it: the idler needs a rebuke—yes, he needs a rebuke.”

“Rebuke! Pathfinder; I never dreamt of saying anything disagreeable, and least of all would I think of rebuking you; because a solitary spy, and an Indian or two, have escaped us. Now I know where you were, I think your absence the most natural thing in the world.”

“I think nothing of it, Jasper; I think



nothing of what you said, since it was deserved. We are all human, and all do wrong."

"This is unkind, Pathfinder."

"Give me your hand, lad, give me your hand. It wasn't you that gave the lesson; it was conscience."

"Well, well," interrupted Cap, "now this latter matter is settled to the satisfaction of all parties, perhaps you will tell us how it happened to be known that there were spies near us, so lately. This looks amazingly like a circumstance."

As the mariner uttered the last sentence, he pressed a foot sily on that of the Sergeant, and nudged the guide with his elbow, winking, at the same time, though this sign was lost in the obscurity.

"It is known, because their trail was found next day by the Serpent, and it was that of a military boot and a moccasin. One of our hunters, moreover, saw the canoe crossing towards Frontenac next morning."

"Did the trail lead near the garrison, Jas-

per," Pathfinder asked in a manner so meek and subdued, that it resembled the tone of a rebuked school-boy. "Did the trail lead near the garrison, lad?"

"We thought not; though, of course, it did not cross the river. It was followed down to the eastern point, at the river's mouth, where what was doing in port might be seen; but it did not cross, as we could discover."

"And why didn't you get under way, Master Jasper," Cap demanded, "and give chase? On Tuesday morning it blew a good breeze; one in which this cutter might have run nine knots."

"That may do on the ocean, Master Cap," put in Pathfinder, "but it would not do here. Water leaves no trail, and a Mingo and a Frenchman are a match for the devil, in a pursuit."

"Who wants a trail, when the chase can be seen from the deck, as Jasper, here, said was the case with this canoe? and it mattered nothing if there were twenty of your Mingos and Frenchmen, with a good British-built

bottom in their wake. I'll engage, Master Eau-deuce, had you given me a call, that said Tuesday morning, that we should have overhauled the blackguards."

"I dare say, Master Cap, that the advice of as old a seaman as you might have done no harm to as young a sailor as myself, but it is a long and a hopeless chase that has a bark canoe in it."

"You would have had only to press it hard, to drive it ashore."

"Ashore, Master Cap! You do not understand our lake navigation at all, if you suppose it an easy matter to force a bark canoe ashore. As soon as they find themselves pressed, these bubbles paddle right into the wind's eye, and before you know it, you find yourself a mile or two dead under their lee."

"You don't wish me to believe, Master Jasper, that any one is so heedless of drowning, as to put off into this lake, in one of them egg-shells, when there is any wind?"

"I have often crossed Ontario in a bark canoe, even when there has been a good deal of

sea on. Well managed, they are the driest boats of which we have any knowledge."

Cap now led his brother-in-law and Pathfinder aside, when he assured him that the admission of Jasper concerning the spies was "a circumstance," and "a strong circumstance," and as such, it deserved his deliberate investigation; while his account of the canoes was so improbable, as to wear the appearance of browbeating the listeners. Jasper spoke confidently of the character of the two individuals who had landed, and this Cap deemed pretty strong proof that he knew more about them than was to be gathered from a mere trail. As for moccasins, he said that they were worn in that part of the world by white men as well as by Indians; he had purchased a pair himself; and boots, it was notorious, did not particularly make a soldier. Although much of this logic was thrown away on the Sergeant, still it produced some effect. He thought it a little singular himself, that there should have been spies detected so near the fort and he know nothing of it; nor did he

believe that this was a branch of knowledge that fell particularly within the sphere of Jasper. It was true that the Scud had, once or twice, been sent across the lake to land men of this character, or to bring them off; but then the part played by Jasper, to his own certain knowledge, was very secondary, the master of the cutter remaining as ignorant as any one else of the purport of the visits of those whom he had carried to and fro; nor did he see why he alone, of all present, should know anything of the late visit. Pathfinder viewed the matter differently. With his habitual diffidence, he reproached himself with a neglect of duty, and that knowledge, of which the want struck him as a fault in one whose business it was to possess it, appeared a merit in the young man. He saw nothing extraordinary in Jasper's knowing the facts he had related; while he did feel it was unusual, not to say disgraceful, that he himself now heard of them for the first time.

“As for moccasins, Master Cap,” he said, when a short pause invited him to speak,

“ they may be worn by pale-faces as well as by red-skins, it is true, though they never leave the same trail on the foot of one, as on the foot of the other. Any one who is used to the woods, can tell the footstep of an Indian from the footstep of a white man, whether it be made by a boot or a moccasin. It will need better evidence than this to persuade me into the belief that Jasper is false.”

“ You will allow, Pathfinder, that there are such things in the world as traitors?” put in Cap logically.

“ I never knew an honest-minded Mingo, — one that you could put faith in, if he had a temptation to deceive you. Cheating seems to be their gift, and I sometimes think they ought to be pitied for it, rather than persecuted.”

“ Then why not believe that this Jasper may have the same weakness? A man is a man, and human nature is sometimes but a poor concern, as I know by experience : I may say well know by experience,—at least, I speak from my own human nature.”

This was the opening of another long and desultory conversation, in which the probability of Jasper's guilt or innocence was argued pro and con, until both the Sergeant and his brother-in-law had nearly reasoned themselves into settled convictions in favour of the first, while their companion grew sturdier and sturdier in his defence of the accused, and still more fixed in his opinion of his being unjustly charged with treachery. In this there was nothing out of the common course of things; for there is no more certain way of arriving at any particular notion, than by undertaking to defend it; and among the most obstinate of our opinions may be classed those which are derived from discussions in which we affect to search for truth, while in reality we are only fortifying prejudice. By this time, the Sergeant had reached a state of mind that disposed him to view every act of the young sailor with distrust, and he soon got to coincide with his relative in deeming the peculiar knowledge of Jasper, in reference to the spies, a branch of information that certainly did not

come within the circle of his regular duties as "a circumstance."

While this matter was thus discussed near the taffrail, Mabel sat silently by the companion-way, Mr. Muir having gone below to look after his personal comforts, and Jasper standing a little aloof, with his arms crossed, and his eyes wandering from the sails to the clouds, from the clouds to the dusky outline of the shore, from the shore to the lake, and from the lake back again to the sails. Our heroine, too, began to commune with her own thoughts. The excitement of the late journey, the incidents which marked the day of her arrival at the fort, the meeting with a father who was virtually a stranger to her, the novelty of her late situation in the garrison, and her present voyage, formed a vista for the mind's-eye to look back through, that seemed lengthened into months. She could with difficulty believe that she had so recently left the town, with all the usages of civilized life; and she wondered in particular that the incidents which had oc-



curred during the descent of the Oswego, had made so little impression on her mind. Too inexperienced to know that events, when crowded, have the effect of time, or that the quick succession of novelties that pass before us in travelling elevates objects, in a measure, to the dignity of events, she drew upon her memory for days and dates, in order to make certain that she had known Jasper, and the Pathfinder, and her own father, but little more than a fortnight. Mabel was a girl of heart rather than of imagination, though by no means deficient in the last, and she could not easily account for the strength of her feelings in connection with those who were so lately strangers to her; for she was not sufficiently accustomed to analyze her sensations to understand the nature of the influences that have just been mentioned. As yet, however, her pure mind was free from the blight of distrust, and she had no suspicion of the views of either of her suitors; and one of the last thoughts that could have voluntarily disturbed

her confidence would have been, to suppose it possible either of her companions was a traitor to his King and country.

America, at the time of which we are writing, was remarkable for its attachment to the German family, that then sat on the British throne; for, as is the fact with all provinces, the virtues and qualities that are proclaimed near the centre of power, as incense and policy, get to be a part of political faith, with the credulous and ignorant, at a distance. This truth is just as apparent to-day, in connection with the prodigies of the republic, as it then was in connection with those distant rulers, whose merits it was always safe to applaud, and whose demerits it was treason to reveal. It is a consequence of this mental dependence, that public opinion is so much placed at the mercy of the designing; and the world, in the midst of its idle boasts of knowledge and improvement, is left to receive its truths, on all such points as touch the interests of the powerful and managing, through such a medium, and such a medium only, as may serve the parti-

cular views of those who pull the wires. Pressed upon by the subjects of France, who were then encircling the British colonies with a belt of forts and settlements that completely secured the savages for allies, it would have been difficult to say, whether the Americans loved the English more than they hated the French; and those who then lived, probably would have considered the alliance which took place between the cis-Atlantic subjects and the ancient rivals of the British Crown, some twenty years later, as an event entirely without the circle of probabilities. In a word, as fashions are exaggerated in a province, so are opinions; and the loyalty that, in London, merely formed a part of a political scheme, at New York was magnified into a faith that might almost have moved mountains. Disaffection was, consequently, a rare offence; and, most of all, would treason, that should favour France or Frenchmen, have been odious in the eyes of the provincials. The last thing that Mabel would suspect of Jasper, was the very crime with which he now stood secretly charged;

and, if others near her endured the pains of distrust, she, at least, was filled with the generous confidence of a woman. As yet, no whisper had reached her ear to disturb the feeling of reliance with which she had early regarded the young sailor, and her own mind would have been the last to suggest such a thought of itself. The pictures of the past and of the present, therefore, that exhibited themselves so rapidly to her active imagination, were unclouded with a shade that might affect any in whom she felt an interest; and ere she had mused, in the manner related, a quarter of an hour, the whole scene around her was filled with unalloyed satisfaction.

The season and the night, to represent them truly, were of a nature to stimulate the sensations which youth, health, and happiness are wont to associate with novelty. The weather was warm, as is not always the case in that region even in summer, while the air that came off the land, in breathing currents, brought with it the coolness and fragrance of the forest. The wind was far from being

fresh, though there was enough of it to drive the Scud merrily ahead, and, perhaps, to keep attention alive, in the uncertainty that more or less accompanies darkness. Jasper, however, appeared to regard it with complacency, as was apparent by what he said in a short dialogue that now occurred between him and Mabel.

“At this rate, Eau-douce,” for so Mabel had already learned to style the young sailor, said our heroine, “we cannot be long in reaching our place of destination.”

“Has your father then told you what that is, Mabel?”

“He has told me nothing; my father is too much of a soldier, and too little used to have a family around him, to talk of such matters. Is it forbidden to say whither we are bound?”

“It cannot be far, while we steer in this direction, for sixty or seventy miles will take us into the St. Lawrence, which the French might make too hot for us; and no voyage on this lake can be very long.”

“So says my uncle Cap; but to me, Jasper, Ontario and the ocean appear very much the same.”

“You have then been on the ocean; while I, who pretend to be a sailor, have never yet seen salt-water. You must have a great contempt for such a mariner as myself, in your heart, Mabel Dunham?”

“Then I have no such thing, in my heart, Jasper Eau-douce. What right have I, a girl without experience or knowledge, to despise any, much less one like you, who are trusted by the Major, and who command a vessel like this? I have never been on the ocean, though I have seen it; and, I repeat, I see no difference between this lake and the Atlantic.”

“Nor in them that sail on both? I was afraid, Mabel, your uncle had said so much against us fresh-water sailors, that you had begun to look upon us as little better than pretenders?”

“Give yourself no uneasiness on that account, Jasper; for I know my uncle, and he says as many things against those who live

ashore, when at York, as he now says against those who sail on fresh water. No, no; neither my father, nor myself, think anything of such opinions. My uncle Cap, if he spoke openly, would be found to have even a worse notion of a soldier, than of a sailor who never saw the sea."

"But your father, Mabel, has a better opinion of soldiers than of any one else? he wishes you to be the wife of a soldier?"

"Jasper Eau-douce!—I, the wife of a soldier! My father wishes it! Why should he wish any such thing? what soldier is there in the garrison that I could marry—that he could *wish me* to marry?"

"One may love a calling so well, as to fancy it will cover a thousand imperfections."

"But one is not likely to love his own calling so well, as to cause him to overlook everything else. You say my father wishes me to marry a soldier; and yet there is no soldier, at Oswego, that he would be likely to give me to. I am in an awkward position; for while I am not good enough to be the wife

of one of the gentlemen of the garrison, I think, even you will admit, Jasper, I am too good to be the wife of one of the common soldiers."

As Mabel spoke thus frankly she blushed, she knew not why, though the obscurity concealed the fact from her companion; and she laughed faintly, like one who felt that the subject, however embarrassing it might be, deserved to be treated fairly. Jasper, it would seem, viewed her position differently from herself.

"It is true, Mabel," he said, "you are not what is called a lady, in the common meaning of the word —"

"Not in any meaning, Jasper," the generous girl eagerly interrupted; "on that head, I have no vanities, I hope. Providence has made me the daughter of a sergeant, and I am content to remain in the station in which I was born."

"But all do not remain in the stations in which they were born, Mabel; for some rise above them, and some fall below them. Many



sergeants have become officers—even generals ; and why may not sergeants' daughters become officers' ladies ? ”

“ In the case of Sergeant Dunham's daughter, I know no better reason than the fact that no officer is likely to wish to make her his wife,” returned Mabel, laughing.

“ *You* may think so ; but there are some in the 55th that know better. There is certainly one officer in that regiment, Mabel, who *does* wish to make you his wife.”

Quick as the flashing lightning, the rapid thoughts of Mabel Dunham glanced over the five or six subalterns of the corps, who, by age and inclinations, would be the most likely to form such a wish ; and we should do injustice to her habits, perhaps, were we not to say that a lively sensation of pleasure rose momentarily in her bosom, at the thought of being raised above a station which, whatever might be her professions of contentment, she felt that she had been too well educated to fill with perfect satisfaction. But this emotion was as transient as it was sudden ; for Mabel Dunham was

a girl of too much pure and womanly feeling to view the marriage tie, through anything so worldly as the mere advantages of station. The passing emotion was a thrill produced by factitious habits, while the more settled opinion which remained was the offspring of nature and principles.

“ I know no officer in the 55th, or any other regiment, who would be likely to do so foolish a thing; nor do I think I myself would do so foolish a thing as to marry an officer.”

“ Foolish ! Mabel.”

“ Yes, foolish, Jasper. You know, as well as I can know, what the world would think of such matters; and I should be sorry, very sorry, to find that my husband ever regretted that he had so far yielded to a fancy for a face or a figure, as to have married the daughter of one so much his inferior as a sergeant.”

“ *Your* husband, Mabel, will not be so likely to think of the father, as to think of the daughter.”

The girl was talking with spirit, though feeling evidently entered into her part of the

discourse ; but she paused for nearly a minute after Jasper had made the last observation, before she uttered another word. Then she continued in a manner less playful, and one critically attentive might have fancied in a manner that was slightly melancholy :—

“Parent and child ought so to live as not to have two hearts, or two modes of feeling and thinking. A common interest in all things I should think as necessary to happiness in man and wife, as between the other members of the same family. Most of all, ought neither the man nor the woman to have any unusual cause for unhappiness, the world furnishing so many of itself.”

“Am I to understand, then, Mabel, you would refuse to marry an officer, merely because he was an officer?”

“Have you a right to ask such a question, Jasper?” said Mabel, smiling.

“No other right, than what a strong desire to see you happy can give, which, after all may be very little. My anxiety has been increased, from happening to know that it is

your father's intention to persuade you to marry Lieutenant Muir."

"My dear, dear father, can entertain no notion so ridiculous; no notion so cruel!"

"Would it, then, be cruel to wish you the wife of a Quarter-Master?"

"I have told you what I think on that subject, and cannot make my words stronger. Having answered you so frankly, Jasper, I have a right to ask how you know that my father thinks of any such thing?"

"That he has chosen a husband for you, I know from his own mouth; for he has told me this much during our frequent conversations, while he has been superintending the shipment of the stores: and that Mr. Muir is to offer for you, I know from the officer himself, who has told me as much. By putting the two things together, I have come to the opinion mentioned."

"May not my dear father, Jasper,"—Mabel's face glowed like fire while she spoke, though her words escaped her slowly, and by a sort of involuntary impulse,—“May not my

dear father have been thinking of another? It does not follow, from what you say, that Mr. Muir was in his mind."

"Is it not probable, Mabel, from all that has passed? What brings the Quarter-Master here? He has never found it necessary, before, to accompany the parties that have gone below: he thinks of you for his wife; and your father has made up his own mind that you shall be so. You must see, Mabel, that Mr. Muir follows *you*?"

Mabel made no answer. Her feminine instinct had, indeed, told her that she was an object of admiration with the Quarter-Master, though she had hardly supposed to the extent that Jasper believed: and she, too, had even gathered from the discourse of her father, that he thought seriously of having her disposed of in marriage; but by no process of reasoning could she ever have arrived at the inference that Mr. Muir was to be the man. She did not believe it now, though she was far from suspecting the truth. Indeed, it was her own opinion, that these casual remarks of her

father, which had struck her, had proceeded from a general wish to have her settled, rather than from any desire to see her united to any particular individual. These thoughts, however, she kept secret; for self-respect and feminine reserve showed her the impropriety of making them the subject of discussion with her present companion. By way of changing the conversation, therefore, after the pause had lasted long enough to be embarrassing to both parties, she said,—

“Of one thing you may be certain, Jasper; and that is all I wish to say on the subject:—Lieutenant Muir, though he were a colonel, will never be the husband of Mabel Dunham. And now, tell me of your voyage;—when will it end?”

“That is uncertain. Once afloat, we are at the mercy of the winds and waves. Pathfinder will tell you, that he who begins to chase the deer in the morning, cannot tell where he will sleep at night.”

“But we are not chasing a deer; nor is it morning: so Pathfinder’s moral is thrown away.”

“Although we are not chasing a deer, we are after that which may be as hard to catch. I can tell you no more than I have said already ; for it is our duty to be close-mouthed, whether anything depends on it or not. I am afraid, however, I shall not keep you long enough in the Scud to show you what she can do at need.”

“I think a woman unwise who ever marries a sailor,” said Mabel, abruptly, and almost involuntarily.

“This is a strange opinion ; why do you hold it ?”

“Because a sailor’s wife is certain to have a rival in his vessel. My uncle Cap, too, says that a sailor should never marry.”

“He means salt-water sailors,” returned Jasper, laughing. “If he thinks wives not good enough for those who sail on the ocean, he will fancy them just suited to those who sail on the lakes. I hope, Mabel, you do not take your opinions of us fresh-water mariners from all that Master Cap says.”

“Sail, ho !” exclaimed the very individual

of whom they were conversing ; “ or boat, ho ! would be nearer the truth.”

Jasper ran forward ; and, sure enough, a small object was discernible about a hundred yards ahead of the cutter, and nearly on her lee bow. At the first glance, he saw it was a bark canoe ; for, though the darkness prevented hues from being distinguished, the eye that had got to be accustomed to the night, might discern forms at some little distance ; and the eye which, like Jasper’s, had long been familiar with things aquatic, could not be at a loss in discovering the outlines necessary to come to the conclusion he did.

“ This may be an enemy,” the young man remarked ; “ and it may be well to overhaul him.”

“ He is paddling with all his might, lad,” observed the Pathfinder, “ and means to cross your bows and get to windward, when you might as well chase a full-grown buck on snow-shoes !”

“ Let her luff !” cried Jasper, to the man at the helm. “ Luff up, till she shakes, — there, steady, and hold all that.”



The helmsman complied ; and as the Scud was now dashing the water aside merrily, a minute or two put the canoe so far to leeward as to render escape impracticable. Jasper now sprang to the helm himself ; and by judicious and careful handling, he got so near his chase that it was secured by a boat-hook. On receiving an order, the two persons who were in the canoe left it, and no sooner had they reached the deck of the cutter, than they were found to be Arrowhead and his wife.

## CHAPTER V.

What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,  
That learning is too proud to gather up ;  
But which the poor and the despised of all  
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ?  
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

COWPER.

THE meeting with the Indian and his wife excited no surprise in the majority of those who witnessed the occurrence ; but Mabel, and all who knew of the manner in which this chief had been separated from the party of Cap, simultaneously entertained suspicions, which it was far easier to feel than to follow out, by any plausible clue to certainty. Pathfinder, who alone could converse freely with the prisoners, for such they might now be considered, took Arrowhead aside, and held a long conversation with him, concerning the reasons of the latter for

having deserted his charge, and the manner in which he had been since employed.

The Tuscarora met these inquiries, and he gave his answers with the stoicism of an Indian. As respects the separation, his excuses were very simply made, and they seemed to be sufficiently plausible. When he found that the party was discovered in its place of concealment, he naturally sought his own safety, which he secured by plunging into the woods; for he made no doubt that all who could not effect this much would be massacred on the spot. In a word, he had run away, in order to save his life.

“This is well,” returned Pathfinder, affecting to believe the other’s apologies; “my brother did very wisely; but his woman followed?”

“Do not the pale-faces’ women follow their husbands? Would not Pathfinder have looked back to see if one he loved was coming?”

This appeal was made to the guide while he was in a most fortunate frame of mind to admit its force; for Mabel, and her blandish-

ments and constancy, were getting to be images familiar to his thoughts. The Tuscarora, though he could not trace the reason, saw that his excuse was admitted, and he stood, with quiet dignity, awaiting the next inquiry.

“This is reasonable and natural,” returned Pathfinder in English, passing from one language to the other, insensibly to himself, as his feelings or habit dictated; “this is natural, and may be so. A woman would be likely to follow the man to whom she had plighted faith, and husband and wife are one flesh. Mabel, herself, would have been likely to follow the Sergeant, had he been present, and retreated in this manner; and, no doubt, no doubt, the warm-hearted girl would have followed her husband. Your words are honest, Tuscarora,” changing the language to the dialect of the other. “Your words are honest, and very pleasant, and just. But why has my brother been so long from the fort? his friends have thought of him often, but have never seen him.”

“ If the doe follows the buck, ought not the buck to follow the doe ? ” answered the Tuscarora, smiling, as he laid a finger significantly on the shoulder of his interrogator. “ Arrowhead’s wife followed Arrowhead ; it was right in Arrowhead to follow his wife. She lost her way, and they made her cook in a strange wigwam.”

“ I understand you, Tuscarora. The woman fell into the hands of the Mingos, and you kept upon their trail.”

“ Pathfinder can see a reason, as easily as he can see the moss on the trees. It is so.”

“ And how long have you got the woman back, and in what manner has it been done ? ”

“ Two suns. The Dew-of-June was not long in coming, when her husband whispered to her the path.”

“ Well, well, all this seems natural, and according to matrimony. But, Tuscarora, how did you get that canoe, and why are you paddling towards the St. Lawrence, instead of the garrison ? ”

“ Arrowhead can tell his own from that of

another. This canoe is mine ; I found it on the shore, near the fort."

"That sounds reasonable, too, for the canoe does belong to the man, and an Indian would make few words about taking it. Still, it is extraordinary that we saw nothing of the fellow and his wife, for the canoe must have left the river before we did ourselves."

This idea, which passed rapidly through the mind of the guide, was now put to the Indian in the shape of a question.

"Pathfinder knows that a warrior can have shame. The father would have asked me for his daughter, and I could not give him to her. I sent the Dew-of-June for the canoe, and no one spoke to the woman. A Tuscarora woman would not be free in speaking to strange men."

All this, too, was plausible, and in conformity with Indian character and Indian customs. As was usual, Arrowhead had received one half of his compensation previously to quitting the Mohawk ; and his refraining to demand the residue was a proof of that con-

scientific consideration of mutual rights that quite as often distinguishes the morality of a savage, as that of a Christian. To one as upright as Pathfinder, Arrowhead had conducted himself with delicacy and propriety, though it would have been more in accordance with his own frank nature, to have met the father, and abided by the simple truth. Still, accustomed to the ways of Indians, he saw nothing out of the ordinary track of things in the course the other had taken.

“This runs like water flowing down hill, Arrowhead,” he answered, after a little reflection, “and truth obliges me to own it. It was the gift of a red-skin to act in this way, though I do not think it was the gift of a pale-face. You would not look upon the grief of the girl’s father?”

Arrowhead made a quiet inclination of the body, as if to assent.

“One thing more my brother will tell me,” continued Pathfinder, “and there will be no cloud between his wigwam and the strong-house of the Yengeese. If he can blow away

this bit of fog with his breath, his friends will look at him, as he sits by his own fire, and he can look at them, as they lay aside their arms, and forget that they are warriors. Why was the head of Arrowhead's canoe looking towards the St. Lawrence where there are none but enemies to be found ?”

“Why were the Pathfinder and his friends looking the same way ?” asked the Tuscarora, calmly. “A Tuscarora may look in the same direction as a Yengeese.”

“Why, to own the truth, Arrowhead, we are out scouting, like ;—that is sailing—in other words, we are on the King's business, and we have a right to be here, though we may not have a right to say *why* we are here.”

“Arrowhead saw the big canoe, and he loves to look on the face of Eau-douce. He was going towards the sun at evening, in order to seek his wigwam ; but finding that the young sailor was going the other way, he turned that he might look in the same direction. Eau-douce and Arrowhead were together on the last trail.”



“This may all be true, Tuscarora, and you are welcome. You shall eat of our venison, and then we must separate. The setting sun is behind us, and both of us move quick : my brother will get too far from that which he seeks, unless he turns round.”

Pathfinder now returned to the others, and repeated the result of his examination. He appeared himself to believe that the account of Arrowhead might be true, though he admitted that caution would be prudent with one he disliked ; but his auditors, Jasper excepted, seemed less disposed to put faith in the explanations.

“This chap must be ironed at once, brother Dunham,” said Cap, as soon as Pathfinder finished his narration ; “he must be turned over to the master-at-arms, if there is any such officer on fresh-water, and a court-martial ought to be ordered as soon as we reach port.”

“I think it wisest to detain the fellow,” the Sergeant answered ; “but irons are unnecessary so long as he remains in the cutter. In

the morning the matter shall be inquired into."

Arrowhead was now summoned and told the decision. The Indian listened gravely, and made no objections. On the contrary, he submitted with the calm and reserved dignity with which the American Aborigines are known to yield to fate; and he stood apart, an attentive but calm observer of what was passing. Jasper caused the cutter's sails to be filled, and the Scud resumed her course.

It was now getting near the hour to set the watch, and when it was usual to retire for the night. Most of the party went below, leaving no one on deck but Cap, the Sergeant, Jasper, and two of the crew. Arrowhead and his wife also remained, the former standing aloof in proud reserve, and the latter exhibiting, by her attitude and passiveness, the meek humility that characterizes an Indian woman.

"You will find a place for your wife below, Arrowhead, where my daughter will attend to her wants," said the Sergeant, kindly, who

was himself on the point of quitting the deck ;  
“yonder is a sail, where you may sleep your-  
self.”

“I thank my father. The Tuscaroras are not poor. The woman will look for my blankets in the canoe.”

“As you wish, my friend. We think it necessary to detain you ; but not necessary to confine or to maltreat you. Send your squaw into the canoe for the blankets, and you may follow her yourself, and hand us up the paddles. As there may be some sleepy heads in the Scud, Eau-douce,” added the Sergeant, in a lower tone, “it may be well to secure the paddles.”

“Jasper assented, and Arrowhead and his wife, with whom resistance appeared to be out of the question, silently complied with the directions. A few expressions of sharp rebuke passed from the Indian to his wife, while both were employed in the canoe, which the latter received with submissive quiet, immediately repairing an error she had made, by

laying aside the blanket she had taken and searching for another that was more to her tyrant's mind.

"Come, bear a hand, Arrowhead," said the Sergeant, who stood on the gunwale, overlooking the movements of the two, which were proceeding too slowly for the impatience of a drowsy man; "it is getting late; and we soldiers have such a thing as *réveille* — early to bed and early to rise."

"Arrowhead is coming," was the answer, as the Tuscarora stepped towards the head of his canoe.

One blow of his keen knife severed the rope which held the boat, and then the cutter glanced ahead, leaving the light bubble of bark, which instantly lost its way, almost stationary. So suddenly and dexterously was this manœuvre performed, that the canoe was on the lee quarter of the Scud before the Sergeant was aware of the artifice, and quite in her wake, ere he had time to announce it to his companions.

"Hard-a-lee!" shouted Jasper, letting fly

the jib-sheet with his own hands, when the cutter came swiftly up to the breeze, with all her canvass flapping, or was running into the wind's eye, as seamen term it, until the light craft was a hundred feet to windward of her former position. Quick and dexterous as was this movement, and ready as had been the expedient, it was not quicker or more ready than that of the Tuscarora. With an intelligence that denoted some familiarity with vessels, he had seized his paddle, and was already skimming the water, aided by the efforts of his wife. The direction he took was south-westerly, or on a line that led him equally towards the wind and the shore, while it also kept him so far aloof from the cutter, as to avoid the danger of the latter falling on board of him when she filled on the other tack. Swiftly as the Scud had shot into the wind, and far as she had forged ahead, Jasper knew it was necessary to cast her, ere she had lost all her way; and it was not two minutes from the time the helm had been put down, before the lively little craft was aback

forward, and rapidly falling off, in order to allow her sails to fill on the opposite tack.

“He will escape!” said Jasper, the instant he caught a glimpse of the relative bearings of the cutter and the canoe. “The cunning knave is paddling dead to windward, and the Scud can never overtake him!”

“You have a canoe!” exclaimed the Sergeant, manifesting the eagerness of a boy to join in the pursuit; “let us launch it, and give chase!”

“It will be useless. If Pathfinder had been on deck, there might have been a chance; but there is none now. To launch the canoe would have taken three or four minutes; and the time lost would be sufficient for the purposes of Arrowhead.”

Both Cap and the Sergeant saw the truth of this, which would have been nearly self-evident even to one unaccustomed to vessels. The shore was distant less than half a mile, and the canoe was already glancing into its shadows, at a rate to show that it would reach the land ere its pursuers could probably get

half the distance. The canoe, itself, might have been seized, but it would have been a useless prize; for, Arrowhead, in the woods, would be more likely to reach the other shore without detection, than if he still possessed the means to venture on the lake again; though it might be, and probably would be, a greater bodily labour to himself. The helm of the Scud was reluctantly put up again, and the cutter wore short round on her heel, coming up to her course on the other tack, as if acting on an instinct. All this was done by Jasper in profound silence, his assistants understanding what was necessary, and lending their aid in a sort of mechanical imitation. While these manœuvres were in the course of execution, Cap took the Sergeant by a button, and led him towards the cabin-door, where he was out of ear-shot, and began to unlock his stores of thought.

“Hark’e, brother Dunham,” he said with an ominous face, “this is a matter that requires mature thought, and much circumspection.”

“The life of a soldier, brother Cap, is one of constant thought and circumspection. On this frontier, were we to overlook either, our scalps might be taken from our heads in the first nap.”

“But I consider this capture of Arrowhead as a circumstance; and I might add his escape as another. This Jasper Freshwater must look to it.”

“They are both circumstances truly, brother; but they tell different ways. If it is a circumstance against the lad that the Indian has escaped, it is a circumstance in his favour that he was first taken.”

“Ay, ay, but two circumstances do not contradict each other, like two negatives. If you will follow the advice of an old seaman, Sergeant, not a moment is to be lost, in taking the steps necessary for the security of the vessel, and all on board of her. The cutter is now slipping through the water at the rate of six knots, and as the distances are so short on this bit of a pond, we may all find ourselves in



a French port before morning, and in a French prison before night."

"This may be true enough; what would you advise me to do, brother?"

"In my opinion you should put this Master Freshwater under arrest, on the spot; send him below, under the charge of a sentinel, and transfer the command of the cutter to me. All this you have power to perform, the craft belonging to the army, and you being the commanding officer of the troops present."

Sergeant Dunham deliberated more than an hour on the propriety of this proposal; for, though sufficiently prompt when his mind was really made up, he was habitually thoughtful and wary. The habit of superintending the personal police of the garrison had made him acquainted with character, and he had long been disposed to think well of Jasper. Still that subtle poison, suspicion, had entered his soul; and so much were the artifices and intrigues of the French dreaded, that, especially warned as he had been by his commander, it is

not to be wondered the recollection of years of good conduct should vanish under the influence of a distrust so keen, and seemingly so plausible. In this embarrassment, the Sergeant consulted the Quarter-Master, whose opinion, as his superior, he felt bound to respect, though, at the moment, independent of his control. It is an unfortunate occurrence, for one who is in a dilemma, to ask advice of another who is desirous of standing well in his favour, the party consulted being almost certain to try to think in the manner which will be the most agreeable to the party consulting. In the present instance, it was equally unfortunate, as respects a candid consideration of the subject, that Cap, instead of the Sergeant himself, made the statement of the case; for the earnest old sailor was not backward in letting his listener perceive to which side he was desirous that the Quarter-Master should lean. Lieutenant Muir was much too politic to offend the uncle and father of the woman he hoped and expected to win, had he really thought the case admitted of doubt; but, in

the manner in which the facts were submitted to him, he was seriously inclined to think that it would be well to put the control of the Scud temporarily into the management of Cap, as a precaution against treachery. This opinion then decided the Sergeant, who, forthwith, set about the execution of the necessary measures.

Without entering into any explanations Sergeant Dunham simply informed Jasper that he felt it to be his duty to deprive him, temporarily, of the command of the cutter, and to confer it on his own brother-in-law. A natural and involuntary burst of surprise, which escaped the young man, was met by a quiet remark, reminding him that military service was often of a nature that required concealment, and a declaration that the present duty was of such a character, that this particular arrangement had become indispensable. Although Jasper's astonishment remained undiminished, — the Sergeant cautiously abstaining from making any allusion to his suspicions, — the young man was accustomed to obey with mili-

tary submission ; and he quietly acquiesced, with his own mouth directing the little crew to receive their further orders from Cap, until another change should be effected. When, however, he was told the case required that not only he, himself, but his principal assistant, who, on account of his long acquaintance with the lake, was usually termed the pilot, were to remain below, there was an alteration in his countenance and manner that denoted strong feeling, though it was so well mastered as to leave even the distrustful Cap in doubt as to its meaning. As a matter of course, however, when distrust exists, it was not long before the worst construction was put upon it.

As soon as Jasper and the pilot were below, the sentinel at the hatch received private orders to pay particular attention to both ; to allow neither to come on deck again without giving instant notice to the person who might then be in charge of the cutter, and to insist on his return below, as soon as possible. This precaution, however, was uncalled for ; Jasper and his assistant, both throwing themselves

silently on their pallets, which neither quitted again that night.

“And, now, Sergeant,” said Cap, as soon as he found himself master of the deck, “you will just have the goodness to give me the courses and distance, that I may see the boat keeps her head the right way.”

“I know nothing of either, brother Cap,” returned Dunham, not a little embarrassed at the question. “We must make the best of our way to the station among the Thousand Islands, where ‘we shall land, relieve the party that is already out, and get information for our future government.’ That’s it, nearly word for word, as it stands in the written orders.”

“But you can muster a chart—something in the way of bearings and distances, that I may see the road?”

“I do not think Jasper ever had anything of the sort to go by.”

“No chart, Sergeant Dunham!”

“Not a scrap of a pen, even. Our sailors navigate this lake without any aid from maps.”

“The devil they do!—They must be regular Yahoos. And do you suppose, Sergeant Dunham, that I can find one island out of a thousand without knowing its name, or its position; without even a course, or a distance?”

“As for the *name*, brother Cap, you need not be particular, for not one of the whole thousand *has* a name, and so a mistake can never be made on that score. As for the position, never having been there myself, I can tell you nothing about it, nor do I think its position of any particular consequence, provided we find the spot. Perhaps one of the hands on deck can tell us the way.”

“Hold on, Sergeant—hold on, a moment, if you please, Sergeant Dunham. If I am to command this craft, it must be done, if you please, without holding any councils of war with the cook and cabin-boy. A ship-master is a ship-master, and he must have an opinion of his own, even if it be a wrong one. I suppose you know service well enough to understand that it is better in a commander to go

wrong, than to go nowhere. At all events, the Lord High Admiral couldn't command a yawl with dignity, if he consulted the cockswain every time he wished to go ashore. No, sir, if I sink, I sink! but, d—me, I'll go down ship-shape, and with dignity."

"But, brother Cap, I have no wish to go down anywhere, unless it be to the station among the Thousand Islands, whither we are bound."

"Well, well, Sergeant, rather than ask advice, that is, direct, barefaced advice, of a foremast hand, or any other than a quarter-deck officer, I would go round to the whole thousand, and examine them one by one, until we got the right haven. But there is such a thing as coming at an opinion without manifesting ignorance, and I will manage to rouse all there is, out of these hands, and make them think all the while that I am cramming them with my own experience. We are sometimes obliged to use the glass at sea when there is nothing in sight, or to heave the lead long before we strike soundings. I suppose you know

in the army, Sergeant, that the next thing to knowing that which is desirable, is to seem to know all about it. When a youngster, I sailed two v'y'ges with a man who navigated his ship pretty much by the latter sort of information, which sometimes answers."

"I know we are steering in the right direction, at present," returned the Sergeant; "but in the course of a few hours we shall be up with a headland, where we must feel our way with more caution."

"Leave me to pump the man at the wheel, brother, and you shall see that I will make him suck, in a very few minutes."

Cap and the Sergeant now walked aft, until they stood by the sailor who was at the helm, Cap maintaining an air of security and tranquillity, like one who was entirely confident of his own powers.

"This is a wholesome air, my lad," Cap observed, as it might be incidentally, and in the manner that a superior on board a vessel sometimes condescends to use to a favoured inferior.



“Of course, you have it in this fashion, off the land, every night?”

“At this season of the year, sir,” the man returned, touching his hat, out of respect to his new commander and Sergeant Dunham’s connection.

“The same thing, I take it, among the Thousand Islands? The wind will stand of course, though we shall then have land on every side of us.”

“When we get further east, sir, the wind will probably shift, for there can then be no particular land-breeze.”

“Ay, ay; so much for your fresh-water! It has always some trick that is opposed to nature. Now, down, among the West India Islands, one is just as certain of having a land-breeze, as he is of having a sea-breeze. In that respect there is no difference, though it’s quite in rule it should be different up here, on this bit of fresh-water. Of course, my lad, you know all about these said Thousand Islands?”

“Lord bless you, Master Cap, nobody

knows all about them, or anything about them. They are a puzzle to the oldest sailor on the lake, and we don't pretend to know even their names. For that matter, most of them have no more names than a child that dies before it is christened."

"Are you a Roman Catholic?" demanded the Sergeant, sharply.

"No, sir, nor anything else. I'm a generaliser about religion, never troubling that which don't trouble me."

"Hum! a generaliser; that is, no doubt, one of the new sects that afflict the country," muttered Mr. Dunham, whose grandfather had been a New Jersey Quaker, his father a Presbyterian, and who had joined the church of England himself, after he entered the army.

"I take it, John," resumed Cap, "your name is Jack, I believe?"

"No, sir; I am called Robert."

"Ay, Robert, it's very much the same thing, Jack or Bob; we use the two indifferently. I say, Bob, it's good holding ground,

is it, down at this same station for which we are bound?"

"Bless you, sir! I know no more about it than one of the Mohawks, or a soldier of the 55th."

"Did you never anchor there?"

"Never, sir. Master Eau-douce always makes fast to the shore."

"But, in running in for the town, you kept the lead going, out of question, and must have tallowed as usual."

"Tallow! — and town, too! Bless your heart! Master Cap, there is no more town than there is on your chin, and not half as much tallow!"

The Sergeant smiled grimly, but his brother-in-law did not detect this proof of humour.

"No church-tower, nor light, nor fort, ha! There is a garrison, as you call it hereaway, at least?"

"Ask Sergeant Dunham, sir, if you wish to know that. All the garrison is on board the Scud."

“But in running in, Bob, which of the channels do you think the best; the one you went last, or, or, or, — ay, or the other?”

“I can’t say, sir: I know nothing of either.”

“You didn’t go to sleep, fellow, at the wheel, did you?”

“Not at the wheel, sir, but down in the fore-peak, in my berth. Eau-douce sent us below, soldiers and all, with the exception of the pilot, and we know no more of the road than if we had never been over it. This he has always done in going in and coming out; and, for the life of me, I could tell you nothing of the channel, or the course, after we are once fairly up with the islands. No one knows anything of either but Jasper and the pilot.”

“Here is a circumstance for you, Sergeant,” said Cap, leading his brother-in-law a little aside; “there is no one on board to pump, for they all suck from ignorance at the first stroke of the brake. How the devil am I to find the way to this station for which we are bound?”

“Sure enough, brother Cap, your question

is more easily put than answered. Is there no such thing as figuring it out by navigation? I thought you salt-water mariners were able to do as small a thing as that. I have often read of their discovering islands, surely."

"That you have, brother, that you have; and this discovery would be the greatest of them all; for it would not only be discovering one island, but one island out of a thousand. I might make out to pick up a single needle on this deck, old as I am; but I much doubt if I could pick one out of a haystack."

"Still, the sailors of the lake have a method of finding the places they wish to go to."

"If I have understood you, Sergeant, this station, or block-house, is particularly private."

"It is, indeed, the utmost care having been taken to prevent a knowledge of its position from reaching the enemy."

"And you expect me, a stranger on your lake, to find this place without chart, course, distance, latitude, longitude, or soundings,—ay, d—me, or tallow! Allow me to ask if

you think a mariner runs by his nose, like one of Pathfinder's hounds?"

"Well, brother, you may yet learn something by questioning the young man at the helm; I can hardly think that he is as ignorant as he pretends to be."

"Hum! — this looks like another circumstance. For that matter, the case is getting to be so full of circumstances, that one hardly knows how to foot up the evidence. But we will soon see how much the lad knows."

Cap and the Sergeant now returned to their station near the helm, and the former renewed his inquiries.

"Do you happen to know what may be the latitude and longitude of this said island, my lad?" he asked.

"The what, sir?"

"Why, the latitude or longitude, — one or both; I'm not particular which, as I merely inquire in order to see how they bring up young men on this bit of fresh-water."

"I'm not particular about either myself,

sir, and so I do not happen to know what you mean."

"Not what I mean! You know what latitude is?"

"Not I, sir!" returned the man hesitating,—"though I believe it is French for the upper lakes."

"Whe-e-e-w!" whistled Cap, drawing out his breath like the broken stop of an organ;—"latitude, French for upper lakes! Hark'e, young man, do you know what longitude means?"

"I believe I do, sir:—that is, five feet six, the regulation height for soldiers in the King's service."

"There's the longitude found out for you, Sergeant, in the rattling of a brace-block!"

"You have some notion about a degree, and minutes and seconds, I hope?"

"Yes, sir: degree means my betters; and minutes and seconds are for the short or long log-lines. We all know these things as well as the salt-water people."

"D—me, brother Dunham, if I think even

Faith can get along on this lake, much as they say it can do with mountains. I'm sure character is no security. Well, my lad, you understand the azimuth, and measuring distances, and how to box the compass."

"As for the first, sir, I can't say I do. The distances we all know, as we measure them from point to point; and as for boxing the compass, I will turn my back to no admiral in his Majesty's fleet. Nothe, nothe and by east, nothe, nothe-east, nothe-east and by nothe, nothe-east; nothe-east and by east, east-nothe-east, east and by nothe-east —"

"That will do, that will do. You'll bring about a shift of wind, if you go on in this manner. I see very plainly, Sergeant," walking away again, and dropping his voice, "we've nothing to hope for from that chap. I'll stand on two hours longer on this tack, when we'll heave-to and get the soundings, after which we will be governed by circumstances."

To this the Sergeant, who, to coin a word, was very much of an idiosyncranist, made no objections; and as the wind grew lighter, as



usual with the advance of night, and there were no immediate obstacles to the navigation, he made a bed of a sail on deck, and was soon lost in the sound sleep of a soldier. Cap continued to walk the deck, for he was one whose iron frame set fatigue at defiance, and not once that night did he close his eyes.

It was broad daylight when Sergeant Dunham awoke, and the exclamation of surprise that escaped him, as he rose to his feet and began to look about him, was stronger than it was usual for one so drilled to suffer to be heard. He found the weather entirely changed, the view bounded by driving mist that limited the visible horizon to a circle of about a mile in diameter, the lake raging and covered with foam, and the Scud lying to. A brief conversation with his brother-in-law let him into the secrets of all these sudden changes.

According to the account of Master Cap, the wind had died away to a calm about midnight, or just as he was thinking of heaving to, to sound, for islands a-head were beginning to be seen. At one A.M. it began to blow from

the north-east, accompanied by a drizzle, and he stood off to the northward and westward, knowing that the coast of New York lay in the opposite direction. At half-past one he stowed the flying-jib, reefed the mainsail, and took the bonnet off the jib. At two he was compelled to get a second reef aft; and by half-past two he had put a balance-reef in the sail, and was lying-to.

“I can’t say but the boat behaves well, Sergeant,” the old sailor added, “but it blows forty-two pounders. I had no idee there were any such currents of air up here on this bit of fresh-water, though I care not the knotting of a yarn for it, as your lake has now somewhat of a natural look, and” — spitting from his mouth, with distaste, a dash of the spray that had just wetted his face — “and if this d—d water had a savour of salt about it, one might be comfortable.”

“How long have you been heading in this direction, brother Cap?” inquired the prudent soldier; “and at what rate may we be going through the water?”

“Why, two or three hours, mayhap, and she went like a horse for the first pair of them. Oh! we’ve a fine offing now; for, to own the truth, little relishing the neighbourhood of them said islands, although they are to windward, I took the helm myself, and run her off free for some league or two. We are well to leeward of them, I’ll engage:—I say to leeward; for though one might wish to be well to windward of one island, or even half a dozen, when it comes to a thousand, the better way is to give it up at once, and to slide down under their lee as fast as possible. No, no; there they are, up yonder in the dingle; and there they may stay, for anything Charles Cap cares.”

“As the north shore lies only some five or six leagues from us, brother, and I know there is a large bay in that quarter, might it not be well to consult some of the crew concerning our position, if indeed we do not call up Jasper Eau-douce, and tell him to carry us back to Oswego? for it is quite impossible we

should ever reach the station with this wind directly in our teeth."

"There are several serious professional reasons, Sergeant, against all your propositions. In the first place, an admission of ignorance on the part of a commander would destroy discipline. No matter, brother: I understand your shake of the head, but nothing capsizes discipline so much as to confess ignorance. I once knew a master of a vessel who went a week on a wrong course, rather than allow he had made a mistake; and it was surprising how much he rose in the opinions of his people, just because they could not understand him."

"That may do on salt-water, brother Cap, but it will hardly do on fresh. Rather than wreck my command on the Canada shore, I shall feel it a duty to take Jasper out of arrest."

"And make a haven in Frontenac. No, Sergeant; the Scud is in good hands, and will now learn something of seamanship. We have a fine offing, and no one but a madman would think of going upon a coast in a gale like this.

I shall ware every watch, and then we shall be safe against all dangers but those of the drift, which, in a light low craft like this, without top-hamper, will be next to nothing. Leave it all to me, Sergeant, and I pledge you the character of Charles Cap that all will go well."

Sergeant Dunham was fain to yield. He had great confidence in his connection's professional skill, and hoped that he would take such care of the cutter as would amply justify his opinion of him. On the other hand, as distrust, like care, grows by what it feeds on, he entertained so much apprehension of treachery, that he was quite willing any one but Jasper should, just then, have the control of the fate of the whole party. Truth, moreover, compels us to admit another motive. The particular duty on which he was now sent, of right should have been confided to a commissioned officer; and Major Duncan had excited a good deal of discontent among the subalterns of the garrison, by having confided it to one of the Sergeant's humble station. To return

without having even reached the point of destination, therefore, the latter felt would be a failure from which he was not likely soon to recover, and the measure would at once be the means of placing a superior in his shoes.

## CHAPTER VI.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,  
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
Dark heaving ; — boundless, endless, and sublime —  
The image of Eternity ; the throne  
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime  
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone  
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

BYRON.

As the day advanced, that portion of the inmates of the vessel which had the liberty of doing so, appeared on deck. As yet the sea was not very high, from which it was inferred that the cutter was still under the lee of the islands ; but it was apparent to all who understood the lake, that they were about to experience one of the heavy autumnal gales of that region. Land was nowhere visible ; and the horizon on every side exhibited that gloomy

void, which lends to all views, on vast bodies of water, the sublimity of mystery. The swells, or, as landsmen term them, the waves, were short and curling, breaking of necessity sooner than the longer seas of the ocean; while the element itself, instead of presenting that beautiful hue which rivals the deep tint of the southern sky, looked green and angry, though wanting in the lustre that is derived from the rays of the sun.

The soldiers were soon satisfied with the prospect, and, one by one, they disappeared, until none were left on deck but the crew, the Sergeant, Cap, Pathfinder, the Quarter-master, and Mabel. There was a shade on the brow of the last, who had been made acquainted with the real state of things, and who had fruitlessly ventured an appeal in favour of Jasper's restoration to the command. A night's rest, and a night's reflection, appeared also to have confirmed the Pathfinder in his opinion of the young man's innocence; and he, too, had made a warm appeal in behalf of his friend, though with the same want of success.

Several hours passed away, the wind gradually getting to be heavier, and the sea rising,



until the motion of the cutter compelled Mabel and the Quarter-master to retreat also. Cap wore several times; and it was now evident that the Scud was drifting into the broader and deeper parts of the lake, the seas raging down upon her in a way that none but a vessel of superior mould and build could have long ridden and withstood. All this, however, gave Cap no uneasiness; but like the hunter that pricks his ears at the sound of the horn, or the war-horse that paws and snorts with pleasure at the roll of the drum, the whole scene awakened all that was man within him; and instead of the captious, supercilious, and dogmatic critic, quarrelling with trifles, and exaggerating immaterial things, he began to exhibit the qualities of the hardy and experienced seaman that he truly was. The hands soon imbibed a respect for his skill; and, though they wondered at the disappearance of their old commander and the pilot, for which no reason had been publicly given, they soon yielded an implicit and cheerful obedience to the new one.

“This bit of fresh water, after all, brother Dunham, has some spirit, I find,” cried Cap, about noon, rubbing his hands in pure satis-

faction at finding himself once more wrestling with the elements. "The wind seems to be an honest old-fashioned gale, and the seas have a fanciful resemblance to those of the gulf stream. I like this, Sergeant; I like this, and shall get to respect your lake, if it hold out twenty-four hours longer in the fashion in which it has begun."

"Land, ho!" shouted the man who was stationed on the forecastle.

Cap hurried forward; and there, sure enough, the land was visible through the drizzle, at the distance of about half a mile, the cutter heading directly towards it. The first impulse of the old seaman was to give an order to "stand by, to ware off shore;" but the cool-headed soldier restrained him.

"By going a little nearer," said the Sergeant, "some of us may recognise the place. Most of us know the American shore in this part of the lake; and it will be something gained to learn our position."

"Very true, very true; if, indeed, there is any chance of that, we will hold on. What is this off here, a little on our weather bow? It looks like a low headland."

“The garrison, by Jove!” exclaimed the other, whose trained eye sooner recognised the military outlines than the less-instructed senses of his connection.

The Sergeant was not mistaken. There was the fort, sure enough, though it looked dim and indistinct through the fine rain, as if it were seen in the dusk of evening, or the haze of morning. The low, sodded, and verdant ramparts, the sombre palisades, now darker than ever with water, the roof of a house or two, the tall, solitary flag-staff, with its hal-yards blown steadily out, into a curve that appeared traced in immovable lines in the air, were all soon to be seen, though no sign of animated life could be discovered. Even the sentinel was housed; and, at first, it was believed that no eye would detect the presence of their own vessel. But the unceasing vigilance of a border garrison did not slumber: one of the look-outs probably made the interesting discovery; a man or two were seen on some elevated stands, and then the entire ramparts, next the lake, were dotted with human beings.

The whole scene was one in which sublimity was singularly relieved by the picturesque.

The raging of the tempest had a character of duration, that rendered it easy to imagine it might be a permanent feature of the spot. The roar of the wind was without intermission, and the raging water answered to its dull but grand strains, with hissing spray, a menacing wash, and sullen surges. The drizzle made a medium for the eye which closely resembled that of a thin mist, softening and rendering mysterious the images it revealed, while the genial feeling that is apt to accompany a gale of wind on water, contributed to aid the milder influences of the moment. The dark interminable forest hove up out of the obscurity, grand, sombre and impressive, while the solitary, peculiar, and picturesque glimpses of life that were caught in and about the fort, formed a refuge for the eye to retreat to, when oppressed with the more imposing objects of nature.

“They see us,” said the Sergeant, “and think we have returned on account of the gale, and have fallen to leeward of the port. Yes, there is Major Duncan himself, on the north-eastern bastion; I know him by his height, and by the officers around him.”

“Sergeant, it would be worth standing a little jeering, if we could fetch into the river, and come safely to an anchor. In that case, too, we might land this Master Eau-douce, and purify the boat.”

“It would indeed ; but as poor a sailor as I am, I well know it cannot be done. Nothing that sails the lake can turn to windward against this gale ; and there is no anchorage outside, in weather like this.”

“I know it, I see it, Sergeant ; and pleasant as is that sight to you landsmen, we must leave it. For myself, I am never as happy, in heavy weather, as when I am certain that the land is behind me.”

The Scud had now forged so near in, that it became indispensable to lay her head off shore again, and the necessary orders were given. The storm-staysail was set forward, the gaff lowered, the helm put up, and the light craft, that seemed to sport with the elements like a duck, fell off a little, drew ahead swiftly, obeyed her rudder, and was soon flying away on the top of the surges, dead before the gale. While making this rapid flight, though the land still remained in view, on her larboard

beam, the fort, and the groups of anxious spectators on its rampart, were swallowed up in the mist. Then followed the evolutions necessary to bring the head of the cutter up to the wind, when she again began to wallow her weary way towards the north shore.

Hours now passed, before any further change was made, the wind increasing in force, until even the dogmatical Cap fairly admitted it was blowing a thorough gale of wind. About sunset the Scud wore again, to keep her off the north shore, during the hours of darkness; and at midnight her temporary master, who, by questioning the crew in an indirect manner, had obtained some general knowledge of the size and shape of the lake, believed himself to be about midway between the two shores. The height and length of the seas, aided this impression; and it must be added that Cap, by this time, began to feel a respect for fresh-water, that twenty-four hours earlier he would have derided as impossible. Just as the night turned, the fury of the wind became so great, that he found it impossible to bear up against it, the water falling on the deck of the little craft in such masses as to cause it to

shake to the centre ; and, though a vessel of singularly lively qualities, to threaten to bury it beneath its weight. The people of the Scud averred that never before had they been out in such a tempest : which was true ; for possessing a perfect knowledge of all the rivers and head-lands and havens, Jasper would have carried the cutter in shore, long ere this, and placed her in safety, in some secure anchorage. But Cap still disdained to consult the young master, who continued below, determining to act like a mariner of the broad ocean.

It was one in the morning, when the storm-staysail was again got on the Scud, the head of the mainsail lowered, and the cutter put before the wind. Although the canvas now exposed was merely a rag in surface, the little craft nobly justified the use of the name she bore. For eight hours did she scud, in truth ; and it was almost with the velocity of the gulls that wheeled wildly over her in the tempest, apparently afraid to alight in the boiling caldron of the lake. The dawn of day brought little change ; for no other horizon became visible, than the little circle of drizzling sky and water, already described, in which it seemed as if the

elements were rioting in a sort of chaotic confusion. During this time the crew and passengers of the cutter were of necessity passive. Jasper and the Pilot remained below; but, the motion of the vessel having become easier, nearly all the rest were on deck. The morning meal had been taken in silence, and eye met eye, as if their owners asked each other, in dumb show, what was to be the end of this strife in the elements. Cap, however, was perfectly composed and his face brightened, his step grew firmer, and his whole air more assured, as the storm increased, making larger demands on his professional skill and personal spirit. He stood on the forecastle, his arms crossed, balancing his body with a seaman's instinct, while his eyes watched the caps of the seas, as they broke and glanced past the reeling cutter, itself in such swift motion, as if they were the scud flying athwart the sky. At this sublime instant one of the hands gave the unexpected cry of "a sail!"

There was so much of the wild and solitary character of the wilderness about Ontario, that one scarcely expected to meet with a vessel on its waters. The Scud herself, to those who



were in her, resembled a man threading the forest alone, and the meeting was like that of two solitary hunters beneath the broad canopy of leaves that then covered so many millions of acres on the continent of America. The peculiar state of the weather served to increase the romantic, almost supernatural appearance of the passage. Cap alone regarded it with practised eyes, and even he felt his iron nerves thrill under the sensations that were awakened by the wild features of the scene.

The strange vessel was about two cables' length ahead of the Scud, standing by the wind athwart her bows, and steering a course to render it probable that the latter would pass within a few yards of her. She was a full-rigged ship; and, seen through the misty medium of the tempest, the most experienced eye could detect no imperfection in her gear or construction. The only canvas she had set, was a close-reefed main-top-sail, and two small storm-staysails, one forward and the other aft. Still the power of the wind pressed so hard upon her as to bear her down nearly to her beam-ends, whenever the hull was not righted by the buoyancy of some wave under her lee.

Her spars were all in their places, and by her motion through the water, which might have equalled four knots in the hour, it was apparent that she steered a little free.

“The fellow must know his position well,” said Cap, as the cutter flew down towards the ship with a velocity almost equalling that of the gale, “for he is standing boldly to the southward, where he expects to find anchorage or a haven. No man in his senses would run off free in that fashion, that was not driven to scudding, like ourselves, who did not perfectly understand where he was going.”

“We have made an awful run, captain,” returned the man to whom this remark had been addressed. “That is the French king’s ship, Lee-my-calm (Le Montcalm), and she is standing in for the Niagara, where her owner has a garrison and a port. We’ve made an awful run of it!”

“Ay, bad luck to him! Frenchman like, he skulks into port the moment he sees an English bottom.”

“It might be well for us if we could follow him,” returned the man, shaking his head despondingly, “for we are getting into the end

of a bay up here at the head of the lake, and it is uncertain whether we ever get out of it again!"

"Pooh! man, pooh!—We have plenty of sea-room, and a good English hull beneath us. We are no Johnny Crapauds to hide ourselves behind a point or a fort, on account of a puff of wind. Mind your helm, sir!"

The order was given on account of the menacing appearance of the approaching passage. The Scud was now heading directly for the fore-foot of the Frenchman; and, the distance between the two vessels having diminished to a hundred yards, it was momentarily questionable if there was room to pass.

"Port, sir, port!" shouted Cap. "Port your helm and pass astern!"

The crew of the Frenchman were seen assembling to windward, and a few muskets were pointed, as if to order the people of the Scud to keep off. Gesticulations were observed, but the sea was too wild and menacing to admit of the ordinary expedients of war. The water was dripping from the muzzles of two or three light guns on board the ship, but no one thought of loosening them for service in such

a tempest. Her black sides, as they emerged from a wave, glistened and seemed to frown; but the wind howled through her rigging, whistling the thousand notes of a ship; and the hails and cries that escape a Frenchman with so much readiness were inaudible.

“Let him halloo himself hoarse!” growled Cap. “This is no weather to whisper secrets in. Port, sir, port!”

The man at the helm obeyed, and the next send of the sea drove the Scud down upon the quarter of the ship, so near her that the old mariner himself recoiled a step, in a vague expectation that, at the next surge ahead, she would drive bows foremost directly into the planks of the other vessel. But this was not to be: rising from the crouching posture she had taken, like a panther about to leap, the cutter dashed onward, and at the next instant she was glancing past the stern of her enemy, just clearing the end of her spanker-boom with her own lower yard.

The young Frenchman who commanded the Montcalm, leaped on the taffrail; and with that high-toned courtesy which relieves even the worst acts of his countrymen, he raised his cap

and smiled a salutation as the Scud shot past. There were *bonhomie* and good taste in this act of courtesy, when circumstances allowed of no other communications; but they were lost on Cap, who, with an instinct quite as true to his race, shook his fist menacingly, and muttered to himself —

“Ay, ay, it’s d—d lucky for you I’ve no armament on board here, or I’d send you in to get new cabin-windows fitted. Sergeant, he’s a humbug.”

“’Twas civil, brother Cap,” returned the other, lowering his hand from the military salute which his pride as a soldier had induced him to return, “’twas civil, and that’s as much as you can expect from a Frenchman. What he really meant by it, no one can say.”

“He is not heading up to this sea without an object, neither. Well, let him run in, if he can get there; we will keep the lake, like hearty English mariners.”

This sounded gloriously, but Cap eyed with envy the glittering black mass of the Montcalm’s hull, her waving top-sail, and the misty tracery of her spars, as she grew less and less distinct, and finally disappeared in the drizzle,

in a form as shadowy as that of some unreal image. Gladly would he have followed in her wake, had he dared ; for, to own the truth, the prospect of another stormy night in the midst of the wild waters that were raging around him brought little consolation. Still he had too much professional pride to betray his uneasiness, and those under his care relied on his knowledge and resources, with the implicit and blind confidence that the ignorant are apt to feel.

A few hours succeeded, and darkness came again to increase the perils of the Scud. A lull in the gale, however, had induced Cap to come by the wind once more, and throughout the night the cutter was lying-to, as before, head-reaching as a matter of course, and occasionally waring to keep off the land. It is unnecessary to dwell on the incidents of this night, which resembled those of any other gale of wind. There were the pitching of the vessel, the hissing of the waters, the dashing of spray, the shocks that menaced annihilation to the little craft as she plunged into the seas, the undying howling of the wind, and the fearful drift. The last was the most serious danger ;

for, though exceedingly weatherly under her canvas, and totally without top-hamper, the Scud was so light, that the combing of the swells would seem, at times, to wash her down to leeward with a velocity as great as that of the surges themselves.

During this night Cap slept soundly, and for several hours. The day was just dawning, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder; and arousing himself, he found the Pathfinder standing at his side. During the gale the guide had appeared little on deck, for his natural modesty told him that seamen alone should interfere with the management of the vessel; and he was willing to show the same reliance on those who had charge of the Scud, as he expected those who followed through the forest to manifest in his own skill: but he now thought himself justified in interfering, which he did in his own unsophisticated and peculiar manner.

“Sleep is sweet, Master Cap,” he said, as soon as the eyes of the latter were fairly open, and his consciousness had sufficiently returned; — “sleep is sweet, as I know from experience, but life is sweeter still. Look about you, and

say if this is exactly the moment for a commander to be off his feet."

"How now? how now, Master Pathfinder?" growled Cap, in the first moments of his awakened faculties. "Are you, too, getting on the side of the grumblers? When ashore, I admired your sagacity in running through the worst shoals without a compass; and since we have been afloat, your meekness and submission have been as pleasant as your confidence on your own ground. I little expected such a summons from you."

"As for myself, Master Cap, I feel I have my gifts, and I believe they'll interfere with those of no other man; but the case may be different with Mabel Dunham. She has her gifts, too, it is true; but they are not rude like ours, but gentle and womanish, as they ought to be. It's on her account that I speak, and not on my own."

"Ay, ay, I begin to understand. The girl is a good girl, my worthy friend; but she is a soldier's daughter and a sailor's niece, and ought not to be too tame or too tender in a gale. Does she show any fear?"

"Not she! not she! Mabel is a woman,



but she is reasonable and silent. Not a word have I heard from her concerning our doings; though I do think, Master Cap, she would like it better if Jasper Eau-douce were put into his proper place, and things were restored to their old situation, like. This is human natur'."

"I'll warrant it — girl-like, and Dunham-like, too. Anything is better than an old uncle, and everybody knows more than an old seaman. *This* is human natur', Master Pathfinder, and d—me if I'm the man to sheer a fathom, starboard or port, for all the human natur' that can be found in a minx of twenty,—ay, or" (lowering his voice a little) "for all that can be paraded in his Majesty's 55th regiment of foot. I've not been at sea forty years, to come up on this bit of fresh-water to be taught human natur'. How this gale holds out! It blows as hard at this moment as if Boreas had just clapped his hand upon the bellows. And what is all this to leeward?" (rubbing his eyes) — "land! as sure as my name is Cap,—and high land, too."

The Pathfinder made no immediate answer; but, shaking his head, he watched the expres-

sion of his companion's face, with a look of strong anxiety in his own.

“Land, as certain as this is the Scud!” repeated Cap; “a lee shore, and that, too, within a league of us, with as pretty a line of breakers as one could find on the beach of all Long Island!”

“And is that encouraging? or is it disheartening?” demanded the Pathfinder.

“Ha! encouraging,—disheartening!—why, neither. No, no, there is nothing encouraging about it; and as for disheartening, nothing ought to dishearten a seaman. You never get disheartened or afraid in the woods, my friend?”

“I’ll not say that—I’ll not say that. When the danger is great, it is my gift to see it, and know it, and to try to avoid it; else would my scalp long since have been drying in a Mingo wigwam. On this lake, however, I can see no trail, and I feel it my duty to submit; though I think we ought to remember there is such a person as Mabel Dunham on board. But here comes her father, and he will naturally feel for his own child.”

“We are seriously situated, I believe, brother Cap,” said the Sergeant, when he had

reached the spot, "by what I can gather from the two hands on the fore-castle? They tell me the cutter cannot carry any more sail, and her drift is so great we shall go ashore in an hour or two. I hope their fears have deceived them?"

Cap made no reply; but he gazed at the land with a rueful face, and then looked to windward, with an expression of ferocity, as if he would gladly have quarrelled with the weather.

"It may be well, brother," the Sergeant continued, "to send for Jasper and consult him as to what is to be done. There are no French here to dread; and, under all circumstances, the boy will save us from drowning if possible."

"Ay, ay, 'tis these cursed circumstances that have done all the mischief. But let the fellow come; let him come; a few well-managed questions will bring the truth out of him, I'll warrant you."

This acquiescence on the part of the dogmatical Cap was no sooner obtained, than Jasper was sent for. The young man instantly made his appearance, his whole air, counte-

nance, and mien expressive of mortification, humility, and, as his observers fancied, rebuked deception. When he first stepped on deck, Jasper cast one hurried anxious glance around, as if curious to know the situation of the cutter; and that glance sufficed, it would seem, to let him into the secret of all her perils. At first he looked to windward, as is usual with every seaman; then he turned round the horizon, until his eye caught a view of the highlands to leeward, when the whole truth burst upon him at once.

“I’ve sent for you, Master Jasper,” said Cap, folding his arms, and balancing his body with the dignity of the fore-castle, “in order to learn something about the haven to leeward. We take it for granted, you do not bear malice so hard as to wish to drown us all, especially the women; and, I suppose, you will be man enough to help us to run the cutter into some safe berth, until this bit of a gale has done blowing?”

“I would die myself rather than harm should come to Mabel Dunham,” the young man earnestly answered.

“I knew it!—I knew it!” cried the Path-

finder, clapping his hand kindly on Jasper's shoulder. "The lad is as true as the best compass that ever run a boundary, or brought a man off from a blind trail. It is a mortal sin to believe otherwise."

"Humph!" ejaculated Cap, "especially the women! As if *they* were in any particular danger. Never mind, young man; we shall understand each other by talking like two plain seamen. Do you know of any port under our lee?"

"None. There is a large bay at this end of the lake; but it is unknown to us all, and not easy of entrance."

"And this coast to leeward — it has nothing particular to recommend it, I suppose?"

"It is a wilderness until you reach the mouth of the Niagara in one direction, and Frontenac in the other. North and west, they tell me, there is nothing but forest and prairies for a thousand miles."

"Thank God! then, there can be no French. Are there many savages, hereaway, on the land?"

"The Indians are to be found in all directions; though they are nowhere very nume-

rous. By accident, we might find a party at any point on the shore; or, we might pass months there without seeing one."

"We must take our chance, then, as to the blackguards; but, to be frank with you, Master Western, if this little unpleasant matter about the French had not come to pass, what would you now do with the cutter?"

"I am a much younger sailor than yourself, Master Cap," said Jasper, modestly, "and am hardly fitted to advise you."

"Ay, ay, we all know that. In a common case, perhaps not. But this is an uncommon case, and a circumstance; and on this bit of fresh-water, it has what may be called its peculiarities; and so, everything considered, you may be fitted to advise even your own father. At all events, you can speak, and I can judge of your opinions, agreeably to my own experience"

"I think, sir, before two hours are over, the cutter will have to anchor."

"Anchor!—not out here in the lake?"

"No, sir; but in yonder, near the land."

“You do not mean to say, Master Eau-douce, you would anchor on a lee shore in a gale of wind?”

“If I would save my vessel, that is exactly what I would do, Master Cap.”

“Whe—e—w! — this is fresh-water, with a vengeance! Hark’e, young man, I’ve been a seafaring animal, boy and man, forty-one years, and I never yet heard of such a thing. I’d throw my ground-tackle overboard, before I would be guilty of so lubberly an act!”

“That is what we do, on this lake,” modestly replied Jasper, “when we are hard pressed. I dare say we might do better, had we been better taught.”

“That you might indeed! No; no man induces me to commit such a sin against my own bringing up. I should never dare show my face inside of Sandy Hook again, had I committed so know-nothing an exploit. Why, Pathfinder, here, has more seamanship in him than that comes to. You can go below, again, Master Eau-douce.”

Jasper quietly bowed and withdrew; still, as

he passed down the ladder, the spectators observed that he cast a lingering anxious look at the horizon to windward, and the land to leeward, and then disappeared with concern strongly expressed in every lineament of his face.



## CHAPTER VII.

His still refuted quirks he still repeats ;  
New-raised objections with new quibbles meets,  
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,  
He dies disputing, and the contest ends.

COWPER.

As the soldier's wife was sick in her berth, Mabel Dunham was the only person in the outer cabin, when Jasper returned to it; for, by an act of grace in the Sergeant, he had been permitted to resume his proper place, in this part of the vessel. We should be ascribing too much simplicity of character to our heroine, if we said that she had felt no distrust of the young man, in consequence of his arrest; but we should also be doing injustice to her warmth of feeling, and generosity of disposition, if we did not add, that this distrust was insignificant and transient. As he now took his seat near her, his whole countenance clouded with the uneasi-

ness he felt concerning the situation of the cutter, everything like suspicion was banished from her mind, and she saw in him only an injured man.

“You let this affair weigh too heavily on your mind, Jasper,” she said, eagerly, or with that forgetfulness of self, with which the youthful of her sex are wont to betray their feelings, when a strong and generous interest has attained the ascendancy; “no one, who knows you, can, or does, believe you guilty. Pathfinder says he will pledge his life for you.”

“Then you, Mabel,” returned the youth, his eyes flashing fire, “do not look upon me as the traitor that your father seems to believe me to be?”

“My dear father is a soldier, and is obliged to act as one. My father’s daughter is not, and will think of you as she ought to think of a man who has done so much to serve her already.”

“Mabel, I’m not used to talking with one like you, or, saying all I think and feel with any. I never had a sister, and my mother died when I was a child, so that I know little what your sex most likes to hear ——”

Mabel would have given the world to know what lay behind the teeming word, at which Jasper hesitated; but the indefinable and controlling sense of womanly diffidence made her suppress her womanly curiosity. She waited in silence for him to explain his own meaning.

“I wish to say, Mabel,” the young man continued, after a pause which he found sufficiently embarrassing, “that I am unused to the ways and opinions of one like you, and that you must imagine all I would add.”

Mabel had imagination enough to fancy anything, but there are ideas and feelings that her sex prefer to have expressed, before they yield them all their own sympathies, and she had a vague consciousness that these of Jasper might properly be enumerated in the class; with a readiness that belonged to her sex, therefore, she preferred changing the discourse to permitting it to proceed any further, in a manner so awkward and so unsatisfactory.

“Tell me one thing, Jasper, and I shall be content,” she said, speaking now with a firmness that denoted confidence, not only in herself, but in her companion,

“ you do not deserve this cruel suspicion which rests upon you ? ”

“ I do not ! Mabel,” answered Jasper, looking into her full blue eyes with an openness and simplicity that might have shaken stronger distrust. “ As I hope for mercy hereafter, I do not ! ”

“ I knew it — I could have sworn it ! ” returned the girl warmly. “ And yet my father means well : — but do not let this matter disturb you, Jasper.”

“ There is so much more to apprehend from another quarter just now, that I scarcely think of it.”

“ Jasper ! ”

“ I do not wish to alarm you, Mabel ; but if your uncle could be persuaded to change his notions about handling the Scud ; and yet he is so much older, and more experienced than I am, that he ought, perhaps, to place more reliance on his own judgment than on mine.”

“ Do you think the cutter in any danger ? ” demanded Mabel, quick as thought.

“ I fear so ; at least she would have been thought in great danger by us of the lake ;

perhaps an old seaman of the ocean may have means of his own to take care of her."

"Jasper, all agree in giving you credit for skill in managing the Scud. You know the lake, you know the cutter; you *must* be the best judge of our real situation."

"My concern for you, Mabel, may make me more cowardly than common; but, to be frank, I see but one method of keeping the cutter from being wrecked in the course of the next two or three hours, and that your uncle refuses to take. After all, this may be my ignorance; for, as he says, Ontario is merely fresh water."

"You cannot believe this will make any difference. Think of my dear father, Jasper! Think of yourself; of all the lives that depend on a timely word from you to save them."

"I think of you, Mabel, and that is more, much more, than all the rest put together!" returned the young man, with a strength of expression and an earnestness of look, that uttered infinitely more than the words themselves.

Mabel's heart beat quickly, and a gleam of grateful satisfaction shot across her blushing

features ; but the alarm was too vivid and too serious to admit of much relief from happier thoughts. She did not attempt to repress a look of gratitude, and then she returned to the feeling that was naturally uppermost.

“ My uncle’s obstinacy must not be permitted to occasion this disaster. Go once more on deck, Jasper ; and ask my father to come into the cabin.”

While the young man was complying with this request, Mabel sat listening to the howling of the storm, and the dashing of the water against the cutter, in a dread to which she had hitherto been a stranger. Constitutionally an excellent sailor, as the term is used among passengers, she had not hitherto bethought her of any danger, and had passed her time since the commencement of the gale in such womanly employments as her situation allowed ; but now alarm was seriously awakened, she did not fail to perceive that never before had she been on the water in such a tempest. The minute or two that elapsed ere the Sergeant came appeared an hour, and she scarcely breathed when she saw him and Jasper descending the ladder in company. Quick as language could

express her meaning, she acquainted her father with Jasper's opinion of their situation; and entreated him, if he loved her, or had any regard for his own life, or for those of his men, to interfere with her uncle, and to induce him to yield the control of the cutter again to its proper commander.

"Jasper is true, father," she added earnestly; "and if false, he could have no motive in wrecking us in this distant part of the lake at the risk of all our lives, his own included. I will pledge my own life for his truth."

"Ay, this is well enough for a young woman who is frightened," answered the more phlegmatic parent; "but it might not be so prudent or excusable in one in command of an expedition. Jasper may think the chance of drowning in getting ashore fully repaid by the chance of escaping as soon as he reaches the land."

"Sergeant Dunham!"

"Father!"

These exclamations were made simultaneously, but they were uttered in tones expressive of different feelings. In Jasper, surprise was the emotion uppermost; in Mabel, reproach. The

old soldier, however, was too much accustomed to deal frankly with subordinates to heed either; and, after a moment's thought, he continued as if neither had spoken.

“Nor is brother Cap a man likely to submit to be taught his duty on board a vessel.”

“But, father, when all our lives are in the utmost jeopardy!”

“So much the worse. The fair-weather commander is no great matter; it is when things go wrong that the best officer shows himself in his true colours. Charles Cap will not be likely to quit the helm because the ship is in danger. Besides, Jasper Eau-douce, he says, your proposal in itself has a suspicious air about it, and sounds more like treachery than reason.”

“He may think so; but let him send for the pilot and hear his opinion. It is well-known I have not seen the man since yesterday evening.”

“This does sound reasonably, and the experiment shall be tried. Follow me on deck then, that all may be honest and above-board.”

Jasper obeyed, and so keen was the interest of Mabel, that she too ventured as far as the companion-way, where her garments were suffi-



ciently protected against the violence of the wind and her person from the spray. Here maiden modesty induced her to remain, though an absorbed witness of what was passing.

The pilot soon appeared, and there was no mistaking the look of concern that he cast around at the scene as soon as he was in the open air. Some rumours of the situation of the Scud had found their way below, it is true; but, in this instance, rumour had lessened instead of magnifying the danger. He was allowed a few minutes to look about him, and then the question was put as to the course that he thought it prudent to follow.

“I see no means of saving the cutter but to anchor,” he answered simply, and without hesitation.

“What! out here in the lake?” inquired Cap, as he had previously done of Jasper.

“No: but closer in; just at the outer line of the breakers.”

The effect of this communication was to leave no doubt, in the mind of Cap, that there was a secret arrangement between her commander and the pilot to cast away the Scud; most probably with the hope of effecting their escape. He

consequently treated the opinion of the latter with the indifference he had manifested towards that of the former.

“ I tell you, brother Dunham,” he said, in answer to the remonstrances of the Sergeant, against his turning a deaf ear to this double representation, “ that no seaman would give such an opinion honestly. To anchor on a lee shore, in a gale of wind, would be an act of madness that I could never excuse to the underwriters, under any circumstances, as long as a rag can be set ; but to anchor close to breakers would be insanity.”

“ His Majesty underwrites the Scud, brother, and I am responsible for the lives of my command. These men are better acquainted with Lake Ontario than we can possibly be, and I do think their telling the same tale entitles them to some credit.”

“ Uncle ! ” said Mabel, earnestly ; but a gesture from Jasper induced the girl to restrain her feelings.

“ We are drifting down upon the breakers so rapidly,” said the young man, “ that little need be said on the subject. Half an hour must settle the matter, one way or the other ;

but I warn Master Cap that the surest-footed man among us will not be able to keep his feet an instant on the deck of this low craft, should she fairly get within them. Indeed, I make little doubt, that we shall fill and founder before the second line of rollers is passed."

"And how would anchoring help the matter?" demanded Cap, furiously, as if he felt that Jasper was responsible for the effects of the gale, as well as for the opinion he had just given.

"It would at least do no harm," Eau-douce mildly replied. "By bringing the cutter head to sea we should lessen her drift; and even if we dragged through the breakers, it would be with the least possible danger. I hope, Master Cap, you will allow the pilot and myself to *prepare* for anchoring, since the precaution may do good, and can do no harm."

"Overhaul your ranges, if you will, and get your anchors clear, with all my heart. We are now in a situation that cannot be much affected by anything of that sort. Sergeant, a word with you, aft here, if you please."

Cap led his brother-in-law out of ear-shot; and then, with more of human feeling in his

voice and manner than he was apt to exhibit, he opened his heart on the subject of their real situation.

“ This is a melancholy affair for poor Mabel:” he said, blowing his nose, and speaking with a slight tremour. “ You and I, Sergeant, are old fellows, and used to being near death, if not to actually dying, our trades fit us for such scenes ; but poor Mabel !—she is an affectionate and kind-hearted girl, and I had hoped to see her comfortably settled, and a mother, before my time came. Well, well ! we must take the bad with the good in every v’y’ge ; and the only serious objection that an old seafaring man can with propriety make to such an event is, that it should happen on this bit of d—d fresh water.”

Sergeant Dunham was a brave man, and had shown his spirit in scenes that looked much more appalling than this ; but on all such occasions he had been able to act his part against his foes, while here he was pressed upon by an enemy whom he had no means of resisting. For himself he cared far less than for his daughter, feeling some of that self-reliance which seldom deserts a man of firmness who is

in vigorous health, and who has been accustomed to personal exertions in moments of jeopardy ; but, as respects Mabel, he saw no means of escape, and, with a father's fondness, he at once determined, that if either was doomed to perish, he and his daughter must perish together.

“ Do you think this must come to pass ? ” he asked of Cap firmly, but with strong feeling.

“ Twenty minutes will carry us into the breakers ; and, look for yourself, Sergeant, what chance will even the stoutest man among us have in that caldron to leeward ? ”

The prospect was, indeed, little calculated to encourage hope. By this time the Scud was within a mile of the shore, on which the gale was blowing at right angles, with a violence that forbade the idea of showing any additional canvas, with a view to claw off. The small portion of the mainsail that was actually set, and which merely served to keep the head of the Scud so near the wind as to prevent the waves from breaking over her; quivered under the gusts, as if at each moment the stout threads which held the complicated fabric together were about to be torn asunder.

The drizzle had ceased; but the air, for a hundred feet above the surface of the lake, was filled with dazzling spray, which had an appearance not unlike that of a brilliant mist, while above all the sun was shining gloriously in a cloudless sky. Jasper had noted the omen, and had foretold that it announced a speedy termination to the gale, though the next hour or two must decide their fate. Between the cutter and the shore the view was still more wild and appalling. The breakers extended nearly half a mile: while the water within their line was white with foam, the air above them was so far filled with vapour and spray, as to render the land beyond hazy and indistinct. Still it could be seen that the latter was high, — not a usual thing for the shores of Ontario, — and that it was covered with the verdant mantle of the interminable forest.

While the Sergeant and Cap were gazing at this scene in silence, Jasper and his people were actively engaged on the forecastle. No sooner had the young man received permission to resume his old employment, than, appealing to some of the soldiers for aid, he mustered five or six assistants, and set about in earnest

the performance of a duty that had been too long delayed. On these narrow waters, anchors are never stowed in-board, or cables that are intended for service unbent, and Jasper was saved much of the labour that would have been necessary in a vessel at sea. The two bowers were soon ready to be let go, ranges of the cables were overhauled, and then the party paused to look about them. No changes for the better had occurred, but the cutter was falling slowly in, and each instant rendered it more certain that she could not gain an inch to windward.

One long earnest survey of the lake ended, Jasper gave new orders in a manner to prove how much he thought that the time pressed. Two kedges were got on deck, and hawsers were bent to them; the inner ends of the hawsers were bent, in their turns, to the crowns of the anchors, and everything was got ready to throw them overboard at the proper moment. These preparations completed, Jasper's manner changed, from the excitement of exertion to a look of calm but settled concern. He quitted the forecastle, where the seas were dashing in-board at every plunge of the vessel, the

duty just mentioned having been executed with the bodies of the crew frequently buried in the water, and walked to a drier part of the deck, aft. Here he was met by the Pathfinder, who was standing near Mabel and the Quarter-Master. Most of those on board, with the exception of the individuals who have already been particularly mentioned, were below, some seeking relief from physical suffering on their pallets, and others tardily bethinking them of their sins. For the first time, most probably, since her keel had dipped into the limpid waters of Ontario, the voice of prayer was heard on board the Scud.

“Jasper,” commenced his friend, the guide, “I have been of no use this morning, for my gifts are of little account, as you know, in a vessel like this; but, should it please God to let the Sergeant’s daughter reach the shore alive, my acquaintance with the forest may still carry her through in safety to the garrison.”

“’Tis a fearful distance thither, Pathfinder!” Mabel rejoined, the party being so near together that all that was said by one was over-



heard by the others. "I am afraid none of us could live to reach the fort."

"It would be a risky path, Mabel, and a crooked one; though some of your sex have undergone even more than that in this wilderness. But, Jasper, either you or I, or both of us, must man this bark canoe; Mabel's only chance will lie in getting through the breakers in that."

"I would willingly man anything to save Mabel," answered Jasper, with a melancholy smile; "but no human hand, Pathfinder, could carry that canoe through yonder breakers, in a gale like this. I have hopes from anchoring, after all; for, once before, have we saved the Scud in an extremity, nearly as great as this."

"If we are to anchor, Jasper," the Sergeant inquired, "why not do it at once? Every foot we lose in drifting now, would come into the distance we shall probably drag when the anchors are let go."

Jasper drew nearer to the Sergeant, and took his hand, pressing it earnestly, and in a way to denote strong, almost uncontrollable, feelings.

“Sergeant Dunham,” he said, solemnly, “you are a good man, though you have treated me harshly in this business. You love your daughter?”

“That you cannot doubt, Eau-douce,” returned the Sergeant, huskily.

“Will you give her — give us all, the only chance for life that is left?”

“What would you have me do, boy; what would you have me do? I have acted according to my judgment, hitherto — what would you have me do?”

“Support me against Master Cap for five minutes, and all that man can do towards saving the Scud shall be done.”

The Sergeant hesitated, for he was too much of a disciplinarian to fly in the face of regular orders. He disliked the appearance of vacillation, too; and then he had a profound respect for his kinsman’s seamanship. While he was deliberating, Cap came from the post he had some time occupied, which was at the side of the man at the helm, and drew nigh the group.

“Master Eau-douce,” he said, as soon as near enough to be heard, “I have come to in-

quire if you know any spot near by, where this cutter can be beached? The moment has arrived when we are driven to this hard alternative."

That instant of indecision on the part of Cap secured the triumph of Jasper. Looking at the Sergeant, the young man received a nod that assured him of all he asked, and he lost not one of those moments that were getting to be so very precious.

"Shall I take the helm?" he inquired of Cap, "and see if we can reach a creek that lies too leeward?"

"Do so, do so," said the other, hemming to clear his throat; for he felt oppressed by a responsibility that weighed all the heavier on his shoulders, on account of his ignorance. "Do so, Eau-douce, since, to be frank with you, I can see nothing better to be done. We must beach, or swamp."

Jasper required no more; springing aft, he soon had the tiller in his own hands. The pilot was prepared for what was to follow; and, at a sign from his young commander, the rag of sail that had so long been set was taken in. At that moment, Jasper, watching his time,

put the helm up; the head of a staysail was loosened forward, and the light cutter, as if conscious she was now under the control of familiar hands, fell off, and was soon in the trough of the sea. This perilous instant was passed in safety, and at the next moment the little vessel appeared flying down toward the breakers, at a rate that threatened instant destruction. The distances had got to be so short, that five or six minutes sufficed for all that Jasper wished, and he put the helm down again, when the bows of the Scud came up to the wind, notwithstanding the turbulence of the waters, as gracefully as the duck varies its line of direction on the glassy pond. A sign from Jasper set all in motion on the fore-castle, and a kedge was thrown from each bow. The fearful nature of the drift was now apparent even to Mabel's eyes, for the two hawsers ran out like tow-lines. As soon as they straightened to a slight strain, both anchors were let go, and cable was given to each, nearly to the better-ends. It was not a difficult task to snub so light a craft, with ground-tackle of a quality better than common; and in less than ten minutes from the moment when Jasper went to

the helm, the Scud was riding, head to sea, with the two cables stretched ahead in lines that resembled bars of iron.

“This is not well done, Master Jasper!” angrily exclaimed Cap, as soon as he perceived the trick that had been played him; “this is not well done, sir: I order you to cut, and to beach the cutter without a moment’s delay.”

No one, however, seemed disposed to comply with this order; for so long as Eau-douce saw fit to command, his own people were disposed to obey. Finding that the men remained passive, Cap, who believed they were in the utmost peril, turned fiercely to Jasper, and renewed his remonstrances.

“You did not head for your pretended creek,” he added, after dealing in some objurgatory remarks that we do not deem it necessary to record, “but steered for that bluff, where every soul on board would have been drowned, had we gone ashore.”

“And you wish to cut, and put every soul ashore at that very spot!” Jasper retorted, a little drily.

“Throw a head-line overboard, and ascertain the drift!” Cap now roared to the people

forward. A sign from Jasper, sustaining this order, it was instantly obeyed. All on deck gathered round the spot, and watched, with nearly breathless interest, the result of the experiment. The lead was no sooner on the bottom, than the line tended forward, and in about two minutes it was seen that the cutter had drifted her length, dead in towards the bluff. Jasper looked gravely, for he well knew nothing would hold the vessel did she get within the vortex of the breakers, the first line of which was appearing and disappearing about a cable's length directly under their stern.

“Traitor!” exclaimed Cap, shaking a finger at the young commander, though passion choked the rest. “You must answer for this with your life!” he added, after a short pause. “If I were at the head of this expedition, Sergeant, I would hang him at the end of the main-boom, lest he escape drowning.”

“Moderate your feelings, brother; be more moderate, I beseech you: Jasper appears to have done all for the best, and matters may not be as bad as you believe them.”

“Why did he not run for the creek he mentioned? — why has he brought us here, dead

to windward of that bluff, and to a spot where even the breakers are only of half the ordinary width, as if in a hurry to drown all on board?"

"I headed for the bluff, for the precise reason that the breakers are so narrow at this spot," answered Jasper mildly, though his gorge had risen at the language the other held.

"Do you mean to tell an old seaman like me that this cutter could live in those breakers?"

"I do not, sir. I think she would fill and swamp, if driven into the first line of them; I am certain she would never reach the shore on her bottom, if fairly entered. I hope to keep her clear of them altogether."

"With a drift of her length in a minute?"

"The backing of the anchors does not yet fairly tell, nor do I even hope that *they* will entirely bring her up."

"On what then do you rely? To moor a craft, head and stern, by faith, hope, and charity?"

"No, sir, I trust to the under-tow. I headed for the bluff, because I knew that it was stronger at that point than at any other,

and because we could get nearer in with the land without entering the breakers."

This was said with spirit, though without any particular show of resentment. Its effect on Cap was marked, the feeling that was uppermost being evidently that of surprise.

"Under-tow!" he repeated; "who the devil ever heard of saving a vessel from going ashore by the under-tow?"

"This may never happen on the ocean, sir," Jasper answered, modestly; "but we have known it to happen here."

"The lad is right, brother," put in the Sergeant; "for though I do not well understand it, I have often heard the sailors of the lake speak of such a thing. We shall do well to trust to Jasper in this strait."

Cap grumbled and swore; but as there was no remedy, he was compelled to acquiesce. Jasper being now called on to explain what he meant by the under-tow, gave this account of the matter. The water that was driven up on the shore by the gale was necessarily compelled to find its level by returning to the lake by some secret channels. This could not be done on the surface, where both wind and



waves were constantly urging it towards the land, and it necessarily formed a sort of lower eddy, by means of which it flowed back again to its ancient and proper bed. This inferior current had received the name of the under-tow; and as it would necessarily act on the bottom of a vessel that drew as much water as the Scud, Jasper trusted to the aid of this reaction to keep his cables from parting. In short, the upper and lower currents would, in a manner, counteract each other.

Simple and ingenious as was this theory, however, as yet there was little evidence of its being reduced to practice. The drift continued; though as the kedges and hawsers with which the anchors were backed took the strains it became sensibly less. At length the man at the lead announced the joyful intelligence that the anchors had ceased to drag, and that the vessel had brought up! At this precise moment the first line of breakers was about a hundred feet astern of the Scud, even appearing to approach much nearer as the foam vanished and returned on the raging surges. Jasper sprang forward, and casting a glance over the bows, he smiled in triumph, as he

pointed exultingly to the cables. Instead of resembling bars of iron in rigidity, as before, they were curving downwards, and to a seaman's senses, it was evident that the cutter rose and fell on the seas as they came in with the ease of a ship in a tides-way, when the power of the wind is relieved by the counter-acting pressure of the water.

“T is the under-tow!” he exclaimed, with delight, fairly bounding along the deck to steady the helm, in order that the cutter might ride still easier. “Providence has placed us directly in its current, and there is no longer any danger.”

“Ay, ay, Providence is a good seaman,” growled Cap, “and often helps lubbers out of difficulty. Under-tow, or upper-tow, the gale has abated; and, fortunately for us all, the anchors have met with good holding-ground. Then this d——d fresh-water has an unnatural way with it.”

Men are seldom inclined to quarrel with good fortune, but it is in distress that they grow clamorous and critical. Most on board were disposed to believe that they had been saved from shipwreck by the skill and know-

ledge of Jasper, without regarding the opinions of Cap, whose remarks were now little heeded.

There was half an hour of uncertainty and doubt, it is true, during which period the lead was anxiously watched; and then a feeling of security came over all, and the weary slept without dreaming of instant death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ It is to be all made of sighs and tears ;  
It is to be all made of faith and service ;  
It is to be all made of phantasy ;  
All made of passion, and all made of wishes :  
All adoration, duty, and observance ;  
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience ;  
All purity, all trial, all observance.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was near noon when the gale broke ; and then its force abated as suddenly as its violence had arisen. In less than two hours after the wind fell, the surface of the lake, though still agitated, was no longer glittering with foam ; and in double that time, the entire sheet presented the ordinary scene of disturbed water, that was unbroken by the violence of a tempest. Still the waves came rolling incessantly towards the shore, and the lines of breakers remained, though the spray had ceased to fly ; the combing of the swells was more moderate,

and all that there was of violence proceeded from the impulsion of wind that had abated.

As it was impossible to make head against the sea that was still up, with the light opposing air that blew from the eastward, all thoughts of getting under way that afternoon were abandoned. Jasper, who had now quietly resumed the command of the Scud, busied himself, however, in heaving-up to the anchors, which were lifted in succession. The kedges that backed them were weighed, and everything was got in readiness for a prompt departure, as soon as the state of the weather would allow. In the mean time, they who had no concern with these duties, sought such means of amusement as their peculiar circumstances allowed.

As is common with those who are unused to the confinement of a vessel, Mabel cast wistful eyes towards the shore ; nor was it long before she expressed a wish that it were possible to land. The Pathfinder was near her at the time, and he assured her that nothing would be easier, as they had a bark canoe on deck, which was the best possible mode of conveyance to go through a surf. After the usual

doubts and misgivings, the Sergeant was appealed to; his opinion proved to be favourable, and preparations to carry the whim into effect were immediately made.

The party that was to land consisted of Sergeant Dunham, his daughter, and the Pathfinder. Accustomed to the canoe, Mabel took her seat in the centre with great steadiness, her father was placed in the bows, while the guide assumed the office of conductor, by steering in the stern. There was little need of impelling the canoe by means of the paddle, for the rollers sent it forward, at moments, with a violence that set every effort to govern its movements at defiance. More than once, ere the shore was reached, Mabel repented of her temerity, but Pathfinder encouraged her, and really manifested so much self-possession, coolness, and strength of arm himself, that even a female might have hesitated about owning all her apprehensions. Our heroine was no coward; and while she felt the novelty of her situation, in landing through a surf, she also experienced a fair proportion of its wild delight. At moments, indeed, her heart was in her mouth, as the bubble of a boat floated on the very crest

of a foaming breaker, appearing to skim the water like a swallow, and then she flushed and laughed, as, left by the glancing element, they appeared to linger behind as if ashamed of having been outdone in the headlong race. A few minutes sufficed for this excitement; for though the distance between the cutter and the land considerably exceeded a quarter of a mile, the intermediate space was passed in a very few minutes.

On landing, the Sergeant kissed his daughter kindly, for he was so much of a soldier as always to feel more at home on terra firma than when afloat; and taking his gun, he announced his intention to pass an hour in quest of game.

“Pathfinder will remain near you, girl, and no doubt he will tell you some of the traditions of this part of the world, or some of his own experiences with the Mingos.”

The guide laughed, promised to have a care of Mabel, and in a few minutes the father had ascended a steep acclivity, and disappeared in the forest. The others took another direction, which, after a few minutes of a sharp ascent also, brought them to a small naked point on

the promontory, where the eye overlooked an extensive and very peculiar panorama. Here Mabel seated herself on a fragment of fallen rock, to recover her breath and strength, while her companion, on whose sinews no personal exertion seemed to make any impression, stood at her side, leaning in his own and not ungraceful manner on his long rifle. Several minutes passed, and neither spoke; Mabel, in particular, being lost in admiration of the view.

The position the two had obtained was sufficiently elevated to command a wide reach of the lake, which stretched away towards the north-east in a boundless sheet, glittering beneath the rays of an afternoon's sun, and yet betraying the remains of that agitation which it had endured while tossed by the late tempest. The land set bounds to its limits in a huge crescent, disappearing in distance towards the south-east and the north. Far as the eye could reach, nothing but forest was visible, not even a solitary sign of civilisation breaking in upon the uniform and grand magnificence of nature. The gale had driven the Scud beyond the line of those forts, with which the French were then



endeavouring to gird the English North American possessions; for, following the channels of communication between the great lakes, their posts were on the banks of the Niagara, while our adventurers had reached a point many leagues westwards of that celebrated strait. The cutter rode at single anchor, without the breakers, resembling some well imagined and accurately executed toy, that was intended rather for a glass-case than for the struggles with the elements which she had so lately gone through, while the canoe lay on the narrow beach, just out of reach of the waves that came booming upon the land, a speck upon the shingles.

“We are very far, here, from human habitations!” exclaimed Mabel, when, after a long and musing survey of the scene, its principal peculiarities forced themselves on her active and ever brilliant imagination; “this is indeed being on a frontier.”

“Have they more sightly scenes than this nearer the sea and around their large towns?” demanded Pathfinder, with an interest he was apt to discover in such a subject.

“I will not say that; there is more to re-

mind one of his fellow-beings there than here ; less, perhaps, to remind one of God."

" Ay, Mabel, that is what my own feelings say. I am but a poor hunter, I know ; untaught and unlearned ; but God is as near me, in this my home, as he is near the king in his royal palace."

" Who can doubt it ? " returned Mabel, looking from the view up into the hard-featured but honest face of her companion, though not without surprise at the energy of his manner. " One feels nearer to God in such a spot, I think, than when the mind is distracted by the objects of the towns."

" You say all I wish to say myself, Mabel, but in so much plainer speech, that you make me ashamed of wishing to let others know what I feel on such matters. I have coasted this lake in search of skins afore the war, and have been here already ; not at this very spot, for we landed yonder, where you may see the blasted oak that stands above the cluster of hemlocks ——"

" How, Pathfinder, can you remember all these trifles so accurately ? "

" These are our streets and houses ; our

churches and palaces. Remember them, indeed! I once made an appointment with the Big Sarpent, to meet at twelve o'clock at noon, near the foot of a certain pine, at the end of six months, when neither of us was within three hundred miles of the spot. The tree stood, and stands still, unless the judgment of Providence has lighted on that too, in the midst of the forest, fifty miles from any settlement, but in a most extraordinary neighbourhood for beaver."

"And did you meet at that very spot and hour?"

"Does the sun rise and set? When I reached the tree, I found the Sarpent leaning against its trunk, with torn leggings and muddied moccasins. The Delaware had got into a swamp, and it worried him not a little to find his way out of it; but, as the sun which comes over the eastern hills in the morning, goes down behind the western at night, so was he true to time and place. No fear of Chingachgook when there is either a friend or an enemy in the case. He is equally sartain with each."

"And where is the Delaware now? why is he not with us to-day?"

“He is scouting on the Mingo trail, where I ought to have been too, but for a great human infirmity.”

“You seem above, beyond, superior to all infirmity, Pathfinder; I never yet met with a man who appeared to be so little liable to the weaknesses of nature.”

“If you mean in the way of health and strength, Mabel, Providence has been kind to me; though I fancy the open air, long hunts, active scoutings, forest fare, and the sleep of a good conscience, may always keep the doctors at a distance. But I am human after all; yes, I find I'm very human in some of my feelings.”

Mabel looked surprised, and it would be no more than delineating the character of her sex, if we added that, her sweet countenance expressed a good deal of curiosity, too, though her tongue was more discreet.

“There is something bewitching in this wild life of yours, Pathfinder,” she exclaimed, a tinge of enthusiasm mantling her cheeks. “I find I'm fast getting to be a frontier girl, and am coming to love all this grand silence of the woods. The towns seem tame to me; and,

as my father will probably pass the remainder of his days here, where he has already lived so long, I begin to feel that I should be happy to continue with him, and not to return to the sea-shore."

"The woods are never silent, Mabel, to such as understand their meaning. Days at a time, have I travelled them alone, without feeling the want of company; and, as for conversation, for such as can comprehend their language, there is no want of rational and instructive discourse."

"I believe you are happier when alone, Pathfinder, than when mingling with your fellow-creatures."

"I will not say that, I will not say exactly that. I have seen the time when I have thought that God was sufficient for me in the forest, and that I craved no more than his bounty and his care. But other feelings have got uppermost, and I suppose nature will have its way. All other creatures mate, Mabel, and it was intended man should do so, too."

"And have you never bethought you of seeking a wife, Pathfinder, to share your fortunes," inquired the girl, with the directness

and simplicity that the pure of heart, and the undesigning, are the most apt to manifest, and with that feeling of affection which is inbred in her sex. "To me, it seems, you only want a home to return to, from your wanderings, to render your life completely happy. Were I a man, it would be my delight to roam through these forests at will, or to sail over this beautiful lake."

"I understand you, Mabel; and God bless you for thinking of the welfare of men as humble as we are. We have our pleasures, it is true, as well as our gifts, but we might be happier; yes, I do think we might be happier."

"Happier! in what way, Pathfinder? In this pure air, with these cool and shaded forests to wander through, this lovely lake to gaze at, and sail upon, with clear consciences, and abundance for all their real wants, men ought to be nothing less than as perfectly happy, as their infirmities will allow."

"Every creatur' has its gifts, Mabel, and men have theirs," answered the guide, looking stealthily at his beautiful companion, whose cheeks had flushed and eyes brightened under the ardour of feelings, excited by the novelty

of her striking situation ; “and all must obey them. Do you see yonder pigeon that is just alightin’ on the beach,—here in a line with the fallen chestnut ?”

“Certainly ; it is the only thing stirring with life in it, besides ourselves, that is to be seen in this vast solitude.”

“Not so, Mabel, not so ; Providence makes nothing that lives, to live quite alone. Here is its mate, just rising on the wing ; it has been feeding near the other beach, but it will not long be separated from its companion.”

“I understand you, Pathfinder ;” returned Mabel, smiling sweetly, though as calmly as if the discourse was with her father. “But a hunter may find a mate, even in this wild region. The Indian girls are affectionate and true, I know ; for such was the wife of Arrow-head, to a husband who oftener frowned than smiled.”

“That would never do, Mabel, and good would never come of it. Kind must cling to kind, and country to country, if one would find happiness. If, indeed, I could meet with one like you, who would consent to be a hunter’s wife, and who would not scorn my igno-

rance and rudeness, then, indeed, would all the toil of the past appear like the sporting of the young deer, and all the future like sunshine."

"One like me! A girl of my years and indiscretion would hardly make a fit companion for the boldest scout and surest hunter on the lines."

"Ah! Mabel, I fear me, that I have been improving a red-skin's gifts, with a pale-face's natur' ? Such a character would insure a wife in an Indian village."

"Surely, surely, Pathfinder, you would not think of choosing one as ignorant, as frivolous, as vain, and as inexperienced as I, for your wife?" Mabel would have added, "and as young;" but an instinctive feeling of delicacy repressed the words.

"And why not, Mabel? If you are ignorant of frontier usages, you know more than all of us of pleasant anecdotes and town customs; as for frivolous, I know not what it means; but if it signifies beauty, ah's me! I fear it is no fault in my eyes. Vain you are not, as is seen by the kind manner in which you listen to all my idle tales about scoutings and trails; and as for experience, that will come with years.



Besides, Mabel, I fear men think little of these matters when they are about to take wives : I do."

" Pathfinder, your words, — your looks : — surely, all this is meant in trifling ; you speak in pleasantry ?"

" To me it is always agreeable to be near you, Mabel ; and I should sleep sounder this blessed night than I have done for a week past, could I think that you find such discourse as pleasant as I do."

We shall not say that Mabel Dunham had not believed herself a favourite with the guide. This her quick feminine sagacity had early discovered ; and perhaps she had occasionally thought there had mingled with his regard and friendship some of that manly tenderness which the ruder sex must be coarse, indeed, not to show on occasions to the gentler ; but the idea that he seriously sought her for his wife had never before crossed the mind of the spirited and ingenuous girl. Now, however, a gleam of something like the truth broke in upon her imagination, less induced by the words of her companion, perhaps, than by his manner. Looking earnestly into the rugged honest

countenance of the scout, Mabel's own features became concerned and grave; and when she spoke again, it was with a gentleness of manner that attracted him to her even more powerfully than the words themselves were calculated to repel.

“ You and I should understand each other, Pathfinder,” she said with an earnest sincerity, “ nor should there be any cloud between us. You are too upright and frank to meet with anything but sincerity and frankness in return, Surely, surely, all this means nothing, — has no other connection with your feelings than such a friendship as one of your wisdom and character would naturally feel for a girl like me ? ”

“ I believe it's all nat'ral, Mabel; yes, I do: the Sergeant tells me he had such feelings towards your own mother, and I think I've seen something like it in the young people I have from time to time guided through the wilderness. Yes, yes, I dare say it's all nat'ral enough, and that makes it come so easy, and is a great comfort to me.”

“ Pathfinder, your words make me uneasy. Speak plainer, or change the subject for ever.

You do not, cannot mean that — you cannot wish me to understand” — even the tongue of the spirited Mabel faltered, and she shrunk, with maiden shame, from adding what she wished so earnestly to say. Rallying her courage, however, and determined to know all as soon and as plainly as possible, after a moment’s hesitation, she continued, — “ I mean, Pathfinder, that you do not wish me to understand that you seriously think of me as a wife?”

“ I do, Mabel; that’s it, that’s just it; and you have put the matter in a much better point of view than I, with my forest gifts and frontier ways, would ever be able to do. The Sergeant and I have concluded on the matter, if it is agreeable to you, as he thinks is likely to be the case; though I doubt my own power to please one who deserves the best husband America can produce.”

Mabel’s countenance changed from uneasiness to surprise; and then, by a transition still quicker, from surprise to pain.

“ My father!” she exclaimed — “ my dear father has thought of my becoming your wife, Pathfinder?”

“ Yes, he has, Mabel, he has, indeed. He has even thought such a thing might be agreeable to you, and has almost encouraged me to fancy it might be true.”

“ But you yourself,—you certainly can care nothing whether this singular expectation shall ever be realized or not ?”

“ Anan ?”

“ I mean, Pathfinder, that you have talked of this match more to oblige my father than anything else ; that your feelings are no way concerned let my answer be what it may ?”

The scout looked earnestly into the beautiful face of Mabel, which had flushed with the ardour and novelty of her sensations, and it was not possible to mistake the intense admiration that betrayed itself in every lineament of his ingenuous countenance.

“ I have often thought myself happy, Mabel, when ranging the woods on a successful hunt, breathing the pure air of the hills, and filled with vigour and health ; but I now know that it has all been idleness and vanity compared with the delight it would give me to know that you thought better of me than you think of most others.”

“ Better of you !—I do, indeed, think better of you, Pathfinder, than of most others: I am not certain that I do not think better of you than of any other ; for your truth, honesty, simplicity, justice, and courage, are scarcely equalled by any of earth.”

“ Ah! Mabel, these are sweet and encouraging words from you ; and the Sergeant, after all, was not as near wrong as I feared.”

“ Nay, Pathfinder, in the name of all that is sacred and just, do not let us misunderstand each other, in a matter of so much importance. While I esteem, respect, nay, reverence you, almost as much as I reverence my own dear father, it is impossible that I should ever become your wife—that I ——”

The change in her companion's countenance was so sudden and so great, that the moment the effect of what she had uttered became visible in the face of the Pathfinder, Mabel arrested her own words, notwithstanding her strong desire to be explicit, the reluctance with which she could at any time cause pain being sufficient of itself to induce the pause. Neither spoke for some time, the shade of disappointment that crossed the rugged lineaments

of the hunter, amounting so nearly to anguish, as to frighten his companion, while the sensation of choking became so strong in the Pathfinder, that he fairly griped his throat, like one who sought physical relief for physical suffering. The convulsive manner in which his fingers worked actually struck the alarmed girl with a feeling of awe.

“Nay, Pathfinder,” Mabel eagerly added, the instant she could command her voice—“I may have said more than I mean; for all things of this nature are possible, and women, they say, are never sure of their own minds. What I wish you to understand is, that it is not likely that you and I should ever think of each other, as man and wife ought to think of each other.”

“I do not—I shall never think in that way again, Mabel,” gasped forth the Pathfinder, who appeared to utter his words, like one just raised above the pressure of some suffocating substance. “No, no, I shall never think of you, or any one else, again, in that way.”

“Pathfinder, dear Pathfinder, understand me; do not attach more meaning to my words

than I do myself: a match like that would be unwise, unnatural, perhaps."

"Yes, unnat'ral—ag'in natur'; and so I told the Sargeant, but he *would* have it otherwise."

"Pathfinder! Oh! this is worse than I could have imagined; take my hand, excellent Pathfinder, and let me see that you do not hate me. For God's sake, smile upon me again."

"Hate you, Mabel! Smile upon you! Ah's me!"

"Nay, give me your hand; your hardy true and manly hand—both, both, Pathfinder! for I shall not be easy until I feel certain that we are friends again, and that all this has been a mistake."

"Mabel!" said the guide, looking wistfully into the face of the generous and impetuous girl, as she held his two hard and sunburnt hands in her own pretty and delicate fingers, and laughing in his own silent and peculiar manner, while anguish gleamed over lineaments which seemed incapable of deception, even while agitated with emotions so conflicting, "Mabel! the Sargeant was wrong."

The pent-up feelings could endure no more, and the tears rolled down the cheeks of the scout like rain. His fingers again worked convulsively at his throat; and his breast heaved, as if it possessed a tenant of which it would be rid, by any effort, however desperate.

“Pathfinder! Pathfinder!” Mabel almost shrieked, “anything but this; anything but this! Speak to me, Pathfinder! smile again, say one kind word, anything to prove you can forgive me.”

“The Sergeant was wrong,” exclaimed the guide, laughing amid his agony, in a way to terrify his companion by the unnatural mixture of anguish and light-heartedness. “I knew it, I knew it, and said it; yes, the Sergeant was wrong after all.”

“We can be friends, though we cannot be man and wife,” continued Mabel, almost as much disturbed as her companion, scarcely knowing what she said; “we can always be friends, and always will.”

“I thought the Sergeant was mistaken,” resumed the Pathfinder, when a great effort had enabled him to command himself, “for I did not think my gifts were such as would please



the fancy of a town-bred girl. It would have been better, Mabel, had he not over-persuaded me into a different notion ; and it might have been better, too, had you not been so pleasant and confiding like ; yes, it would."

"If I thought any error of mine had raised false expectations in you, Pathfinder, however unintentionally on my part, I should never forgive myself ; for, believe me, I would rather endure pain in my own feelings, than you should suffer."

"That 's just it, Mabel ; that 's just it. These speeches and opinions, spoken in so soft a voice, and in a way I'm so unused to in the woods, have done the mischief. But I now see plainly, and begin to understand the difference between us better, and will strive to keep down thought, and to go abroad again as I used to do, looking for the game and the inimy. Ah's me ! Mabel, I have indeed been on a false trail, since we met."

"But you will now travel on the true one. In a little while you will forget all this, and think of me as a friend, who owes you her life."

"This may be the way in the towns, but I

doubt if it's nat'ral to the woods. With us, when the eye sees a lovely sight, it is apt to keep it long in view, or when the mind takes in an upright and proper feeling, it is loath to part with it."

"But it is not a proper feeling that you should love me, nor am I a lovely sight. You will forget it all, when you come seriously to recollect that I am altogether unsuited to be your wife."

"So I told the Sergeant; but he would have it otherwise. I knew you was too young and beautiful for one of middle age, like myself, and who never was comely to look at, even in youth: and then your ways have not been my ways; nor would a hunter's cabin be a fitting place for one who was educated among chiefs, as it were. If I were younger and comelier, though, like Jasper Eau-douce ——"

"Never mind Jasper Eau-douce," interrupted Mabel, impatiently; "we can talk of something else."

"Jasper is a worthy lad, Mabel; ay, and a comely," returned the guileless guide, looking earnestly at the girl, as if he distrusted her judgment in speaking slightly of his friend.

“Were I only half as comely as Jasper Western, my misgivings in this affair would not have been so great, and they might not have been so true.”

“We will not talk of Jasper Western,” repeated Mabel, the colour mounting to her temples; “he may be good enough in a gale, or on the lake, but he is not good enough to talk of here.”

“I fear me, Mabel, he is better than the man who is likely to be your husband, though the Sergeant says that never can take place. But the Sergeant was wrong once, and he may be wrong twice.”

“And who is likely to be my husband, Pathfinder? This is scarcely less strange than what has just passed between us.”

“I know it is nat’ral for like to seek like, and for them that have consorted much with officers’ ladies to wish to be officers’ ladies themselves. But, Mabel, I may speak plainly to you, I know; and I hope my words will not give you pain; for, now I understand what it is to be disappointed in such feelings, I wouldn’t wish to cause even a Mingo sorrow on this head. But happiness is not always to

be found in a marquee, any more than in a tent; and though the officers' quarters may look more tempting than the rest of the barracks, there is often great misery between husband and wife, inside of their doors."

"I do not doubt it in the least, Pathfinder; and did it rest with me to decide, I would sooner follow you to some cabin in the woods, and share your fortune, whether it might be better or worse, than go inside the door of any officer I know, with an intention of remaining there as its master's wife."

"Mabel, this is not what Lundie hopes, or Lundie thinks."

"And what care I for Lundie? He is major of the 55th, and may command his men to wheel and march about as he pleases; but he cannot compel me to wed the greatest or the meanest of his mess: besides, what can you know of Lundie's wishes on such a subject?"

"From Lundie's own mouth. The Sergeant had told him that he wished me for a son-in-law; and the Major, being an old and a true friend, conversed with me on the subject: he put it to me, plainly, whether it would not be more generous in me to let an officer succeed,

than to strive to make you share a hunter's fortune. I owned the truth, I did ; and that was, that I thought it might ; but when he told me that the Quarter-master would be his choice, I would not abide by the conditions. No, no, Mabel ; I know Davy Muir well, and though he may make you a lady, he can never make you a happy woman, or himself a gentleman. I say this honestly, I do ; for I now plainly see that the Sergeant has been wrong."

"My father has been very wrong, if he has said or done aught to cause you sorrow, Pathfinder ; and so great is my respect for you, so sincere my friendship, that were it not for one—I mean that no person need fear Lieutenant Muir's influence with me—I would rather remain as I am to my dying day, than become a lady at the cost of being his wife."

"I do not think you would say that which you do not feel, Mabel," returned Pathfinder earnestly.

"Not at such a moment, on such a subject, and least of all to you. No ; Lieutenant Muir may find wives where he can—my name shall never be on his catalogue."

"Thank you, thank you for that, Mabel ;

for though there is no longer any hope for me, I could never be happy were you to take to the Quarter-master. I feared the commission might count for something, I did; and I know the man. It is not jealousy that makes me speak in this manner, but truth, for I know the man. Now, were you to fancy a deserving youth, one like Jasper Western, for instance—”

“Why always mention Jasper Eau-douce, Pathfinder? he can have no concern with our friendship; let us talk of yourself, and of the manner in which you intend to pass the winter.”

“Ah’s me!—I ’m little worth at the best, Mabel, unless it may be on a trail or with the rifle; and less worth now that I have discovered the Sergeant’s mistake. There is no need, therefore, of talking of me. It has been very pleasant to me, to be near you so long, and even to fancy that the Sergeant was right; but that is all over now. I shall go down the lake with Jasper, and then there will be business to occupy us, and that will keep useless thoughts out of the mind.”

“And you will forget this—forget me—no,

not forget me either, Pathfinder ; but you will resume your old pursuits, and cease to think a girl of sufficient importance to disturb your peace ?”

“ I never know'd it afore, Mabel ; but girls, as you call them, though gals is the name I've been taught to use, are of more account in this life than I could have believed. Now, afore I know'd you, the new-born babe did not sleep more sweetly than I used to could ; my head was no sooner on the root, or the stone, or mayhap on the skin, than all was lost to the senses, unless it might be to go over in the night the business of the day in a dream like ; and there I lay till the moment came to be stirring, and the swallows were not more certain to be on the wing with the light, than I to be afoot at the moment I wished to be. All this seemed a gift, and might be calculated on even in the midst of a Mingo camp ; for I've been outlying, in my time, in the very villages of the vagabonds.”

“ And all this will return to you, Pathfinder ; for one so upright and sincere will never waste his happiness on a mere fancy. You will dream again of your hunts, of the

deer you have slain, and of the beaver you have taken."

"Ah's me, Mabel, I wish never to dream again! Before we met, I had a sort of pleasure in following up the hounds, in fancy, as it might be; and even in striking a trail of the Iroquois—nay, I've been in skirmishes, and ambushments, in thought like, and found satisfaction in it, according to my gifts; but all those things have lost their charms since I've made acquaintance with you. Now, I think no longer of anything rude in my dreams; but the very last night we stayed in the garrison I imagined I had a cabin in a grove of sugar maples, and at the root of every tree was a Mabel Dunham, while the birds that were among the branches, sung ballads, instead of the notes that natur' gave, and even the deer stopped to listen. I tried to shoot a fa'n, but killdeer missed fire, and the creatur' laughed in my face, as pleasantly as a young girl laughs in her merriment, and then it bounded away, looking back as if expecting me to follow."

"No more of this, Pathfinder, we'll talk no more of these things," said Mabel, dashing the tears from her eyes; for the simple earnest



manner in which this hardy woodsman betrayed the deep hold she had taken of his feelings, nearly proved too much for her own generous heart. "Now let us look for my father; he cannot be distant, as I heard his gun, quite near."

"The Sergeant was wrong — yes, he was wrong, and it's of no avail to attempt to make the dove consort with the wolf."

"Here comes my dear father," interrupted Mabel; "let us look cheerful and happy, Pathfinder, as such good friends ought to look, and keep each other's secrets."

A pause succeeded; the Sergeant's foot was heard crushing the dried twigs hard by, and then his form appeared shoving aside the bushes of a copse just near. As he issued into the open ground, the old soldier scrutinized his daughter and her companion, and speaking good-naturedly, he said,

"Mabel, child, you are young and light of foot — look for a bird I've shot, that fell just beyond the thicket of young hemlocks on the shore; and, as Jasper is showing signs of an intention of getting under way, you need not take the trouble to clamber up this hill again,

but we will meet you on the beach in a few minutes."

Mabel obeyed, bounding down the hill with the elastic step of youth and health. But, notwithstanding the lightness of her steps, the heart of the girl was heavy, and no sooner was she hid from observation by the thicket, than she threw herself on the root of a tree and wept as if her heart would break. The Sergeant watched her until she disappeared, with a father's pride, and then turned to his companion, with a smile as kind and as familiar as his habits would allow him to use towards any.

"She has her mother's lightness and activity, my friend, with somewhat of her father's force," he said. "Her mother was not quite as handsome, I think myself; but the Dunhams were always thought comely, whether men or women. Well, Pathfinder, I take it for granted you've not overlooked the opportunity, but have spoken plainly to the girl? women like frankness in matters of this sort."

"I believe Mabel and I understand each other at last, Sergeant," returned the other,

looking another way to avoid the soldier's face.

“So much the better. Some people fancy that a little doubt and uncertainty makes love all the livelier; but I am one of those who think the plainer the tongue speaks, the easier the mind will comprehend. Was Mabel surprised?”

“I fear she was, Sergeant; I fear she was taken quite by surprise — yes, I do.”

“Well, well, surprises in love are like an ambush in war, and quite as lawful; though it is not as easy to tell when a woman is surprised, as to tell when it happens to an enemy. Mabel did not run away, my worthy friend, did she?”

“No, Sergeant, Mabel did not try to escape; *that* I can say with a clear conscience.”

“I hope the girl was not too willing, neither! Her mother was shy and coy for a month, at least; but frankness, after all, is a recommendation in man or woman.”

“That it is, that it is; and judgment, too.”

“You are not to look for too much judgment

in a young creature of twenty, Pathfinder, but it will come with experience. A mistake in you or in me, for instance, might not be so easily overlooked; but, in a girl of Mabel's years, one is not to strain at a gnat lest they swallow a camel."

The reader will remember that Sergeant Dunham was not a Hebrew scholar.

The muscles of the listener's face twitched, as the Sergeant was thus delivering his sentiments, though the former had now recovered a portion of that stoicism which formed so large a part of his character, and which he had probably imbibed from long association with the Indians. His eyes rose and fell, and once a gleam shot athwart his hard features, as if he were about to indulge in his peculiar laugh; but the joyous feeling, if it really existed, was as quickly lost in a look allied to anguish. It was this unusual mixture of wild and keen mental agony, with native, simple, joyousness, that had most struck Mabel, who, in the interview just related, had a dozen times been on the point of believing that her suitor's heart was only lightly touched, as images of happiness and humour gleamed over a mind that was almost

infantine in its simplicity and nature ; an impression, however, that was soon driven away, by the discovery of emotions so painful and so deep, that they seemed to harrow the very soul. Indeed, in this respect, the Pathfinder was a mere child : unpractised in the ways of the world, he had no idea of concealing a thought of any kind, and his mind received and reflected each emotion, with the pliability and readiness of that period of life ; the infant scarcely yielding its wayward imagination to the passing impression, with greater facility than this man, so simple in all his personal feelings, so stern, stoical, masculine, and severe in all that touched his ordinary pursuits.

“ You say true, Sergeant,” Pathfinder answered ; “ a mistake in one like you is a more serious matter.”

“ You will find Mabel sincere and honest in the end, give her but a little time.”

“ Ah ’s me, Sergeant !”

“ A man of your merits would make an impression on a rock, give him time, Pathfinder.”

“ Sergeant Dunham, we are old fellow-campaigners — that is, as campaigns are carried on

here in the wilderness; and we have done so many kind acts to each other, that we can afford to be candid — what has caused you to believe that a girl like Mabel could ever fancy one as rude as I am ?”

“ What ? — why a variety of reasons, and good reasons too, my friend. Those same acts of kindness, perhaps, and the campaigns you mention ; moreover, you are my sworn and tried comrade.”

“ All this sounds well, so far as you and I are concerned ; but they do not touch the case of your pretty daughter. She may think these very campaigns have destroyed the little comeliness I may once have had ; and I am not quite certain that being an old friend of her father would lead any young maiden’s mind into a particular affection for a suitor. Like loves like, I tell you, Sargeant ; and my gifts are not altogether the gifts of Mabel Dunham.”

“ These are some of your old modest qualms, Pathfinder, and will do you no credit with the girl. Women distrust men who distrust themselves, and take to men who distrust nothing. Modesty is a capital thing in a recruit, I grant

you ; or in a young subaltern who has just joined, for it prevents his railing at the non-commissioned officers before he knows what to rail at ; I'm not sure it is out of place in a commissary or a parson, but it's the devil and all when it gets possession of either a real soldier or a lover. Have as little to do with it as possible, if you would win a woman's heart. As for your doctrine that like loves like, it is as wrong as possible in matters of this sort. If like loved like, women would love one another and men also. No, no ; like loves dislike,"—the Sergeant was merely a scholar of the camp, —“and you have nothing to fear from Mabel on that score. Look at Lieutenant Muir ; the man has had five wives already, they tell me, and there is no more modesty in him than there is in a cat-o'-nine-tails.”

“Lieutenant Muir will never be the husband of Mabel Dunham, let him ruffle his feathers as much as he may.”

“That is a sensible remark of yours, Pathfinder ; for my mind is made up that you shall be my son-in-law. If I were an officer myself, Mr. Muir might have some chance ; but time has placed one door between my child and my-

self, and I don't intend there shall be that of a marquee also."

"Sergeant, we must let Mabel follow her own fancy; she is young and light of heart, and God forbid that any wish of mine should lay the weight of a feather on a mind that is all gaiety now, or take one note of happiness from her laughter!"

"Have you conversed freely with the girl?" the Sergeant demanded quickly, and with some asperity of manner.

Pathfinder was too honest to deny a truth plain as that which the answer required, and yet too honourable to betray Mabel, and expose her to the resentment of one whom he well knew to be stern in his anger.

"We have laid open our minds," he said; "and though Mabel's is one that any man might love to look at, I find little there, Sergeant, to make me think any better of myself."

"The girl has not dared to refuse you — to refuse her father's best friend?"

Pathfinder turned his face away to conceal the look of anguish that consciousness told him was passing athwart it, but he con-



tinued the discourse in his own quiet manly tones.

“Mabel is too kind to refuse anything, or to utter harsh words to a dog. I have not put the question in a way to be downright refused, Sergeant.”

“And did you expect my daughter to jump into your arms before you asked her? She would not have been her mother’s child had she done any such thing, nor do I think she would have been mine. The Dunhams like plain dealing, as well as the King’s Majesty; but they are no jumpers. Leave me to manage this matter for you, Pathfinder, and there shall be no unnecessary delay. I’ll speak to Mabel myself this very evening, using your name as principal in the affair.”

“I’d rather not, I’d rather not, Sergeant. Leave the matter to Mabel and me, and I think all will come right in the end. Young girls are like timorous birds; they do not over-relish being hurried or spoken harshly to nither. Leave the matter to Mabel and me.”

“On one condition I will, my friend; and that is, that you promise me on the honour of a scout, that you will put the matter plainly

to Mabel the first suitable opportunity, and no mincing of words."

"I will ask her, Sergeant—yes, I will ask her, on condition that you promise not to meddle in the affair—yes, I will promise to ask Mabel the question whether she will marry me, even though she laugh in my face at my doing so, on that condition."

Sergeant Dunham gave the desired promise very cheerfully; for he had completely wrought himself up into the belief that the man he so much esteemed and respected himself, must be acceptable to his daughter. He had married a woman much younger than himself, and he saw no unfitness in the respective years of the intended couple. Mabel was educated so much above him, too, that he was not aware of the difference which actually existed between the parent and child in this respect; for it is one of the most unpleasant features in the intercourse between knowledge and ignorance, taste and unsophistication, refinement and vulgarity, that the higher qualities are often necessarily subjected to the judgments of those who have absolutely no perception of their existence. It followed that Sergeant Dunham was not alto-

gether qualified to appreciate his daughter's tastes, or to form a very probable conjecture what would be the direction taken by those feelings, which oftener depend on impulses and passion, than on reason. Still, the worthy soldier was not so wrong in his estimate of the Pathfinder's chances, as might at first appear. Knowing, as he well did, all the sterling qualities of the man, his truth, integrity of purpose, courage, self-devotion, disinterestedness, it was far from unreasonable to suppose that qualities like these would produce a deep impression on any female heart, where there was an opportunity to acquire a knowledge of their existence; and the father erred principally in fancying that the daughter might know, as it might be by intuition, what he himself had acquired by years of intercourse and adventure.

As Pathfinder and his military friend descended the hill to the shore of the lake, the discourse did not flag. The latter continued to persuade the former that his diffidence alone prevented complete success with Mabel, and that he had only to persevere in order to prevail. Pathfinder was much too modest by

nature, and had been too plainly, though so delicately, discouraged in the recent interview, to believe all he heard; still the father used so many arguments that seemed plausible, and it was so grateful to fancy that the daughter might yet be his, the reader is not to be surprised when he is told that this unsophisticated being did not view Mabel's recent conduct in precisely the light in which he may be inclined to view it himself. He did not credit all that the Sergeant told him, it is true; but he began to think virgin coyness and ignorance of her own feelings might have induced Mabel to use the language she had.

“The Quarter-master is no favourite,” said Pathfinder, in answer to one of his companion's remarks. “Mabel will never look on him as more than one who has had four or five wives already.”

“Which is more than his share. A man may marry twice, without offence to good morals and decency, I allow; but four times is an aggravation.”

“I should think even marrying once, what Master Cap calls a circumstance,” put in Pathfinder, laughing in his quiet way, for by this

time his spirits had recovered some of their buoyancy.

“It is indeed, my friend, and a most solemn circumstance too. If it were not that Mabel is to be your wife, I would advise you to remain single. But here is the girl herself, and discretion is the word.”

“Ah’s me! Sergeant, I fear you are mistaken.”

## CHAPTER IX.

Thus was this place  
A happy rural seat of various view.—MILTON.

MABEL was in waiting on the beach, and the canoe was soon launched. Pathfinder carried the party out through the surf, in the same skilful manner as he had brought it in; and, though Mabel's colour heightened with excitement, and her heart seemed often ready to leap out of her mouth again, they reached the side of the Scud without having received even a drop of spray.

Ontario is like a quick-tempered man, sudden to be angered, and as soon appeased. The sea had already fallen; and though the breakers bounded the shore, far as the eye could reach, it was merely in lines of brightness, that appeared and vanished, like the returning waves, produced by a stone that had been dropped

into a pool. The cable of the Scud was scarcely seen above the water, and Jasper had already hoisted his sails, in readiness to depart, as soon as the expected breeze from the shore should fill the canvas.

It was just sunset, as the cutter's mainsail flapped, and its stem began to sever the water. The air was light and southerly, and the head of the vessel was kept looking up along the south shore, it being the intention to get to the eastward again as fast as possible. The night that succeeded was quiet; and the rest of those who slept, deep and tranquil.

Some difficulty occurred concerning the command of the vessel, but the matter had been finally settled by an amicable compromise. As the distrust of Jasper was far from being appeased, Cap retained a supervisory power, while the young man was allowed to work the craft, subject, at all times, to the control and interference of the old seaman. To this Jasper consented, in preference to exposing Mabel any longer to the dangers of their present situation; for, now that the violence of the elements had ceased, he well knew that the Montcalm would be in search of them. He

had the discretion, however, not to reveal his apprehensions on this head; for it happened that the very means he deemed the best to escape the enemy, were those which would be most likely to awaken new suspicions of his honesty in the minds of those who held the power to defeat his intentions. In other words, Jasper believed that the gallant young Frenchman, who commanded the ship of the enemy, would quit his anchorage under the fort at Niagara, and stand up the lake, as soon as the wind abated, in order to ascertain the fate of the Scud, keeping mid-way between the two shores, as the best means of commanding a broad view; and that, on his part, it would be expedient to hug one coast or the other, not only to avoid a meeting, but as affording a chance of passing without detection, by blending his sails and spars with objects on the land. He preferred the south, because it was the weather shore, and because he thought it was that which the enemy would the least expect him to take, though it necessarily led near his settlements, and in front of one of the strongest posts he held in that part of the world.



Of all this, however, Cap was happily ignorant, and the Sergeant's mind was too much occupied with the details of his military trust to enter into these niceties, which so properly belonged to another profession. No opposition was made, therefore, and, ere morning, Jasper had apparently dropped quietly into all his former authority, issuing his orders freely, and meeting with obedience without hesitation or cavil.

The appearance of day brought all on board on deck again; and, as is usual with adventurers on the water, the opening horizon was curiously examined, as objects started out of the obscurity, and the panorama brightened under the growing light. East, west, and north, nothing was visible but water, glittering in the rising sun: but southward stretched the endless belt of woods, that then held Ontario in a setting of forest verdure. Suddenly an opening appeared ahead, and then the massive walls of a *château*-looking house, with outworks, bastions, blockhouses, and palisades, frowned on a headland that bordered the outlet of a broad stream. Just as the fort became

visible, a little cloud rose over it, and the white ensign of France was seen fluttering from a lofty flag-staff.

Cap gave an ejaculation as he witnessed this ungrateful exhibition, and he cast a quick suspicious glance at his brother-in-law.

“The dirty table-cloth hung up to air, as my name is Charles Cap!” he muttered, “and we hugging this d—d shore, as if it were our wife and children, met on the return from an India v’y’ge! Hark’e, Jasper, are you in search of a cargo of frogs, that you keep so near in to this New France?”

“I hug the land, sir, in the hope of passing the enemy’s ship without being seen, for I think she must be somewhere down here to leeward.”

“Ay, ay, this sounds well, and I hope it may turn out as you say. I trust there is no under-tow here?”

“We are on a weather shore, now,” said Jasper, smiling; “and, I think you will admit, Master Cap, that a strong under-tow makes an easy cable: we owe all our lives to the under-tow of this very lake.”

“French flummery!” growled Cap, though

he did not care to be heard by Jasper. "Give me a fair, honest, English-Yankee-American tow, above board, and above water too, if I must have a tow at all, and none of your sneaking drift that is below the surface, where one can neither see nor feel. I dare say, if the truth could be come at, that this late escape of ours was all a contrived affair."

"We have now a good opportunity, at least, to reconnoitre the enemy's post at Niagara, brother, for such I take this fort to be," put in the Sergeant. "Let us be all eyes in passing, and remember that we are almost in face of the enemy."

This advice of the Sergeant needed nothing to enforce it; for the interest and novelty of passing a spot occupied by human beings, were, of themselves, sufficient to attract deep attention in that scene of a vast but deserted nature. The wind was now fresh enough to urge the Scud through the water with considerable velocity, and Jasper eased her helm as she opened the river, and luffed nearly into the mouth of that noble strait, or river as it is termed. A dull, distant, heavy roar came down through the opening in the banks, swelling on the cur-

rents of the air, like the deeper notes of some immense organ, and occasionally seeming to cause the earth, itself, to tremble.

“That sounds like surf on some long unbroken coast!” exclaimed Cap, as a swell, deeper than common came to his ears.

“Ay, that is such surf as we have in this quarter of the world,” Pathfinder answered. “There is no under-tow there, Master Cap; but all the water that strikes the rocks stays there, so far as going back again is concerned. That is old Niagara that you hear, or this noble stream tumbling down a mountain.”

“No one will have the impudence to pretend that this fine broad river falls over yonder hills?”

“It does, Master Cap, it does; and all for the want of stairs, or a road to come down by. This is natur’, as we have it up hereaway, though I dare say you beat us down on the ocean. Ah’s me! Mabel; a pleasant hour it would be if we could walk on the shore some ten or fifteen miles up this stream, and gaze on all that God has done there.”

“You have, then, seen these renowned falls, Pathfinder?” the girl eagerly inquired.

“I have—yes, I have; and an awful sight I witnessed at that same time. The Sarpent and I were out scouting about the garrison there, when he told me that the traditions of his people gave an account of a mighty cataract in this neighbourhood, and he asked me to vary from the line of march a little to look at the wonder. I had heard some marvels concerning the spot, from the soldiers of the 60th, which is my nat’ral corps like, and not the 55th, with which I have sojourned so much of late, but there are so many terrible liars in all rigiments, that I hardly believed half they had told me. Well, we went; and though we expected to be led by our ears, and to hear some of that awful roaring that we hear to-day, we were disappointed, for natur’ was not then speaking in thunder, as she is this morning. Thus it is, in the forest, Master Cap; there being moments when God seems to be walking abroad in power, and then, again, there is a calm over all, as if his spirit lay in quiet along the ’arth. Well, we came suddenly upon the stream, a short distance above the fall, and a young Delaware, who was in our company, found a bark canoe, and he would push into

the current, to reach an island that lies in the very centre of the confusion and strife. We told him of his folly, we did ; and we reasoned with him on the wickedness of tempting Providence by seeking danger that led to no end ; but the youth among the Delawares are very much the same as the youth among the soldiers, risky and vain. All we could say did not change his mind, and the lad had his way. To me it seems, Mabel, that whenever a thing is really grand and potent, it has a quiet majesty about it, that is altogether unlike the frothy and flustering manner of smaller matters, and so it was with them rapids. The canoe was no sooner fairly in them, than down it went, as it might be, as one sails through the air on the 'arth, and no skill of the young Delaware could resist the stream. And yet he struggled manfully for life, using the paddle to the last, like the deer that is swimming to cast the hounds. At first, he shot across the current so swiftly, that we thought he would prevail ; but he had miscalculated his distance, and when the truth really struck him, he turned the head up stream, and struggled in a way that was fearful to look at. I could have

pitied him, even had he been a Mingo. For a few moments his efforts were so frantic, that he actually prevailed over the power of the cataract ; but natur' has its limits, and one faltering stroke of the paddle set him back, and then he lost ground, foot by foot, inch by inch, until he got near the spot where the river looked even and green, and as if it were made of millions of threads of water, all bent over some huge rock, when he shot backwards like an arrow and disappeared, the bow of the canoe tipping just enough to let us see what had become of him. I met a Mohawk, some years later, who had witnessed the whole affair, from the bed of the stream below, and he told me that the Delaware continued to paddle in the air, until he was lost in the mists of the falls."

"And what became of the poor wretch?" demanded Mabel, who had been strongly interested by the natural eloquence of the speaker.

"He went to the happy hunting-grounds of his people, no doubt ; for though he was risky and vain, he was also just and brave. Yes, he died foolishly, but the Manitou of the red-skins

has compassion on his creatures as well as the God of a Christian.”

A gun at this moment was discharged from a blockhouse near the fort ; and the shot, one of light weight, came whistling over the cutter's mast, an admonition to approach no nearer. Jasper was at the helm, and he kept away, smiling at the same time, as if he felt no anger at the rudeness of the salutation. The Scud was now in the current, and her outward set soon carried her far enough to leeward to avoid the danger of a repetition of the shot, and then she quietly continued her course along the land. As soon as the river was fairly opened, Jasper ascertained that the Montcalm was not at anchor in it ; and a man sent aloft came down with the report that the horizon showed no sail. The hope was now strong that the artifice of Jasper had succeeded, and that the French commander had missed them by keeping the middle of the lake, as he steered towards its head.

All that day the wind hung to the southward, and the cutter continued her course about a league from the land, running six or eight knots the hour, in perfectly smooth



water. Although the scene had one feature of monotony, the outline of unbroken forest, it was not without its interest and pleasures. Various headlands presented themselves, and the cutter, in running from one to another, stretched across bays so deep, as almost to deserve the name of gulfs. But nowhere did the eye meet with the evidences of civilisation : rivers occasionally poured their tribute into the great reservoir of the lake, but their banks could be traced inland for miles by the same outlines of trees ; and even large bays, that lay embosomed in woods, communicating with Ontario only by narrow outlets, appeared and disappeared, without bringing with them a single trace of a human habitation.

Of all on board, the Pathfinder viewed the scene with the most unmingled delight. His eyes feasted on the endless line of forest, and, more than once that day, notwithstanding he found it so grateful to be near Mabel, listening to her pleasant voice, and echoing, in feelings at least, her joyous laugh, did his soul pine to be wandering beneath the high arches of the maples, oaks, and lindens, where his habits had induced him to fancy lasting and true joys

were only to be found. Cap viewed the prospect differently; more than once he expressed his disgust at there being no light-houses, church-towers, beacons, or roadsteads with their shipping. Such another coast, he protested, the world did not contain; and, taking the Sergeant aside, he gravely assured him that the region could never come to anything, as the havens were neglected, the rivers had a deserted and useless look, and that even the breeze had a smell of the forest about it, which spoke ill of its properties.

But the humours of the different individuals in her did not stay the speed of the Scud: when the sun was setting, she was already a hundred miles on her route towards Oswego, into which river Sergeant Dunham now thought it his duty to go, in order to receive any communications that Major Duncan might please to make. With a view to effect this purpose, Jasper continued to hug the shore all night; and though the wind began to fail him towards morning, it lasted long enough to carry the cutter up to a point that was known to be but a league or two from the fort. Here the breeze came out light at the northward, and the cutter

hauled a little from the land, in order to obtain a safe offing should it come on to blow, or should the weather again get to be easterly.

When the day dawned, the cutter had the mouth of the Oswego well under her lee, distant about two miles; and just as the morning-gun from the fort was fired, Jasper gave the order to ease off the sheets, and to bear up for his port. At that moment a cry from the fore-castle drew all eyes towards the point on the eastern side of the outlet, and there, just without the range of shot from the light guns of the works, with her canvas reduced to barely enough to keep her stationary, lay the Mont-calm, evidently in waiting for their appearance.

To pass her was impossible, for, by filling her sails, the French ship could have intercepted them in a few minutes; and the circumstances called for a prompt decision. After a short consultation, the Sergeant again changed his plan, determining to make the best of his way towards the station for which he had been originally destined, trusting to the speed of the Scud to throw the enemy so far astern, as to leave no clue to her movements.

The cutter accordingly hauled upon a wind

with the least possible delay, with everything set that would draw. Guns were fired from the fort, ensigns shown, and the ramparts were again crowded. But sympathy was all the aid that Lundie could lend to his party; and the Montcalm also firing four or five guns of defiance, and throwing abroad several of the banners of France, was soon in chase under a cloud of canvas.

For several hours the two vessels were pressing through the water as fast as possible, making short stretches to windward, apparently with a view to keep the port under their lee, the one to enter it if possible, and the other to intercept it in the attempt.

At meridian, the French ship was hull down, dead to leeward, the disparity of sailing on a wind being very great, and some islands were near by, behind which Jasper said it would be possible for the cutter to conceal her future movements. Although Cap and the Sergeant, and particularly Lieutenant Muir to judge by his language, still felt a good deal of distrust of the young man, and Frontenac was not distant, this advice was followed, for time pressed,

and the Quarter-master discreetly observed, that Jasper could not well betray them without running openly into the enemy's harbour, a step they could at any time prevent, since the only cruiser of force the French possessed at the moment was under their lee, and not in a situation to do them any immediate injury.

Left to himself, Jasper Western soon proved how much was really in him. He weathered upon the islands, passed them, and, on coming out to the eastward, kept broad away, with nothing in sight in his wake or to leeward. By sunset, again the cutter was up with the first of the islands that lie in the outlet of the lake; and ere it was dark, she was running through the narrow channels on her way to the long-sought station. At nine o'clock, however, Cap insisted that they should anchor, for the maze of islands became so complicated and obscure, that he feared, at every opening, the party would find themselves under the guns of a French fort. Jasper consented cheerfully, it being a part of his standing instructions to approach the station under such circumstances as would prevent the men from obtaining any

very accurate notions of its position, lest a deserter might betray the little garrison to the enemy.

The Scud was brought-to in a small retired bay, where it would have been difficult to find her by daylight, and where she was perfectly concealed at night, when all but a solitary sentinel on deck sought their rest. Cap had been so harassed during the previous eight-and-forty hours, that his slumbers were long and deep ; nor did he awake from his first nap until the day was just beginning to dawn. His eyes were scarcely open, however, when his nautical instinct told him that the cutter was under way. Springing up, he found the Scud threading the islands again, with no one on deck but Jasper and the pilot, unless the sentinel be excepted, who had not in the least interfered with movements that he had every reason to believe were as regular as they were necessary.

“ How’s this, Master Western ? ” demanded Cap, with sufficient fierceness for the occasion ; “ are you running us into Frontenac, at last, and we all asleep below, like so many mariners waiting for the ‘ sentry go. ’ ”

“This is according to orders, Master Cap, Major Duncan having commanded me never to approach the station, unless at a moment when the people were below; for he does not wish there should be more pilots in those waters than the King has need of.”

“Whe-e-e-w! a pretty job I should have made of running down among these bushes and rocks with no one on deck! Why, a regular York branch could make nothing of such a channel.”

“I always thought, sir,” said Jasper, smiling, “you would have done better had you left the cutter in my hands until she had safely reached her place of destination.”

“We should have done it, Jasper, we should have done it, had it not been for a circumstance; these circumstances are serious matters, and no prudent man will overlook them.”

“Well, sir, I hope there is now an end of them. We shall arrive in less than an hour, if the wind holds, and then you’ll be safe from any circumstances that I can contrive.”

“Humph!”

Cap was obliged to acquiesce; and as every thing around him had the appearance of Jas-

per's being sincere, there was not much difficulty in making up his mind to submit. It would not have been easy, indeed, for a person the most sensitive on the subject of circumstances, to fancy that the Scud was anywhere in the vicinity of a port as long established, and as well known on the frontiers, as Frontenac. The islands might not have not been literally a thousand in number, but they were so numerous and small as to baffle calculation, though occasionally one of larger size than common was passed. Jasper had quitted what might have been termed the main channel, and was winding his way, with a good stiff breeze, and a favourable current, through passes that were sometimes so narrow, that there appeared to be barely room sufficient for the Scud's spars to clear the trees, while at other moments he shot across little bays, and buried the cutter again amid rocks, forests, and bushes. The water was so transparent, that there was no occasion for the lead, and being of very equal depth, little risk was actually run, though Cap, with his maritime habits, was in a constant fever lest they should strike.

“I give it up, I give, it up, Pathfinder!”



the old seaman at length exclaimed, when the little vessel emerged in safety from the twentieth of these narrow inlets, through which she had been so boldly carried; "this is defying the very nature of seamanship, and sending all its laws and rules to the d—l!"

"Nay, nay, Salt-water, 'tis the perfection of the art. You perceive that Jasper never falters, but, like a hound with a true nose, he runs with his head high, as if he had a strong scent. My life on it, the lad brings us out right in the ind, as he would have done in the beginning, had we given him leave."

"No pilot, no lead, no beacons, buoys or lighthouses, no ——"

"Trail," interrupted Pathfinder; "for that to me is the most mysterious part of the business. Water leaves no trail, as every one knows; and yet here is Jasper moving ahead as boldly as if he had before his eyes the prints of moccasins on leaves, as plainly as we can see the sun in the heaven."

"D—me, if I believe there is even any compass!"

"Stand by, to haul down the jib," called out Jasper, who merely smiled at the remarks

of his companion. "Haul down—starboard your helm—starboard hard—so—meet her—gently, there, with the helm—touch her lightly—now jump ashore with the fast, lad—no, heave; there are some of our people ready to take it."

All this passed so quickly as barely to allow the spectators time to note the different evolutions, ere the Scud had been thrown into the wind until her mainsail shivered, next cast a little by the use of the rudder only, and then she set bodily alongside of a natural rocky quay, where she was immediately secured by good fasts run to the shore. In a word, the station was reached, and the men of the 55th were greeted by their expecting comrades, with the satisfaction that a relief usually brings.

Mabel sprang upon the shore with a delight which she did not care to express; and her father led his men after her, with an alacrity which proved how wearied he had become of the cutter. The station, as the place was familiarly termed by the soldiers of the 55th, was indeed a spot to raise expectations of enjoyment, among those who had been cooped up so long in a vessel of the dimensions of the

Scud. None of the islands were high, though all lay at a sufficient elevation above the water, to render them perfectly healthy and secure. Each had more or less of wood ; and the greater number, at that distant day, were clothed with the virgin forest. The one selected by the troops for their purpose was small, containing about twenty acres of land, and by some of the accidents of the wilderness it had been partly stripped of its trees, probably centuries before the period of which we are writing, and a little grassy glade covered nearly half its surface. It was the opinion of the officer who had made the selection of this spot for a military post, that a sparkling spring near by, had early caught the attention of the Indians, and that they had long frequented this particular place, in their hunts, or when fishing for salmon, a circumstance that had kept down the second growth, and given time for the natural grasses to take root, and to gain dominion over the soil. Let the cause be what it might, the effect was to render this island far more beautiful than most of those around it, and to lend it an air of civilisation that was then wanting in so much of that vast region of country.

The shores of Station Island were completely fringed with bushes, and great care had been taken to preserve them, as they answered as a screen to conceal the persons and things collected within their circle. Favoured by this shelter, as well as by that of several thickets of trees, and different copses, some six or eight low huts had been erected to be used as quarters for the officer and his men, to contain stores, and to serve the purposes of kitchen, hospital, &c. These huts were built of logs, in the usual manner, had been roofed by bark brought from a distance, lest the signs of labour should attract attention, and as they had now been inhabited some months, were as comfortable as dwellings of that description usually ever get to be.

At the eastern extremity of the island, however, was a small densely wooded peninsula, with a thicket of under-brush so closely matted, as nearly to prevent the possibility of seeing across it, so long as the leaves remained on the branches. Near the narrow neck that connected this acre with the rest of the island, a small blockhouse had been erected, with some attention to its means of resistance. The logs

were bullet proof, squared and jointed with a care to leave no defenceless points; the windows were loop-holes, the door massive and small, and the roof, like the rest of the structure was framed of hewn timber, covered properly with bark to exclude the rain. The lower apartment, as usual, contained stores and provisions; here indeed the party kept all their supplies; the second story was intended for a dwelling, as well as for the citadel, and a low garret was subdivided into two or three rooms, and could hold the pallets of some ten or fifteen persons. All the arrangements were exceedingly simple and cheap, but they were sufficient to protect the soldiers against the effects of a surprise. As the whole building was considerably less than forty feet high, its summit was concealed by the tops of the trees, except from the eyes of those who had reached the interior of the island. On that side the view was open from the upper loops, though bushes even there, more or less, concealed the base of the wooden tower.

The object being purely defence, care had been taken to place the blockhouse so near an opening in the limestone rock, that formed the

base of the island, as to admit of a bucket's being dropped into the water, in order to obtain that great essential, in the event of a siege. In order to facilitate this operation, and to enfilade the base of the building, the upper stories projected several feet beyond the lower, in the manner usual to blockhouses, and pieces of wood filled the apertures cut in the log flooring, which were intended as loops and traps. The communications between the different stories were by means of ladders. If we add, that these blockhouses were intended as citadels, for garrisons or settlements to retreat to, in the cases of attacks, the general reader will obtain a sufficiently correct idea of the arrangements it is our wish to explain.

But the situation of the island itself formed its principal merit as a military position. Lying in the midst of twenty others, it was not an easy matter to find it; since boats might pass quite near, and, by the glimpses caught through the openings, this particular island would be taken for a part of some other. Indeed, the channels between the islands that lay around the one we have been describing were so narrow that it was even difficult to say which portions

of the land were connected, or which separated, even as one stood in their centre, with the express desire of ascertaining the truth. The little bay in particular, that Jasper used as a harbour, was so embowered with bushes and shut in with islands, that the sails of the cutter being lowered her own people, on one occasion, had searched for hours before they could find the Scud, in their return from a short excursion among the adjacent channels in quest of fish. In short, the place was admirably adapted to its present objects, and its natural advantages had been as ingeniously improved as economy and the limited means of a frontier post would very well allow.

The hour that succeeded the arrival of the Scud was one of hurried excitement. The party in possession had done nothing worthy of being mentioned, and wearied with their seclusion, they were all eager to return to Oswego. The Sergeant and the officer he came to relieve, had no sooner gone through the little ceremonies of transferring the command, than the latter hurried on board the Scud with his whole party; and Jasper, who would gladly have passed the day on the island, was required

to get under way forthwith, the wind promising a quick passage up the river and across the lake. Before separating, however, Lieutenant Muir, Cap, and the Sergeant had a private conference with the Ensign who had been relieved, in which the last was made acquainted with the suspicions that existed against the fidelity of the young sailor. Promising due caution, the officer embarked, and in less than three hours from the time when she had arrived the cutter was again in motion.

Mabel had taken possession of a hut; and with female readiness and skill, she made all the simple little domestic arrangements of which the circumstances would admit, not only for her own comfort, but for that of her father. To save labour, a mess-table was prepared in a hut set apart for that purpose, where all the heads of the detachment were to eat, the soldier's wife performing the necessary labour. The hut of the Sergeant, which was the best on the island, being thus freed from any of the vulgar offices of a household, admitted of such a display of womanly taste, that, for the first time since her arrival on the frontier, the girl felt proud of her home. As soon as these im-



portant duties were discharged, she strolled out on the island, taking a path that led through the pretty glade, and which conducted to the only point that was not covered with bushes. Here she stood gazing at the limpid water, which lay with scarcely a ruffle on it at her feet, musing on the novel situation in which she was placed, and permitting a pleasing and deep excitement to steal over her feelings, as she remembered the scenes through which she had so lately passed, and conjectured those which still lay veiled in the future.

“You’re a beautiful fixture, in a beautiful spot, Mistress Mabel,” said David Muir, suddenly appearing at her elbow; “and I’ll no engage you’re not just the handsomest of the two.”

“I will not say, Mr. Muir, that compliments on my person are altogether unwelcome, for I should not gain credit for speaking the truth, perhaps,” answered Mabel with spirit; “but I will say that if you would condescend to address to me some remarks of a different nature, I may be led to believe you think I have sufficient faculties to understand them.”

“Hoot! your mind, beautiful Mabel, is

polished just like the barrel of a soldier's musket, and your conversation is only too discreet and wise for a poor d—l who has been chewing birch up here these four years, on the lines, instead of receiving it in an application that has the virtue of imparting knowledge. But you are no sorry, I take it, young lady, that you 've got your pretty foot on terra firma once more."

"I thought so, two hours since, Mr. Muir; but the Scud looks so beautiful, as she sails through these vistas of trees, that I almost regret I am no longer one of her passengers."

As Mabel ceased speaking, she waved her handkerchief in return to a salutation from Jasper, who kept his eyes fastened on her form until the white sails of the cutter had swept round a point, and were nearly lost behind its green fringe of leaves.

"There they go, and I'll no say 'joy go with them;' but may they have the luck to return safely, for without them we shall be in danger of passing the winter on this island; unless, indeed, we have the alternative of the castle at Québec. Yon Jasper Eau-douce is a vagrant sort of a lad, and they have reports of

him in the garrison that it pains my very heart to hear. Your worthy father, and almost-as-worthy uncle, have none of the best opinion of him."

"I am sorry to hear it, Mr. Muir; I doubt not that time will remove all their distrust."

"If time would only remove mine, pretty Mabel," rejoined the Quarter-master, in a wheedling tone, "I should feel no envy of the commander-in-chief. I think if I were in a condition to retire, the Sergeant would just step into my shoes."

"If my dear father is worthy to step into your shoes, Mr. Muir," returned the girl, with malicious pleasure, "I'm sure that the qualification is mutual, and that you are every way worthy to step into his."

"The deuce is in the child! you would not reduce me to the rank of a non-commissioned officer, Mabel?"

"No indeed, sir, I was not thinking of the army at all, as you spoke of retiring. My thoughts were more egotistical, and I was thinking how much you reminded me of my dear father, by your experience, wisdom, and

suitableness to take his place as the head of a family."

"As its bridegroom, pretty Mabel, but not as its parent or natural chief. I see how it is with you, loving your repartee, and brilliant with wit. Well, I like spirit in a young woman, so it be not the spirit of a scold. This Pathfinder is an extraordinair, Mabel, if truth may be said of the man."

"Truth should be said of him or nothing. Pathfinder is my friend—my very particular friend, Mr. Muir, and no evil can be said of him, in my presence, that I shall not deny."

"I shall say nothing evil of him, I can assure you, Mabel; but, at the same time, I doubt if much good can be said in his favour."

"He is at least expert with the rifle," returned Mabel, smiling. "That *you* cannot deny."

"Let him have all the credit of his exploits in that way, if you please; but he is as illiterate as a Mohawk."

"He may not understand Latin, but his knowledge of Iroquois is greater than that of most men, and it is the more useful language of the two in this part of the world."

“If Lundie himself were to call on me for an opinion which I admired more, your person or your wit, beautiful and caustic Mabel, I should be at a loss to answer. My admiration is so nearly divided between them, that I often fancy this is the one that bears off the palm, and then the other! Ah! the late Mrs. Muir was a paragon in that way also.”

“The latest Mrs. Muir, did you say, sir? asked Mabel, looking up innocently at her companion.

“Hoot, hoot!—That is some of Pathfinder’s scandal. Now, I dare say, that the fellow has been trying to persuade you, Mabel, that I have had more than one wife already.”

“In that case his time would have been thrown away, sir, as everybody knows that you have been so unfortunate as to have had four.”

“Only three, as sure as my name is David Muir. The fourth is pure scandal—or rather, pretty Mabel, she is yet *in petto*, as they say at Rome; and that means, in matters of love, in the heart, my dear.”

“Well, I’m glad I’m not that fourth person, *in petto*, or in anything else, as I should not like to be a scandal.”

“No fear of that, charming Mabel; for were you the fourth, all the others would be forgotten, and your wonderful beauty and merit would at once elevate you to be the first. No fear of your being the fourth in anything.”

“There is consolation in that assurance, Mr. Muir,” said Mabel, laughing, “whatever there may be in your other assurance; for I confess I should prefer being even a fourth-rate beauty, to being a fourth wife.”

So saying, she tripped away, leaving the Quarter-master to meditate on his success. Mabel had been induced to use her female means of defence thus freely, partly because her suitor had of late been so pointed, as to stand in need of a pretty strong repulse, and partly on account of his innuendoes against Jasper and the Pathfinder. Though full of spirit and quick of intellect, she was not naturally pert; but, on the present occasion, she thought circumstances called for more than usual decision. When she left her companion, therefore, she believed she was now finally released from attentions that she thought as ill-bestowed as they were certainly disagreeable.

Not so, however, with David Muir; accustomed to rebuffs, and familiar with the virtue of perseverance, he saw no reason to despair, though the half-menacing, half self-satisfied manner in which he shook his head towards the retreating girl, might have betrayed designs as sinister as they were determined. While he was thus occupied the Pathfinder approached, and got within a few feet of him unseen.

“ ’Twill never do, Quarter-master, ’twill never do,” commenced the latter, laughing in his noiseless way; “ she is young and actyve, and none but a quick foot can overtake her. They tell me you are her suitor, if you are not her follower.”

“ And I hear the same of yourself, man, though the presumption would be so great, that I scarcely can think it true.”

“ I fear you’re right, I do; yes, I fear you’re right;—when I consider myself, what I am, how little I know, and how rude my life has been, I altogether distrust my claim, even to think a moment of one so tutored, and gay, and light of heart, and delicate ——”

“ You forget handsome,” coarsely interrupted Muir.

“And handsome, too, I fear,” returned the meek and self-abased guide; “I might have said handsome, at once, among her other qualities; for the young fa’n, just as it learns to bound, is not more pleasant to the eye of the hunter, than Mabel is lovely in mine. I do indeed fear that all the thoughts I have harboured about her are vain and presumptuous.”

“If you think this, my friend, of your own accord, and natural modesty, as it might be, my duty to you as an old fellow-campaigner compels me to say ——”

“Quarter-master,” interrupted the other, regarding his companion keenly, “you and I have lived together much behind the ramparts of forts, but very little in the open woods, or in front of the enemy.”

“Garrison or tent, it all passes for part of the same campaign, you know, Pathfinder; and then my duty keeps me much within sight of the store-houses, greatly contrary to my inclinations, as ye may well suppose, having yourself the ardour of battle in your temperament. But had ye heard what Mabel has just been saying of you, ye’d no think another



minute of making yourself agreeable to the saucy and uncompromising hussy."

Pathfinder looked earnestly at the lieutenant, for it was impossible he should not feel an interest in what might be Mabel's opinion; but he had too much of the innate and true feeling of a gentleman to ask to hear what another had said of him. Muir, however, was not to be foiled by this self-denial and self-respect; for, believing he had a man of great truth and simplicity to deal with, he determined to practise on his credulity, as one means of getting rid of his rivalry. He therefore pursued the subject, as soon as he perceived that his companion's self-denial was stronger than his curiosity.

"You ought to know her opinion, Pathfinder," he continued; "and I think every man ought to hear what his friends and acquaintances say of him: and so, by way of proving my own regard for your character and feelings, I'll just tell you, in as few words as possible. You know that Mabel has a wicked malicious way with them eyes of her own, when she has a mind to be hard upon one's feelings."

“To me her eyes, Lieutenant Muir, have always seemed winning and soft, though I will acknowledge that they sometimes laugh; yes, I have known them to laugh, and that right heartily, and with downright good will.”

“Well, it was just that, then; her eyes were laughing with all their might, as it were; and in the midst of all her fun, she broke out with an exclamation to this effect:—I hope ’twill no hurt your sensibility, Pathfinder?”

“I will not say, Quarter-master, I will not say. Mabel’s opinion of me is of more account than that of most others.”

“Then I’ll no tell ye, but just keep discretion on the subject; and why should a man be telling another what his friends say of him, especially when they happen to say that which may not be pleasant to hear. I’ll not add another word to this present communication.”

“I cannot make you speak, Quarter-master, if you are not so minded, and perhaps it is better for me not to know Mabel’s opinion, as you seem to think it is not in my favour. Ah’s me! if we could be what we wish to be, instead of being only what we are, there would be a great difference in our characters, and

knowledge, and appearance. One may be rude, and coarse, and ignorant, and yet happy, if he does not know it; but it is hard to see our own failings, in the strongest light, just as we wish to hear the least about them."

"That's just the *rationale*, as the French say, of the matter; and so I was telling Mabel, when she ran away and left me. You noticed the manner in which she skipped off, as you approached?"

"It was very observable," answered Pathfinder, drawing a long breath, and clenching the barrel of his rifle, as if the fingers would bury themselves in the iron.

"It was more than observable—it was flagrant; that's just the word, and the dictionary wouldn't supply a better, after an hour's search. Well, you must know, Pathfinder, for I cannot reasonably deny you the gratification of hearing this; so you must know, the minx bounded off in that manner, in preference to hearing what I had to say in your justification."

"And what could you find to say in my behalf, Quarter-master?"

"Why, d'ye understand, my friend, I was

ruled by circumstances, and no ventured indiscreetly into generalities, but was preparing to meet particulars, as it might be, with particulars. If you were thought wild, half-savage, or of a frontier formation, I could tell her, ye know, that it came of the frontier, wild, and half-savage life ye 'd led; and all her objections must cease at once, or there would be a sort of a misunderstanding with Providence."

"And did you tell her this, Quarter-master?"

"I'll no swear to the exact words, but the idea was prevalent in my mind, ye'll understand. The girl was impatient, and would not hear the half I had to say; but away she skiped, as ye saw with your own eyes, Pathfinder, as if her opinion were fully made up, and she cared to listen no longer. I fear her mind may be said to have come to its conclusion."

"I fear it has, indeed, Quarter-master, and her father, after all, is mistaken. Yes, yes; the Sergeant has fallen into a grievous error."

"Well, man, why need ye lament, and undo all the grand reputation ye've been so many weary years making? Shoulder the rifle that ye use so well, and off into the woods with ye,

for there's not the female breathing that is worth a heavy heart for a minute, as I know from experience. Tak' the word of one who knows the sax, and has had two wives, that women, after all, are very much the sort of creatures we do not imagine them to be. Now, if you would really mortify Mabel, here is as glorious an occasion as any rejected lover could desire."

"The last wish I have, Lieutenant, would be to mortify Mabel."

"Well, ye'll come to that in the end, notwithstanding; for it's human nature to desire to give unpleasant feelings to them that give unpleasant feelings to us. But a better occasion never offered to make your friends love you, than is to be had at this very moment, and that is the certain means of causing one's enemies to envy us."

"Quarter-master, Mabel is not my inimy; and if she was, the last thing I could desire, would be to give her an uneasy moment."

"Ye say so, Pathfinder, ye say so, and I dare say ye think so; but reason and nature are both against you, as ye'll find in the end. Ye've heard the saying of 'love me, love my

dog:’ well, now, that means, read backwards, ‘don’t love me, don’t love my dog.’ Now, listen to what is in your power to do. You know we occupy an exceedingly precarious and uncertain position here, almost in the jaws of the lion, as it were?”

“Do you mean the Frenchers, by the lion, and this island as his jaws, Lieutenant?”

“Metaphorically only, my friend, for the French are no lions, and this island is not a jaw—unless, indeed, it may prove to be, what I greatly fear may come true, the jaw-bone of an ass.”

Here the Quarter-master indulged in a sneering laugh, that proclaimed anything but respect and admiration for his friend Lundie’s sagacity in selecting that particular spot for his operations.

“The post is as well chosen as any I ever put foot in,” said Pathfinder, looking around him as one surveys a picture.

“I’ll no’ deny it, I’ll no’ deny it. Lundie is a great soldier, in a small way; and his father was a great laird, with the same qualification. I was born on the estate, and have followed the Major so long, that I’ve got to reverence

all he says and does : that 's just my weakness, ye'll know, Pathfinder. Well, this post may be the post of an ass, or of a Solomon, as men fancy ; but it's most critically placed, as is apparent by all Lundie's precautions and injunctions. There are savages out scouting through these thousand islands, and over the forest, searching for this very spot, as is known to Lundie himself, on certain information ; and the greatest service you can render the 55th is, to discover their trails, and lead them off on a false scent. Unhappily Sergeant Dunham has taken up the notion that the danger is to be apprehended from up-stream, because Frontenac lies above us ; whereas all experience tells us that Indians come on the side that is most contrary to reason, and, consequently, are to be expected from below. Take your canoe, therefore, and go down stream among the islands, that we may have notice if any danger approaches from that quarter. If ye should look a few miles on the main, especially on the York side, the information you'd bring in would be all the more accurate, and, consequently, the more valuable.

“ The Big Sarpent is on the look-out in that

quarter; and as he knows the station well, no doubt he will give us timely notice, should any wish to sarcumvent us in that direction."

"He is but an Indian, after all, Pathfinder; and this is an affair that calls for the knowledge of a white man. Lundie will be eternally grateful to the man that shall help this little enterprise to come off with flying colours. To tell you the truth, my friend, he is conscious it should never have been attempted; but he has too much of the old laird's obstinacy about him to own an error, though it be as manifest as the morning-star."

The Quarter-master then continued to reason with his companion, in order to induce him to quit the island without delay, using such arguments as first suggested themselves, sometimes contradicting himself, and not unfrequently urging at one moment a motive that at the next was directly opposed by another. The Pathfinder, simple as he was, detected these flaws in the Lieutenant's philosophy, though he was far from suspecting that they proceeded from a desire to clear the coast of Mabel's suitor. He met bad reasons by good ones, resisted every inducement that was not



legitimate by his intimate acquaintance with his peculiar duties, and was blind, as usual, to the influence of every incentive that could not stand the test of integrity. He did not exactly suspect the secret objects of Muir, but he was far from being blind to his sophistry. The result was that the two parted, after a long dialogue, unconvinced, and distrustful of each other's motives, though the distrust of the guide, like all that was connected with the man, partook of his own upright, disinterested, and ingenuous nature.

A conference that took place soon after between Sergeant Dunham and the Lieutenant, led to more consequences. When it was ended, secret orders were issued to the men, the block-house was taken possession of, the huts were occupied, and one accustomed to the movements of soldiers might have detected that an expedition was in the wind. In fact, just as the sun was setting, the Sergeant, who had been much occupied at what was called the harbour, came into his own hut, followed by Pathfinder and Cap; and as he took his seat at the neat table that Mabel had prepared for him, he opened the budget of his intelligence.

“ You are likely to be of some use here, my child,” the old soldier commenced, “ as this tidy and well-ordered supper can testify ; and, I trust, when the proper moment arrives, you will show yourself to be the descendant of those who know how to face their enemies.”

“ You do not expect me, dear father, to play Joan of Arc, and to lead the men to battle ?”

“ Play whom, child ? Did you ever hear of the person Mabel mentions, Pathfinder ?”

“ Not I, Sergeant ; but what of that ? I am ignorant and uneducated, and it is too great a pleasure to me to listen to her voice, and take in her words, to be particular about persons.”

“ I know her,” said Cap, decidedly ; “ she sailed a privateer out of Morlaix, in the last war ; and good cruises she made of them.”

Mabel blushed at having inadvertently made an allusion that went beyond her father’s reading, to say nothing of her uncle’s dogmatism, and, perhaps, a little at the Pathfinder’s simple, ingenuous earnestness ; but she did not forbear the less to smile.

“ Why, father, I am not expected to fall in with the men, and to help defend the island ?”

“ And yet women have often done such

things, in this quarter of the world, girl, as our friend, the Pathfinder, here, will tell you. But, lest you should be surprised at not seeing us, when you awake in the morning, it is proper that I now tell you we intend to march in the course of this very night."

"*We*, father! and leave me and Jennie on this island alone?"

"No, my daughter; not quite as unmilitary as that. We shall leave Lieutenant Muir, brother Cap, Corporal M'Nab, and three men, to compose the garrison during our absence. Jennie will remain with you in this hut, and brother Cap will occupy my place."

"And Mr. Muir?" said Mabel, half unconscious of what she uttered, though she foresaw a great deal of unpleasant persecution in the arrangement.

"Why, he can make love to you, if you like it, girl; for he is an amorous youth, and having already disposed of four wives, is impatient to show how much he honours their memories, by taking a fifth."

"The Quarter-master tells me," said Pathfinder, innocently, "that when a man's feelings have been harrowed by so many losses, there

is no wiser way to soothe them than by ploughing up the soil anew, in such a manner as to leave no traces of what have gone over it before."

"Ay, that is just the difference between ploughing and harrowing," returned the Sergeant, with a grim smile. "But let him tell Mabel his mind, and there will be an end of his suit. I very well know that *my* daughter will never be the wife of Lieutenant Muir."

This was said in a way that was tantamount to declaring that no daughter of his ever *should* become the wife of the person in question. Mabel had coloured, trembled, half laughed, and looked uneasy; but, rallying her spirit, she said, in a voice so cheerful as completely to conceal her agitation,

"But, father, we might better wait until Mr. Muir manifests a wish that your daughter would have him, or rather a wish to have your daughter, lest we get the fable of sour grapes thrown into our faces."

"And what is that fable, Mabel?" eagerly demanded Pathfinder, who was anything but learned in the ordinary lore of white men:

“tell it to us, in your own pretty way,; I dare say the Sergeant never heard it.”

Mabel repeated the well-known fable, and, as her suitor had desired, in her own pretty way, which was a way to keep his eyes riveted on her face, and the whole of his honest countenance covered with a smile.

“That was like a fox!” cried Pathfinder, when she had ceased; “ay, and like a Mingo, too, cunning and cruel; that is the way with both the riptyles. As to grapes, they are sour enough in this part of the country, even to them that can get at them, though I dare say there are seasons, and times, and places, where they are sourer to them that can’t. I should judge, now, my scalp is very sour in Mingo eyes.”

“The sour grapes will be the other way, child, and it is Mr. Muir who will make the complaint. You would never marry that man, Mabel?”

“Not she,” put in Cap; “a fellow who is only half a soldier, after all. The story of them there grapes is quite a circumstance.”

“I think little of marrying any one, dear father, and dear uncle, and would rather talk

about it less, if you please. But, did I think of marrying at all, I do believe a man whose affections have already been tried by three or four wives would scarcely be my choice."

The Sergeant nodded at the guide, as much as to say, you see how the land lies; and then he had sufficient consideration for his daughter's feelings to change the subject.

"Neither you nor Mabel, brother Cap," he resumed, "can have any legal authority with the little garrison I leave behind on the island; but you may counsel and influence. Strictly speaking, Corporal M'Nab will be the commanding-officer, and I have endeavoured to impress him with a sense of his dignity, lest he might give way too much to the superior rank of Lieutenant Muir, who, being a volunteer, can have no right to interfere with the duty. I wish you to sustain the corporal, brother Cap; for, should the Quarter-master once break through the regulations of the expedition, he may pretend to command me, as well as M'Nab."

"More particularly, should Mabel really cut him adrift, while you are absent. Of course, Sergeant, you'll leave everything that

is afloat, under my care? The most d—ble confusion has grown out of misunderstandings between commanders-in-chief, ashore and afloat.”

“In one sense, brother, though, in a general way, the corporal is commander-in-chief. History does indeed tell us that a division of command leads to difficulties, and I shall avoid that danger. The corporal must command; but you can counsel freely, particularly in all matters relating to the boats, of which I shall leave one behind, to secure your retreat should there be occasion. I know the corporal well; he is a brave man, and a good soldier; and one that may be relied on, if the Santa Cruz can be kept from him. But then he is a Scotchman, and will be liable to the Quartermaster’s influence, against which I desire both you and Mabel to be on your guard.”

“But why leave us behind, dear father? I have come thus far to be a comfort to you, and why not go further?”

“You are a good girl, Mabel, and very like the Dunhams. But you must halt here. We shall leave the island to-morrow, before the day dawns, in order not to be seen by any prying

eyes, coming from our cover, and we shall take the two largest boats, leaving you the other, and one bark canoe. We are about to go into the channel used by the French, where we shall lie in wait, perhaps a week, to intercept their supply-boats that are about to pass up, on their way to Frontenac, loaded, in particular, with a heavy amount of Indian goods."

"Have you looked well to your papers, brother?" Cap anxiously demanded. "Of course you know a capture on the high seas is piracy, unless your boat is regularly commissioned, either as a public, or a private armed cruiser."

"I have the honour to hold the colonel's appointment as Sergeant-Major of the 55th," returned the other, drawing himself up with dignity, "and that will be sufficient even for the French King. If not, I have Major Duncan's written orders."

"No papers, then, for a warlike cruiser."

"They must suffice, brother, as I have no other. It is of vast importance to His Majesty's interests, in this part of the world, that the boats in question should be captured and carried into Oswego. They contain the blan-



kets, trinkets, rifles, ammunition, in short, all the stores with which the French bribe their accursed savage allies to commit their unholy acts, setting at nought our holy religion and its precepts, the laws of humanity, and all that is sacred and dear among men. By cutting off these supplies, we shall derange their plans, and gain time on them; for the articles cannot be sent across the ocean again, this autumn."

"But, father, does not his Majesty employ Indians, also?" asked Mabel, with some curiosity.

"Certainly, girl, and he has a right to employ them—God bless him! It's a very different thing, whether an Englishman or a Frenchman employs a savage, as everybody can understand."

"That is plain enough, brother Dunham; but I do not see my way so clear, in the matter of the ship's papers."

"An *English* colonel's appointment ought to satisfy any *Frenchman* of my authority; and what is more, brother, it shall."

"But I do not see the difference, father, between an Englishman's and a Frenchman's employing savages in war?"

“All the odds in the world, child, though you may not be able to see it. In the first place, an Englishman is naturally humane and considerate, while a Frenchman is naturally ferocious and timid.”

“And you may add, brother, that he will dance from morning till night, if you’ll let him.”

“Very true,” gravely returned the Sergeant.

“But, father, I cannot see that all this alters the case. If it be wrong in a Frenchman to hire savages to fight his enemies, it would seem to be equally wrong in an Englishman. *You* will admit this, Pathfinder?”

“It’s reasonable, it’s reasonable; and I have never been one of them that has raised a cry ag’in the Frenchers for doing the very thing we do ourselves. Still it is worse to consort with a Mingo than to consort with a Delaware. If any of that just tribe were left, I should think it no sin to send them out ag’in the foe.”

“And yet they scalp and slay young and old, women and children!”

“They have their gifts, Mabel, and are not to be blamed for following them: natur’ is

natur', though the different tribes have different ways of showing it. For my part, I am white, and endeavour to maintain white feelings."

"This is all unintelligible to me," answered Mabel. "What is right in King George, it would seem, ought to be right in King Louis."

"The King of France's real name is Caput," observed Cap, with his mouth full of venison. "I once carried a great scholar as a passenger, and he told me that these Louises Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth, were all humbugs, and that the men's real name was Caput, which is French for head; meaning, that they ought to be put at the *foot* of the ladder, until ready to go up to be hanged."

"Well, this does look like being given to scalping as a nat'ral gift," Pathfinder remarked with the air of surprise with which one receives a novel idea; "and I shall have less compunction than ever in sarving ag'in the miscreants, though I can't say I ever yet felt any worth naming."

As all parties, Mabel excepted, seemed satisfied with the course the discussion had taken, no one appeared to think it necessary to pur-

sue the subject. The trio of men indeed, in this particular, so much resembled the great mass of their fellow-creatures, who usually judge of character equally without knowledge and without justice, that we might not have thought it necessary to record the discourse had it not some bearing in its facts on the incidents of the legend, and in its opinions on the motives of the characters.

Supper was no sooner ended than the Sergeant dismissed his guests, and then held a long and confidential dialogue with his daughter. He was little addicted to giving way to the gentler emotions, but the novelty of his present situation awakened feelings that he was unused to experience. The soldier or the sailor, so long as he acts under the immediate supervision of a superior, thinks little of the risks he runs; but the moment he feels the responsibility of command, all the hazards of his undertaking begin to associate themselves in his mind with the chances of success or failure. While he dwells less on his own personal danger, perhaps, than when that is the principal consideration, he has more lively general perceptions of all the risks, and submits more to

the influence of the feelings which doubt creates. Such was now the case with Sergeant Dunham, who, instead of looking forward to victory as certain, according to his usual habits, began to feel the possibility that he might be parting with his child for ever.

Never before had Mabel struck him as so beautiful as she appeared that night. Possibly she never had displayed so many engaging qualities to her father; for concern, on his account, had begun to be active in her breast; and then her sympathies met with unusual encouragement through those which had been stirred up in the sterner bosom of the veteran. She had never been entirely at her ease with her parent, the great superiority of her education creating a sort of chasm, which had been widened by the military severity of manner he had acquired by dealing so long and intimately with beings who could only be kept in subjection by an unremitted discipline. On the present occasion, however, or after they were left alone, the conversation between the father and daughter became more confidential than usual, until Mabel rejoiced to find that it was gradually becoming endearing, a state of feeling

that the warm-hearted girl had silently pined for in vain ever since her arrival.

“Then mother was about my height?” Mabel said, as she held one of her father’s hands in both her own, looking up into his face with humid eyes. “I had thought her taller.”

“That is the way with most children, who get a habit of thinking of their parents with respect, until they fancy them larger and more commanding than they actually are. Your mother, Mabel, was as near your height as one woman could be to another.”

“And her eyes, father?”

“Her eyes were like thine, child, too; blue and soft, and inviting like, though hardly so laughing.”

“Mine will never laugh again, dearest father, if you do not take care of yourself in this expedition.”

“Thank you, Mabel — hem — thank you, child; but I must do my duty. I wish I had seen you comfortably married before we left Oswego; my mind would be easier.”

“Married! — to whom, father?”

“You know the man I wish you to love. You may meet with many gayer, and many

dressed in finer clothes ; but with none with so true a heart, and just a mind."

"None, father?"

"I know of none : in these particulars Pathfinder has few equals, at least."

"But I need not marry at all. You are single, and I can remain to take care of you."

"God bless you, Mabel ! I know you would, and I do not say that the feeling is not right, for I suppose it is ; and yet I believe there is another that is more so."

"What can be more right than to honour one's parents?"

"It is just as right to honour one's husband, my dear child."

"But I have no husband, father."

"Then take one, as soon as possible, that you may have a husband to honour. I cannot live for ever, Mabel ; but must drop off in the course of nature, ere long, if I am not carried off in the course of war. You are young, and may yet live long ; and it is proper that you should have a male protector, who can see you safe through life, and take care of you in age, as you now wish to take care of me."

“And do you think, father,” said Mabel, playing with his sinewy fingers with her own little hands, and looking down at them, as if they were subjects of intense interest, though her lips curled in a slight smile, as the words came from them; “and do you think, father, that Pathfinder is just the man to do this? Is he not, within ten or twelve years, as old as yourself?”

“What of that? His life has been one of moderation and exercise, and years are less to be counted, girl, than constitution. Do you know another more likely to be your protector?”

Mabel did not; at least another who had expressed a desire to that effect, whatever might have been her hopes and her wishes.

“Nay, father, we are not talking of another, but of the Pathfinder,” she answered evasively. “If he were younger, I think it would be more natural for me to think of him for a husband.”

“’Tis all in the constitution, I tell you, child; Pathfinder is a younger man than half our subalterns.”



“He is certainly younger than one, sir — Lieutenant Muir.”

Mabel’s laugh was joyous and light-hearted, as if just then she felt no care.

“That he is — young enough to be his grandson; he is younger in years, too. God forbid! Mabel, that you should ever become an officer’s lady, at least until you are an officer’s daughter.”

“There will be little fear of that, father, if I marry Pathfinder,” returned the girl, looking up archly in the Sergeant’s face again.

“Not by the King’s commission, perhaps, though the man is even now the friend and companion of Generals. I think I could die happy, Mabel, if you were his wife.”

“Father!”

“’Tis a sad thing to go into battle, with the weight of an unprotected daughter laid upon the heart.”

“I would give the world to lighten yours of its load, my dear sir.”

“It might be done,” said the Sergeant, looking fondly at his child; “though I could not wish to put a burthen on yours, in order to do so.”

The voice was deep and tremulous; and never before had Mabel witnessed such a show of affection in her parent. The habitual sternness of the man lent an interest to his emotions that they might otherwise have wanted, and the daughter's heart yearned to relieve the father's mind.

“Father, speak plainly!” she cried, almost convulsively.

“Nay, Mabel, it might not be right; your wishes and mine may be very different.”

“I have no wishes — know nothing of what you mean. Would you speak of my future marriage?”

“If I could see you promised to Pathfinder, — know that you were pledged to become his wife, let my own fate be what it might, I think I could die happy. But I will ask no pledge of you, my child; I will not force you to do what you might repent. Kiss me, Mabel, and go to your bed.”

Had Sergeant Dunham exacted of Mabel the pledge that he really so much desired, he would have encountered a resistance that he might have found difficult to overcome; but, by letting nature have its course, he enlisted a

powerful ally on his side, and the warm-hearted generous-minded Mabel was ready to concede to her affections, much more than she would ever have yielded to menace. At that touching moment she thought only of her parent, who was about to quit her, perhaps for ever; and all of that ardent love for him, which had possibly been as much fed by the imagination as by anything else, but which had received a little check by the restrained intercourse of the last fortnight, now returned with a force that was increased by pure and intense feeling. Her father seemed all in all to her, and to render him happy, there was no proper sacrifice that she was not ready to make. One painful, rapid, almost wild gleam of thought shot across the brain of the girl, and her resolution wavered; but endeavouring to trace the foundation of the pleasing hope on which it was based, she found nothing positive to support it. Trained like a woman, to subdue her most ardent feelings, her thoughts reverted to her father, and to the blessings that awaited the child who yielded to a parent's wishes.

“Father,” she said quietly, almost with a holy calm, “God blesses the dutiful daughter.”

“He will, Mabel; we have the Good Book for that.”

“I will marry whomever you desire.”

“Nay, nay, Mabel, you may have a choice of your own ——”

“I have no choice, that is, none have asked me to have a choice, but Pathfinder and Mr. Muir; and between *them*, neither of us would hesitate. No, father; I will marry whomever you may choose.”

“Thou knowest my choice, beloved child; none other can make thee as happy, as the noble-hearted guide.”

“Well then, if he wish it, if he ask me again—for, father, you would not have me offer myself, or that any one should do that office for me,” and the blood stole across the pallid cheeks of Mabel, as she spoke, for high and generous resolutions had driven back the stream of life to her heart; “no one must speak to him of it; but if he seek me again, and, knowing all that a true girl ought to tell the man she marries, he then wishes to make me his wife, I will be his.”

“Bless you! my Mabel; God in heaven bless you, and reward you as a pious daughter deserves to be rewarded!”

“Yes, father, put your mind at peace; go on this expedition with a light heart, and trust in God. For me you will have now no care. In the spring—I must have a little time, father—but, in the spring, I will marry Pathfinder, if that noble-hearted hunter shall then desire it.”

“Mabel, he loves you as I loved your mother. I have seen him weep like a child, when speaking of his feelings towards you.”

“Yes, I believe it; I’ve seen enough to satisfy me, that he thinks better of me than I deserve; and certainly the man is not living for whom I have more respect than for Pathfinder; not even for you, dear father.”

“That is as it should be, child, and the union will be blessed. May I not tell Pathfinder this?”

“I would rather you would not, father. Let it come of itself, come naturally; the man should seek the woman, and not the woman the man—” The smile that illuminated Mabel’s handsome face, was angelic, as even her parent thought, though one better practised in detecting the passing emotions, as they betray

themselves in the countenance, might have traced something wild and unnatural in it. "No, no, *we* must let things take their course; father, you have my solemn promise."

"That will do, that will do, Mabel; now kiss me. God bless and protect you, girl! you are a good daughter."

Mabel threw herself into her father's arms, it was the first time in her life, and sobbed on his bosom like an infant. The stern soldier's heart was melted, and the tears of the two mingled: but Sergeant Dunham soon started, as if ashamed of himself, and gently forcing his daughter from him, he bade her good night; and sought his pallet. Mabel went sobbing to the rude corner that had been prepared for her reception; and in a few minutes the hut was undisturbed by any sound, save the heavy breathing of the veteran.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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