

Percy B. St. John



The White Cloud

The White Cloud.

A Tale of Florida;

by,

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by the Author of the »Enchanted Rock«, »Trappers's Bride«, etc.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CAMP IN THE EVER-GLADE.

A spectator standing upon the summit of a bluff overlooking the Lake du Cygne, as it was called—in reality one of the Ever-glades of Florida—would have looked down upon a most picturesque and lovely scene, containing most of those varied shades, which combined make the charm of an American landscape. To the right lay deep and frowning woods, where the cypress and myrtle were thickly entwined, and where the all, and always green live oak and lofty magnolia clothe the forest in an ever during mantle of delicate verdure. At their feet, amid the mossed root peeping through the rotten sod, were the sweetest of all flowers enamelling the shores and spotting the dark native tapestry that rose proud of its age beside the pellucid waters. The fragrant and intoxicating perfume of the tropics—rich with honied sweets, and myrtle, and jessamine, and all aromatic herbs, was wafted to the passer by;

*Talis beatis incubit insulis
Auree felicitis perpetuus teper
Et nesciis campis senecté
Difficilis queerulique morbi.*

To the left was a congregation of islands, separated rather by a swamp than by waters, though at some distance a small river hastened to supply the wants of the lake, rushing over a stony channel its broken and interrupted waves. In front were two islands, separated only by a very narrow channel, while in no part was the navigation free from the in-cumbrance of the tall grass which rose from its bottom. Behind, the sight was abruptly terminated by a chain of elevated hills.

Above the forest to the right, on an eminence at some considerable distance, so far indeed as to be but faintly outlined against the sky, was a house; but to the spectator it would have formed the least attractive portion of the scene, as the waters of the lake were not still, and events were occurring on its bosom which might well have bound the attention. It was early in the morning of a spring day, the swamps and Ever-glade were teeming with life, the alligator was sporting near his

solitary den, the echoing notes of the sand-hill crane were heard amid the pine woods, the howling wolf sought the deep recesses of the forest, while in the open savannah, bedizened with Flora's varied gifts—hence Florida—the song birds tuned their matinal peal. It was then that a canoe might have been seen, paddled from the shores where the forest lies, towards the island in the centre of the lake. Its occupant was solitary, and his approach to the green eminence, crowned with palmettoes, that formed the nearest islet, was slow and cautious. Young, of graceful and Apollo-like make, his skin betrayed his relationship to the lurking savages, with whom at this time the United States government waged a war, at once bloody, expensive, and for a long time futile. His garb was that of the Seminoles, that tribe so famous in the annals of that ill-fated people, the North American Indians. On his head was a rich fur cap, ornamented with plumes of ostrich feathers; a tunic bound at the waist by a handsome bead sash covered his person, which was also profusely covered with trinkets. Leggings of deerskin, with a handsome shot pouch and powder horn, completed, with porcupine mocassins, the Seminole's rich attire. On his knee lay a rifle, or rather carbine, on the lock of which he kept his eye fixed attentively, while still peering with keen and subtle eye into every sign of danger.

Near the island, and where the water attained about the height of a man's knee, the coarse water grass rose in thick tufts. Behind one of these, in the lake, his eyes fixed with restless activity, now on one shore, now on another, sat a man. Crouching like a tiger in his lair, this strange and seemingly half amphibious sentinel had long since caught sight of the Indian, and examined him as he approached with a half satisfied, half doubtful air.

This man was a negro. Black as ebony, his white rolling eye twinkled with emotions it was difficult to characterize. In his hand was an old musket, the barrel of which was pointed in a direction most menacing for the intruder.

»Hugh!« said the Indian suddenly, dropping his paddle, and letting his hand fall on his rifle, which imperceptibly took the sentinel within its range.

»What um want?« exclaimed the negro, rising from his crouching posture with a precipitancy which denoted a most salutary dread of the Seminole's carbine, »him a enemy?«

»Friend!«

»Well him come in den«, said the black, »but him got a tam queer vay ob shew him friend.«

A sweep of the Indian's paddle brought the two quasi-bellige-rents into close proximity.

»Golly! massa White Cloud«, put in the negro, »but you made my heart go like him Dutch clock.«

»Where is your general«, replied White Cloud, in pure and almost unfigurative English, such as many of the Seminoles spoke, »let him know a chief is here.«

»Oh, general Nero hab him break'ast«, said the sentinel, taking the part of guide, and leading the Indian chief in the direction of the island, »yer feller Zick, him worry soon find general yah!«

White Cloud sent his boat, by one vigorous push, spinning against the sandy beach, that, white as driven snow, and here and there variegated by the stunted palmetto and rough evergreen heather, formed the basis of the island. Zick, too, whose sole garb was composed of a ragged pair of breeches and a calico shirt, shouldered his rifle and began to climb the bank. A walk of a moment brought the pair into the presence of General Nero. In a hollow, where a short and velvety grass afforded an agreeable resting place, concealed from every prying eye, were pitched about twenty rude huts, used only to protect their owners from the night dew. Around these, eating, drinking, smoking, and gambling, were some fifty negroes, all armed, but in such strange fashion as would have astonished even the invading army of Texas, whom Captain Levinge politely calls ruffians. Some had muskets, some rifles, some pistols, all indeed had fire-arms, but some of the guns unfortunately were stocks, others were burst, others were mere barrels. But pikes, swords, and Indian tomahawks, made up, to the full, the deficiency. Perhaps a more ragged regiment of soldiers was never collected, save in Mexico, where many a recruit goes to drill in his shirt, another with a suit of uniform minus only the pantaloons. Some of these sable gentlemen, however,

were, while reposing, in about the same state of dishabille as the Guatemala lad, who, sprawling naked beneath a tree, was desired to dress himself and guide a traveller. The lad put on his hat, and obeyed.

Near the skirts of the camp sat one who, in stature and costume, outshone the whole of his compeers. More than six feet high, this ebony giant seemed, by his atrocious ugliness and the scowl on his execrable countenance, the fit leader of such a gang. Woolly headed, thick lipped, and without any sign in his face of any other intellectuality than the low cunning which played round his mouth, he at once prejudiced the observer against him. Nor did his apparel at all add to his attractiveness. A cocked hat, from which stains of blood had in vain been endeavoured to be effaced, a dragoon coat, split in all quarters from excessive smallness, trousers of buckskin, with cavalry boots, a heavy sword, and half a dozen pistols stuck in his belt, was this worthy beau ideal of a soldier's uniform. Such was General Nero, the doughty and important personage before whom White Cloud presented himself with the utmost coolness, under which was concealed not a little scorn. It is enough to say, in explanation of this interview between two men who played a most conspicuous part in the great Florida war, that they were united by their abhorrence of the Whites. White Cloud was a great chief, and hated the pale-faces as a nation, while he respected and even loved many individuals; Nero was the leader of a gang of runaway slaves, and hated all Americans, but more particularly many particular personages.

»White Cloud, him welcome«, said Nero, motioning the Seminole to a seat, with a ludicrous a-la-Napoleon gesture. The seat being a portion of the earth on which they both trod.

»White Cloud is glad to see his black brother well«, replied the Indian warrior, somewhat coldly, as he reclined in an easy and graceful attitude beside the little charcoal fire by which the negro general sat, no wood being burnt during the day, for fear the columns of smoke should betray the presence of the gang.

»What news ob him enemy, massa White Cloud?« continued the general.

»The soldiers are out in great force—the white men are killed, but ten rise for every one that is scalped. The Seminoles and their black

brothers must fight a great fight, and drive back the pale faces to the waters of the great salt lake.«

»Hum!« said Nero, with somewhat of a doubtful shudder, while at the same time he glanced uneasily towards his followers, »him Indian and colour gen'lman no chance in de field.«

»Well, what does my brother then advise?« inquired the young chief calmly.

»Why, him White Cloud know berry well, dat de white man only lub him land in Florider.«

»Good!«

»Well, let him see«, said the negro, eyeing his coadjutor keenly, while his peepers rolled uneasily in their sockets, »dat him air of Florider no good for him health: well, him white man run away, leave de country to Seminole warrior and black man.«

»Good!«

»Good!« repeated the general, somewhat sharply, »him say good rader cold, like him ice pine-apple. Him know berry well what a colour man mean.«

»When his brother speaks, a great chief listens«, said the Seminole quietly.

»Then if him no understand, him berry soon will«, exclaimed General Nero, in an unusually excited manner, »him burn house, kill man, woman, piccaninny, all—do ebery ting dat frighten white man; den white man run away.«

»Well, and where does my brother say he will begin to sting?«

»White Cloud see him smoke rise ober de forest?« inquired Nero.

»Hugh.«

»Begin dere.«

White Cloud started as if a snake had stung him, while his hand involuntary sought the lock of his rifle. This exhibition of feeling was so rapid and so slight, as to have rendered it very likely to have been unobserved. But General Nero had seen it, and acted accordingly.

»White Cloud him lub Captain Williams?« said the negro rebel. »Good. Nero no ask him hab hand in dat affair; him do dat himself dis morning.

But«, he added, fixing his great white eyes fiercely on the Seminole chief, »my Indian brother must stop till a nigger come back.«

The Seminole looked round, and as if acquiescing in the impossibility of escape from his half friendly captor, made no effort to obtain his liberty. Nero now explained that all had been arranged for some days fur the projected attack on the house of Captain Williams, which was seated on an eminence, as we have before observed, and loomed conspicuously above the forest. White Cloud heard the details without appearing to take the slightest interest in what he was hearing, as seemed the case when Nero ordered four negroes to remain in charge of the prisoner. These commands being issued, the black representative of the ancient Roman Emperor marshalled his ragged and motley forces, who, placing their guns on their heads, proceeded to wade across the space which intervened between the island and the forest.

As soon as the last black warrior had disappeared, White Cloud, who had been deprived of his rifle, asked one of the negroes for some tobacco. The sable watchman complied with the Seminole's request.

No sooner did the Indian receive the tobacco in his hand, than he cast a portion of it, with a handful of dry grass, upon the burning embers before him, and then, having thus propitiated the great spirit, began to smoke.

A small cloud of vapour rose and was wafted on high from the smouldering fire, but quite enough to be recognised by a keen eye on the look out, at a considerable distance.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN DEFENCE WILLIAMS.

Captain Williams was an old officer who, having served with much credit to himself in the navy of his country, had, while still in the full vigour of his years and intellect, retired upon an estate which he »had purchased in Florida. Apart from the bustle of towns, and even of villages, the veteran pitched his tent in the centre of the wild forest, on the borders of the Everglades. Here, with a beloved wife and daughter, the sailor became a farmer, and lived happily and proudly in the midst of his possessions.

The house he inhabited was of the usual character exhibited in the dwellings of the American foresters. Built of substantial logs, and surrounded by a stockade, a small stream ran through the enclosure, furnishing an inexhaustible supply of water to the inhabitants. The wood was about three hundred yards distant, with every sign of retreating gradually still further, as the clearings for culture proceeded. All the ordinary marks of rich vegetation were visible, while cattle, horses, and the everlasting droves of pigs, completed the picture.

It was before the house, on a kind of natural lawn, that the family were collected at breakfast, on the same morning on which the negro gang were preparing to attack them. At the head of the table sat the worthy sailor, while his beloved partner, who had for twenty years weathered the storm of life with him, sat at the other end. Their child, the only one which had blessed their happy union—and which had been spared them most graciously—occupied the middle. A lovely summer flower was Etty Williams. Frank, merry, blithesome as the lark, and gentle and fond to all around. The negroes and hired assistants adored Etty, for to them she was peculiarly gentle, mild, and unassuming. There was not one of the slaves but would have died for her, who procured them always whatever indulgence they ever enjoyed, and was the ministering hand that guided all their pleasures and amusements. Now it was a ball, now a holiday, that Etty would coax out of her adoring parents, whose greatest riches was their one child. »Love ye one

another« was never more rigorously obeyed than in this family. Each of the three vied with the other in affection; and to tell who excelled of the trio in love, was hard indeed. Between them there was but one topic of disagreement.

»I am for a drive along the great road to day, Papa«, said Etty.

»My dear«, replied the old captain, »you know that gig does so jolt one.«

»Now I don't think it is the gig, Father, so much as the very bad state of the roads, which makes a drive so unpleasant. But putting that aside, what say you, Captain, to a day's fishing—anything, indeed, which may take us into the green woods?«

»But, my dear Etty, you forget that that unhangd rogue Nero is said to be still lurking in the neighbourhood. I fear the rascal will do some mischief.«

The young lady shuddered, and her lovely face became suffused with a cloud. She had good reason to fear and dread Nero »Well then«, she exclaimed, recovering herself after a brief use, »while you superintend what you have been speaking of, Father, we will stroll on the skirts of the wood, and ere the sun droop them, cull flowers for my little parlour.«

Willingly, my child«, said the mother, who was now appealed to.

»Oh Golly! Golly!« shrieked a negro, who, bursting from the edge of the wood, had rushed unnoticed to within the stockade, »him devil in de wood come kill Massa.«

»What is it, Scipio?« said the captain, rising.

»Nero, and hundred more«, replied the panting slave, »come against de Grove.«

»To the palisadoes! to the palisadoes!« cried the clear manly voice of the old sailor, »stand by your guns! to arms! stop the gangway, and be d——d to you.«

A dozen labourers engaged in repairs and other in-door work, while the out-door men were luckily breakfasting, hastily obeyed the summons, and five minutes later a discharge, irregular, but well directed, of rifles and musketry, sent the aggressors yelling to cover.

»Bravely done!« said the Captain, warmly, »the boarders get their own. Below there, woman-kind!« continued the excited veteran, pacing the green sward as if it had been the quarter-deck of his ship.

»Be careful, Defence«, said his wife, in the anxious tones of a wife.

»Oh, Father«, cried the weeping girl, »I could leave you with more ease were Harry by your side.«

»I wish he were—that is, hang him, I hope I may never see his face again. Don't talk to me of Harry.«

»Harry would have fought nobly by your side, Father, and your unkindness drove him away.«

»Belay there, Etty«, replied the irritated sailor, for this was a subject on which he was sore, »and go in, while I provide for your safety.«

Miss Williams sighed deeply, and then covering her eyes, so as to veil from her view the conflict which had recommenced, entered the house.

The gang of savage blacks, more savage than any in their original wilds, having lost one of the horrid crew, had retreated beyond the extreme range of fire arms, and were seen conferring on their future course of proceedings. Captain Defence Williams eyed them for a moment with a grim and angry look.

»That rascal Nero is there at the top with a head like a flying royal«, he muttered, »I wonder where he stole that sky scraper from.«

»I reckon«, observed a down easter, who stood leaning on rifle near at hand, »that's the hat of Major Hartsop, who was killed by some varmint down in Water Close? That's a raal dragoon coat, I'll be bound.«

»May I never reeve a block, nor haul down a British ensign«, exclaimed the captain much excited, »if he is not the, murderer.«

»And no mistake«, said the down easter.

»They are dividing into two parties«, continued the Captain. »You Pikeson climb on yonder pigeon-house and keep a look. out from aloft. If any strange sail heave in sight, pass the word below.«

»Aye, aye, sir«, said the old sailor, who, like his master, was apt, when excited, to recur to all his old marine recollections.

»On deck there!« he exclaimed, after a short pause.

»Aye, aye!« replied the captain, who was handling a rifle with all the knowing manner of one who was as much at home as any landsman in this part of the business.

»Nero is leading one band of black boarders down behind the corn-fence.«

»Aye, aye!«

»The others have brought to on their hams, like Dutchmen in a gale of wind.«

»Away to the east postern, Caleb!« exclaimed the captain, »and give those skulking rascals another broadside.«

This was addressed to the down easter, who, leading a small band of which he was constituted chief, hurried to execute this diversion.

»I wish these horse marines would come within range of our guns, I'd soon—«

»On deck there!«

»Aye, aye!«

»A fire-ship is a-drift«, exclaimed the look-out in somewhat alarmed tones.

The Captain leaped upon a barrel which stood close to the stockade, and clearly discerned a negro boy bearing in his mouth a blazing pine-knot, crawling on his hands and knees towards the shed which contained the straw and grain, and which, once fired, would, from their proximity to the main building, have involved all in one common ruin. The officer had learned presence of mind by many a rude encounter with savages in the South Seas.

The lad crawled along a fence, keeping so low as to hide his body in the grass. The gate of the stockade had: not as yet been closed; the band of negroes were intently watching the event of Nero's assault when they were to make a rush. Captain Williams debated not a minute, but clutching a pistol, darted forth from the palisadoes, and ere the young fire-raiser could raise himself and escape, had got him firmly by the nape of his neck.

»Oh massa! massa!« cried the boy, »hab mussy on a poor nigger.«

»What, Cato, you rascal!« said the indignant captain, dragging him most unceremoniously within the works.

The negro lad rose to his feet when within the stockade, with a look of such abject terror as, on his dark visage, to be irresistibly comic. Even the irritated sailor would have smiled, had not the rattling of musketry again drawn off all attention. The attendant Blacks seized their recreant fellow-servant, while the Whites sprung to their defence with all the energy of men who were well aware of the desperate nature of the conflict which was waged. Nero and his band had been repulsed ere the general had attained any position sufficiently favourable to warrant its being preserved, but a furious charge in three different quarters testified how well the Blacks had arranged their places of attack.

»Stand by the bulwarks«, cried the ringing voice of the captain, »all hands repel boarders; stand by for another broadside. My God! men, falter not, beat back the bloodthirsty scoundrels. Well aimed, Pikeson! Pepper them from the cross-trees.«

Nor was the sailor idle. Two negroes were hurriedly loading a perfect armoury of muskets which surrounded him; these he fired with a rapidity that made him do the service of half a dozen men. But the struggle seemed futile, for the gallant little garrison was already diminished by two, and there was not one but what was wounded. On pressed their dogged assailants headed by the furious Nero, who, waving his cutlass in the air, urged his gang to renewed exertions. The defenders gradually retreated to the fresh-cut wood piles that lay in front of the house, preparatory to being stowed away in their proper place. While this manoeuvre was being executed, the black besiegers contrived to burst the gates of the stockade asunder, and headed by their demoniacal general, came whooping, yah-yahing, at the Whites, with whom they were about to join in hand-and-hand combat, when an interruption took place, that made both parties pause in their progress of mutual devastation.

From the forest, and from the house sent back in thrilling echoes, came the tremendous and awful war-whoop of the Seminoles, while high above all was the peculiar cry of White-Cloud. Both parties

hesitated, for neither knew to which this sound boded good. One word put an end to all doubt.

»On, my gallant Seminoles! on, my Green Foresters! no mercy to the black devils, but take Nero alive.«

In an instant every one of the sable gentry, who were about to slaughter the Captain and his family, made a desperate rush towards the rear of the house, climbed the palisades, and were in the wood ere their new assailants could reach one of them.

Captain Williams, his left hand employed in staunching a wound in his head, advanced to meet his new friends not without some surprise, for his countrymen were at that very moment waging a fierce war upon the Indians who had evidently saved him from death. The first person he confronted was Harry Malcolm, the very nephew who had so hotly excited his bile upon the occasion of his name being introduced during the morning conversation.

»Harry Malcolm!«

»My Uncle«

»Do I owe this to you?«

»To me and these brave men«, replied the young man, drawing the Captain's attention to those who crowded in his rear.

»Thank you! thank all!« cried the honest sailor, surveying with delight the forms of some ten Seminole Indians in their most gallant war-paint, while three foresters clothed like Harry, in green hunting coats, buckskin trowsers, and with jaunty caps set knowingly on their heads, leaned on their rifles beside their red-skin companions. White Cloud, an interested gazer upon the interview between the Captain and the young man, also rested his arms upon his long polished fusil.

»My God! what is that?« said the Captain, as a wail of anguish burst from within the house.

In, Uncle, in?« cried the impetuous youth.

»Harry!« was all the agonized man could say, as with tremendous strides the husband and father hastened to learn the meaning of this loud wail of woman that rose with dismal distinctness upon the morning air.

»Oh massa! massa!« was all the negro women, who stood wringing their hands at the common parlour door, could say.

Henry Malcolm and the old sailor entered. At first the apartment seemed empty, but a glance at something white that lay near the window proved this to be an error. Both rushed forward. In that instant, they lived the agonies of hours. It was an awful sight met their view; Mrs. Williams, her head almost severed from her body, had fallen in the very act of raising her hands, to implore, it was but too clear, mercy for her child. Father and nephew saw it at a glance, while both looked involuntarily round in search, their looks plainly said, of another sight of horror.

»Etty!«

»My child!«

The blow was too much for the gallant and noble-hearted sailor. The form of his girl met not his view, but his glazed eyes saw in her bloody shroud the form of her who as a fond and gentle mistress, as a loving and devoted partner, as all that lives and moves and has its being in the sacred name of wife and mother, had been to him the pure fount of joy, whence welled his every spring of happiness, and whence poured forth all dear and holy joys that centre, radiant and paradisaical, in the void home. She who no less loved, no less cherished, with her furrowed cheek and blanched hair, than when a comely and laughing maiden of eighteen—she who was his child's mother—who an hour since had smiled upon him with her meek and placid eye—she whose sweet though aged face was ever the one bright picture of his youth, lay cold, dead, bloody at his feet. »he was too much for the old man, and he sank beside her almost as lifeless as her he loved so well.

Harry Malcolm, dashing away the rising tears, wound from his horn a piercing blast, which soon brought Foresters and Seminoles to the room. White Cloud at a glance saw the whole, and ere a word could be uttered, dispatched one of his young warriors on the track of the fugitives.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUT.

Harry Malcolm had incurred the displeasure of his worthy uncle, Captain Williams, from his persevering love of a wandering life, and of associating with the aboriginal inhabitants of the soil; a taste in which two or three young men of inferior social position combining, a party had been formed, of which Harry was the head and front, under the designation of Green Foresters. Carefully avoiding any collision with either side, they had, by their gallant bearing, by their ardour and ability in the chase, and by their peculiar habits—so different to those of the Whites generally—won the friendship and confidence of the unhappy Seminole Indians. The advantage of this circumstance the reader has already seen. In explanation of the well-timed presence of the rescuing party, it is necessary to state, that the strange signal of the young chief had brought his warriors immediately to his side, who had captured the four negro guards and detained them close prisoners ever since.

It was the evening of the same day on which the terrible events recorded in our last chapter had occurred, and two men trod the mazes of the neighbouring forest. The place in which they now were was exceedingly wild and picturesque. On one side lay the extreme point of the Lac Du Cygne, over which the moon had risen, its brilliant disk shining from above the far-off and blue hills, revealing their rugged and serrated outlines. A subdued and pellucid light trembled on the tranquil lake, the wild fowl hurried to roost, while the rich ornithology of the American forest was heard in all its inharmonious variety. There was the gaudy Virginian nightingale, the elegant shaped but dingy looking mocking-bird, jays and woodpeckers without number. It was a beautiful scene over which the chaste goddess of night shed her benign influence, revealing the hidden secrets of forest and glade to the eye. Here the sycamore, as yet not exhibiting the picturesque contrast of its crimson seed pods and broad and changing leaves, rose mighty and lofty—but to picture all the grandeur and elegance of American forest scenery, with

its richness and variety, with its bright and dazzling red shaded into deep yellow, and blending gently with the deep evergreen, were a vain task—no painter or poet could attempt it without failure. I, a simple proser, shrink from the task.

All lay in stillness, while to the left was a swamp whence rose exhalations of the night, little conducive to the health of the benighted traveller. As they passed this, the taller of the two men, above alluded to, quivered perceptibly. His companion noticed not at first this sign of emotion, his eyes being fixed on the lake in silent contemplation of its beauties. He put not his thoughts in words, but he could have said, had he been in the mood for such ideas,

*»How sweetly does the moonbeam smile
To night upon yon leafy isle.«*

»There died my father«, said the first referred to, pausing and stretching out his hand toward the swamp: »it was a dark, a bloody day. Men fell like the leaves of the trees shaken by the wind of autumn. A thousand warriors left their bones in the shallow water. I was a child then, but I can remember the time. There was weeping and wailing in the Seminole village. The sun was red; all the roads were full of thorns and briars; the clouds were black, the water troubled and stained with blood.«

»Yes, White Cloud, I have heard of that dreadful occurrence«, replied Harry Malcolm, »like to day, it is written on my mind in characters of blood. And here it was they perished?«

»Hugh!« said the Indian.

»And«, continued Harry.

»The spirits of the Seminoles still wander about their field of death«, interrupted White Cloud, laying a hand upon his lips, »let us pass in silence.«

Harry Malcolm was a brave and gallant youth as any in all Florida Territory; but though he put not much faith or confidence in stories of men who,

*»From their oozy tombs below,
Through the heavy foam ascending,
Wander through the midnight gloom,«*

he was not one of those who particularly liked, when the shadows of evening came, to

»Glide in paths that lead to graves.«

He therefore rapidly followed in the Indian's footsteps, and certainly breathed more freely, by a great deal, when the battle field was out of sight, than while it was in view.

They were now in the centre of a dense thicket of fir and birch, which had evidently often served as a camping ground for outlying parties. In the centre of a small open glade was a huge half-burnt log, while scattered charcoal, and piles of wood of all sizes and dimensions, completed the picture. The Indian at once seated himself, and looked to the priming of his long rifle.

»How much does it yet want of the hour?« asked Harry Malcolm, after a moment of thoughtful silence, during which the whole of the terrible scene of the morning reverted to his mind.

»It is time.«

As White Cloud spoke, two men glided from beneath the arches of the forest, and joined the first group. Then came others, until, in a few moments, the whole band of Seminole warriors and Green Foresters were assembled in the open glade, a gallant and stalwart band.

»Thanks«, said the young American warmly, as his well armed and faithful followers surrounded him, their recognised leader, »and may Heaven give our efforts victory.«

»Come«, suddenly exclaimed White Cloud, »it is time.«

And the two friends, again leaving their supporters, entered the forest. This time they walked with care and precaution, treading softly on the ground, and avoiding as much as possible all contact with the many dry boughs which lay scattered at the foot of the trees.

»I perceive a light«, said Harry, whose whole mind was centred in one idea. Before him was the bloody form of his dear aunt, while he shuddered as his thoughts reverted to Etty. The soul of the young man had received a sudden shock, from which he had as yet very far from recovered. He thirsted even more for revenge than for a sight of his beloved.

»Good!« was all the Seminole Indian whispered low in reply, while his tread became still more cautious, itself sufficient signal that danger was near at hand.

»Shall I signal them to advance?« continued the impetuous young man, each moment gaining fuller vigour, as his recollections were driven away, and present action called for all his exertions.

»No!«

There was no time for other reply, for they were both now on the very edge of the Negro camp, and it was necessary a perfect and unbroken silence should be preserved.

»Look«, hissed, rather than said, the young Seminole, »the bird is not there!« and his eyes glared with an unearthly fever.

The whole gang of Negroes lay recumbent round a small fire, some engaged in binding up and salving their wounds, others in taking that rest and refreshment which they all evidently stood in need of after their rough day's work.

»Well«, said one, who lay close to the two secret listeners, »him had a reg'lar splendid victorious battle, massa Williams. Him kill a poor nigger like ox.«

»Oh, him noting to speak ob, dat scarmouch«, replied another, »Gen'ral Nero had him all bottle up, like im fly in de sugar! Yah! yah! But den dat 'rageous rascal White Cloud, him knock all in head. A'nt him reg'lar *treater*?«

Harry Malcolm listened feverishly and impatiently.

»Well, I wonder where him Gen'ral Nero, all dis mossus time. Him worry fond of sugar lips, I reckon.«

Harry quivered from head to foot, and pressed the arm of the Indian convulsively.

»Ah! him reg'lar sly dog, dat Gen'ral Nero«, said the first speaker, shaking his head, »him 'ud just like to sabbe where he kip him sweethearts.«

»Yah! yah!« replied the other, »you a most terrible 'quisitive nigger, I do speculate. But him old Gob penobtrate that secret.«

Harry again pressed the Indian's arm, who himself no longer exhibited any emotion.

»Good«, whispered, however, White Cloud, after a pause, »my white brother will bring up our friends.«

With these words the Seminole Chief stepped across the space which separated him from the enemy, and stood in the centre of the Negro camp before he was discovered.

»Golly?« said the first Negro who espied him, »him White Cloud de berry debbel himself. How him penobtrate to dis loquacity.«

An universal movement of indignation followed the discovery of the Indian's presence, who, however, without taking heed of the furious looks of his late associates, spoke in a loud voice.

»Where is General Nero?«;

»Him don't sabbe.«

»A great chief wishes to speak with him«, continued White Cloud coldly, »tell him.«

»Oh!« said old Gob sneeringly, and with his peculiar cluck, »him great chief find him Gen'ral Nero quick enough, him tink, rader too quick, p'rap.«

White Cloud replied not, but leaning on his rifle leisurely, seemed awaiting the coming of the Black commander. His attitude was that of careless ease, while his eyes, half shut, appeared to mark that his thoughts were far away from the scene before him. His ears alone were alive.

»Him dreaming ob him happy hunting ground«, said the old Negro in a whisper. »Dat a werey queer place, I spec'late. Like to sabbe where him be.«

»Where him White Cloud hab de honour and pleasure to be I 'spect very soon! Yah! yah!

They were mistaken in their ideas. The Indian never took his eyes for one moment off the Negro who was known as Old Gob. To him that aged individual was of more consequence ~ than the whole group besides.

»Dat sound berry like de Gen'ral«, exclaimed this worthy, as the low cry of a wolf rose from the forest.

He had no time to say any more, for White Cloud was upon him ere he could move, speak, or think, while from the cover of the trees burst the Seminoles and Foresters, headed by Harry Malcolm, and making the wood and surrounding hills re-echo with their terrific cries. In two minutes more old Gob and three dead bodies alone remained of the whole Negro group; their facility of locomotion was wonderful.

»Villain!« said Harry, addressing the trembling old blackamoor, »Where is Nero? Where is Etty?«

The Negro retained a sullen silence, though kneeling in the most abject posture before his captors.

»Speak, or by the heaven above I have you hung to the first tree«, cried Harry, with all that impetuosity which characterized his disposition. »Speak, I say.«

The Negro said nothing.

»Answer«, again cried Harry, whom passion and the thought of his beloved Etty placed beside himself, »or I shoot you on the spot.«

»What him get better if him do answer?« said the old Negro sullenly, but with calculation.

»Life and liberty.«

»Him promise dat?« inquired the suspicious rebel.

»Jacob«, said Harry, addressing him by his real name, »shew me the retreat of this monster Nero, and you shall have a full pardon for every thing you have done.«

»Him take de word of Massa Harry«, replied the old Negro, falling on his knees again—from which posture he had risen, »and him swear, Massa, him never hab run away but for Nero.’

»This retreat«, exclaimed Harry impatiently.

The Black rose, and assuming the office of guide at once, entered the forest at a very different point to that by which the motley gang of outlaws had fled. The Seminole Chief walked on one side, keeping his eye all the time fixed sternly on the old Negro, an office that Harry performed equally carefully on the other.

It was now dark night; the moon had long since veiled her chaste beauties from all indiscreet observation, and it was only the intimate

knowledge which the negro possessed of the locality which enabled him to find his way in the deep gloom, increased as it was by the vast canopy of foliage that trembled in the night wind above their heads.

»He is leading to Horse-shoe Dell«, whispered Harry, dropping slightly in the rear.

»My brother is right«, replied the Indian.

»Jacob«, said Harry aloud, »where are you taking us to? You are not playing the traitor, I hope.«

»To Horse-shoe Dell, Massa«, was the ready response of the old negro, who really was glad of an opportunity of giving up a kind of life which never agreed with the antiquated state of his bones.

»I said it, Indian«, said Harry, turning round.

White Cloud and the Seminoles had vanished. There remained but the three Green Foresters, Malcolm, and the old negro.

»He too«, said Harry sadly, and without another word continued on his way.

A few minutes more brought the little party to the skirt of the forest, and in the very opening of Horse-shoe Dell. It was a semicircular bay—if we may so speak—indented in a long range of low and serrated hills, whose cavernous entrails had often served as a refuge for the fugitive slave. The spot where young Malcolm now stood was one of singular wildness. The dell was entered by a narrow path between rocks, while all around stunted live oaks raised their gnarled trunks covered with everlasting verdure. But Harry Malcolm paused not to look around; his eyes were fixed upon the interior of the dell, towards which the Black unhesitatingly led him.

»Dere him Nero's hut«, said old Jacob, after a progress of some minutes.

The young man gazed around for a time in vain, and then something square and dark against the face of a rock caught his eye. It was a rude and low hut, admirably placed for purposes of concealment, at the very foot of a lofty, overhanging precipice.

»Silence«, he whispered, »for your lives, my men!«

The Green Foresters obeyed, and stepping forward steadily were in another instant at the door of the rude log. Harry listened. Not a sound was heard. He placed his hand on the latch—the door gave way—he entered, his men pushing hurriedly behind him. A low fire that slumbered on the hearth enabled them to see the whole of the interior.

The hut of the negro general was completely empty.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.

When White Cloud silently and suddenly left the company of our young and ardent American, he glided into the forest, followed by the whole of the Seminoles, with whom he had a brief and hurried conference. This conference appeared satisfactory, for at the end of a few minutes the party was again in motion in a direction somewhat to the right of the white men. Their march was rapid and straightforward, the chief not hesitating one moment, but treading the ground as if every inch were familiar to him. In about ten minutes they halted, and the warriors seating themselves, the White Cloud proceeded on his way alone.

A short space of time brought the young chief to the foot of a lofty and imposing rock, against whose face grew thickly and darkly the various wild bushes of the American forest. Displacing these, towards the lower portion of the hill, the Seminole stooped low and entered a dark and narrow species of tunnel, at the end of which appeared a faint and glimmering light. White Cloud was soon, however, enabled to walk upright, and as he first raised his head, the sound of a footstep in his rear caught his attention. He paused, clutching his long knife—a present from Harry—and listened. Not the faintest noise was heard, and the Seminole believing himself mistaken advanced on his way. The path grew wider and more lofty, and at length opened at a sudden turn on a noisy and boisterous banquet hall.

It was a room some fifty feet in height, by as many long and broad. Long stalactites hung from the roof, while around on the walls fantastic shapes of houses, men, and every conceivable thing, were painted by the imagination amid the rough unhewn masses of stone composing the sides of this natural chamber. Here and there glaring torches of pine wood gave a flickering light, while in the centre a huge fire sent its glare round the whole gloomy apartment. Beside this sat the negroes before introduced, with several fresh ones, who have not previously appeared upon the scene of action. High over all was General Nero, who sat apart in conference with one or two of the leaders. The majority of the Blacks,

who on their escape from the Seminoles had been first introduced to the mysteries of this prison house, now gazed around in a state of considerable bewilderment, while many an eye endeavoured in vain to pierce the gloom of the passages that diverged on all sides.

White Cloud, who knew the intricacies of the Horse-shoe cave better than any of those who tenanted the interior, turned quietly to the left, and once more followed the windings of a narrow and gloomy passage. Who could have seen the Indian now, would have remarked that his breath came and went—that his emotions were deep and violent. Some feeling, stronger than the calm mask which his race assume could bear, was influencing him. Who can tell the secrets of the soul?—who could, would have read wonders in the Indian's heart that hour.

Again the narrow path widened, and another chamber, smaller than the former and less brilliantly illumined, was discovered. Like the other, it was ornamented with stalactites; but in one corner, on a rude pallet, alone and unattended, lay the object of the Indian's search. It was Etty, sleeping heavily, after a day of unparalleled fatigue and excitement.

The Indian approached with a firm and steady step, and stood by the dreaming girl. There she lay, her lovely face exhibiting now all the innocence and security of a babe. Her eyes were not seen, but long and delicate eyelashes shaded them so gracefully, nought but sweet pupils could lay there beneath;—her cheek, though pale, with the hectic flush of fever in the centre, was of a complexion which is always beautiful—that of youth; her lips were parted, exhibiting to view her white teeth, and living passage to the gentle breath of that pure and exquisite Being. Her soft and well rounded arms were crossed on her bosom in an attitude of peace and resignation. Now and then, however, a flash of terror crossed her face, as if the sudden remembrance of the events of the morning, were coming to her in her dreams.

The White Cloud gazed long and piercingly on her face. His features exhibited an intensity of feeling such as rarely characterizes the Indian physiognomy—there was admiration, not bold, but sad, in his eyes.

»The Singing Bird of the Whites sleeps sound—she is beautiful as the dreams of a lovesick youth—her cheek is as the first rose of morning—

her heart is warm as the eye of a panther—but to the Redskin it is cold. Oh! why is White Cloud more wise than his fellows, why has he gone to school with the palefaces, to learn to love a pale-face girl?»

A deep sigh burst here from beside the Indian, and raising his eyes, the warrior saw before him, silent, resigned, but her face expressive of the most intense anguish, his wife. A young and exquisitely formed Indian girl, faultless in shape as a Grecian statue, and clothed in the tunic, leggings, and mocassins, of a Seminole maiden; the Bounding Fawn had on her face all the evidences of the most violently contending emotions, but not a glance of reproach fell on the startled warrior.

»Hush!« she whispered low, »a great warrior has fallen into the trap of the wolf—the dark men come.«

A confused sound was indeed heard in the distance, as if several of the negroes were hurrying along the passage separating the two chambers.

»Singing Bird«, said the Indian warrior sadly, touching the arm of the sleeping girl, while by a mute but expressive glance he reassured his aggrieved wife, »Singing Bird, awake.«

Etty Williams started to her feet, and after the first confused moment of terror, recognising both the White Cloud and his ruddy spouse, would have expressed her joy.

»Hush«, said White Cloud, in the cold inanimate tone he ever assumed toward the girl, »follow the Redskin.«

Next minute, just as the Blacks entered the chamber which General Nero had set apart for Etty, whom he had deigned to honour with his regard, the three fugitives were flying along another of the labyrinthine ways which abounded in that cavernous hill, undoubtedly of volcanic origin. Nero, however, was too quick for them, and catching a glimpse of them as they entered, gave forth the yell of the Blacks, and rushed in pursuit.

»Quick, lady«, said White Cloud, supporting Etty's tottering steps, »another hundred yards, and the pale-face girl is with her friends.«

»Thanks, good White Cloud«, replied the trembling maiden, »my father, all will bless you.«

»Hugh!« muttered the Indian, in a deep guttural tone, as he faced round and clutched his tomahawk.

In his hurry, and perhaps confused by the memory of his late unconscious soliloquy in the presence of his wife, the Seminole chief had entered by mistake upon a blind passage close beside the one which led to the desired outlet. In an instant his part was taken. Quick as lightning his thoughts bounded forward, and shewed him the means of saving Etty and his wife. A few words explained his plan, and the Bounding Fawn and Miss 'Williams—the latter trembling with fright and horror before the fear of again being in the power of the hated Nero—prepared to obey.

Him cut down dat away, and no mistake«, said the foremost negro, pointing in the direction really occupied by the fugitives.

»On!« exclaimed the furious and. revengeful General Nero, »take him alive. Him too precious to kill all at once.«

»Hugh!« said the Indian, standing forward within the light of the negro torches, and causing the whole band to quail before his eye of fire, aided by the effect of his uplifted hatchet.

At the same moment a rustling sound was heard, and Etty Williams might have been seen gliding down the right path, at the end of which the light of day looked like the star of promise in the distance. The wife saw her safely on her way, and then returned beside her husband.

»Him great chief, sabbe 'zistance useless«, said Nero, keeping at a respectful distance from the Indian's tomahawk, »him shew him wisdom and surrender quietly.«

»The blackskin is a coward and a thief«, replied the Indian, »his heart is that of a panther, all for blood, but no fawn bounds so quick from before brave men. But the pale-face girl is safe, and the wife of a great chief has fled: let the dogs of negroes take a Seminole if they can.«

The Bounding Fawn here stood by her husband's side, and said:

»The wife of the White Cloud is sick at heart—the sky is dim, she will nestle under the wing of the eagle, for a storm is rising.«

The Seminole glanced with pain at his devoted wife, appeared to struggle with his iron will a moment, and then casting his tomahawk

from him, surrendered.

»The Bounding Fawn has the face of a woman, but the soul of a man. She will be the mother of mighty warriors.«

The girl bowed her head with a sad smile. She had heard her husband speak of his love for the pale-face maiden, and her heart of hope had fled.

»Her better find anoder husband den«, said Nero, sneeringly, as his satellites seized the Indian and led him forward, »for him White Cloud berry soon see him fader in the happy hunting Place.«

The news of the capture of the Seminole was received in the great hall of the cavern with uproarious applause; and when General Nero announced his intention of putting his victim to death, the tumult increased to a perfect fury of delight. It was something new for a herd of despicable slaves to hold the destinies of a great warrior in their hands.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIAL.

Half an hour had passed after the above decision, and White Cloud stood tied to a huge log at the further end of the great vaulted chamber. At a short distance, guarded by two negroes, was the Bounding Fawn, placed, by an atrocious refinement of cruelty, within sight of her husband, about to be sacrificed to the brutal revenge of the American blacks, who are perhaps the most cruel of created beings, not by nature so much as from the vile and abominable institution of slavery.

A small pile of charcoal had been placed at the Indian's feet, slowly to consume his flesh, while splinters of wood were being cut before his eyes, in order to pierce his limbs, But not a word, except of defiance, passed the warrior's lips; while the Bounding Fawn, though striving to act up to her forest education, could not control the tears that coursed down her cheek, nor the sobs which convulsed her bosom.

Nero, who had been supping, now advanced, to overlook the fearful preparations which were making.

»White Cloud him not sorry him take the pale face side now«, said the General, tauntingly. »Him find dat it get him rader in the wrong box, him speculate.«

No reply came from the now stoical Indian.

»Him take it berry cool, just now«, continued the negro, »but when him charcoal burn him, him find it perticler hot;« and the rebel General laughed at his own horrible wit.

Still no answer.

»Him Indian gal make very nice squaw for a nigger«, now said the Black, slowly, and letting each word drop with perfect distinctness, »him no doubt de piccaninny berry great warrior in time. Gen'ral Nero great warrior his self.«

A gleam of fearful passion crossed the Seminole's face, but still he made no answer.

»Well! him chief dumb, what him squaw say?« said Nero, turning to the weeping girl, whose tears dried in an instant, while her whole demeanour exhibited the most intense contempt.

»A Seminole squaw sees a great warrior; and she hears the voice of a black coward—a negro dog!«

»Him dog bite«, said the General, furiously shaking the young Indian wife by the arm, »him bite perticler hard, too.«

There was death in the glance which the victim and the victor now shot one upon another; hatred—undying hatred—in the gleam of their fiery eyes.

»Massa White Cloud«, said the negro, forcing himself to speak calmly, and advancing close to his side, »him General Nero not altogeder make up his mind to kill you. On one condition him berry welcome go free.«

The chief looked as scornful as ever.

»Dat is dis. Him White Cloud rob a Nero ob him lawful prize—him sabbe dat. Well, him Sem'nole gib up him squaw, wid him word ob honour, and him go free.«

The Indian spat upon his adversary's face, without moving a muscle. The negro started back, with a demoniacal yell, and raised his cutlass, to kill the daring chief.

»No, dat too mussiful«, said he, »put alight to him charcoal. I make de Sem'nole speak.«

The whole body of negroes now crowded round the huge upright log, like a band of devils round some lost soul. One brought splinters of wood; others lighted torches; others, again, knives, which they brandished before his face, while yells of delight burst from every lip. Even the guards of the young wife left their post, and joined in the infernal dance of death.

Still the White Cloud stood scornful, even smiling on his tormentors, who paused in the very luxury of cruelty; for the sooner they commenced, the sooner the enjoyment of their blood work would be over.

»Bring him squaw nearer«, said the voice of General Nero, above the din.

Her two guards turned their stupified looks upon the place once occupied by the lovely Seminole girl. For an instant it was empty, but next moment, the faithful warriors of the tribe burst, with their war-whoop, into the cavern. In a moment the melee commenced. The negroes, five to one, divided their forces, one guarding the warrior chief and the Bounding Fawn, the rest pressing upon his devoted followers. The contest was fearful and bloody; but, ere half an hour passed, the gallant and fearless band of Indians were all slain or captured. Twelve negroes had paid the forfeit of their lives.

»Now«, said Nero, »him finish Massa Cloud.«

»Surrender, villains«, thundered Harry Malcolm, bursting into the cavern, at the head of a detachment of United States Infantry, and rushing headlong to the side of his friend and brother. The negroes would have rallied, but from every avenue was heard the heavy tramp of armed men, and, falling on their knees, the whole gang cried for quarter. The officer who commanded—a stern, middle-aged man—now ordered the Seminole chief to be unbound, which order being obeyed, the warrior would have joined the Green Foresters with his wife.

»White Cloud«, said the officer, »you are my prisoner. As a Seminole chief—one who in many terrible fights has slain the white man—your life is forfeited.«

Harry Malcolm stood petrified; he had not foreseen this very natural result of bringing in the Government forces. The Bounding Fawn sadly rejoined her husband, who, though separated from the negro captives, and treated with more respect, remained a prisoner in the hands of those who had been led by the Green Foresters for his delivery.

CHAPTER VI.

SORROW.

A sad and mournful meeting was that of the morrow's break fast at the house of Captain Williams. The usual tempting luxuries which nature scatters so profusely in the American wilds were there—the delicious coffee and cream, the buttered Indian cakes, the stewed venison, the hissing tea-urn;' but she who had once presided over all, and whose gentle spirit had poured its benign influence in unseen showers upon all who came near her—she was gone. In saddened, heart-breaking silence, they sat through the form of the wonted meal—untouched in reality. Captain Williams was, perhaps, the greatest sufferer. A few hours had so changed him, it was piteous to gaze upon his grey hair, his furrowed cheek, and his half vacant eye, which appeared looking inward, rather than gazing on the outward world.

Etty and Harry had the comfort of feeling that they were restored to each other, though this was but poor satisfaction, when they, too, missed the beloved one. Etty mourned a mother, and Harry an aunt, who had been to him a second parent. Like the bereaved husband, they sat, as it were, crushed beneath the weight of woe.

The breakfast-table was placed near an open window. On one side sat Captain Williams, while near to him were the lovers. On the other was an empty chair. At this the husband and father gazed for some time in silence, as if his eyes were fixed on utter vacancy. His look was half wild, half sorrowful. At length he spoke.

»Where, where is she?« he cried; »why is the seat there?« pointing to the chair usually occupied by her. »Oh, child, nephew, tell me, where is my wife—your mother?«

Etty and Harry were horror-struck; the former, however, finding some relief in a flood of tears. It was clear that the strong man's intellect was shaken, that he was in part ignorant of what was passing around him. Fortunate for him, perhaps, would this have been, had not the leading idea of his temporarily darkened mind been the very cause of his derangement.

»Father! Father!« cried Etty, scarcely less distracted than himself, »we are not alone in our misery. See the Indian girl there, how she bears up against her sorrow.«

The appeal, which Etty herself understood not the force of, was disregarded, but it served to call her own attention, and that of Henry, to the forlorn Indian wife. When the White Cloud was taken prisoner, with the startling announcement that his life as a Seminole rebel was forfeit to the laws of the United States, the energies of his devoted and lovely partner became, as it were, paralyzed. Unconscious of what she was about, she suffered herself to be led away by the considerate Green Foresters, and to be placed beneath the shelter of a white man's roof—the last spot she would have willingly tenanted in other and more happy moments. Many feelings combined to cast down and overcome her spirit. It was while engaged in the service of another, and one ardently loved, that her husband became amenable to the American troops; and now she was sheltered, protected, fed, by that very woman who had, unconsciously, caused all her misery. That Etty was quite ignorant of the Indian warrior's feelings towards herself, the young wife saw plainly enough. This was some comfort; for the quick eye of the sex had at once seen through the reciprocal feelings of Harry and Etty.

»Child of the forest«, exclaimed Captain Williams, suddenly turning towards the Indian girl, »you have no right to grieve. Your husband lives—death has not snatched him from you. But I— I— am alone in the world!«

»Not alone, father«, cried Etty, passionately; »you have still a daughter.«

»Those are her very tones, her eyes, her cheek, her hair—all as she was some twenty years ago, when first I wooed her. Child, thy mother was then more beautiful than even thyself; and now—where is the negro dog, that I may slay him?«

With these words, Captain Williams rose to his feet, and gazed with vacant eye around. The effort was too much for his frame, wrung and enfeebled by mental agony, and he fainted.

»Let us place him near the window«, said Harry, »'tis better thus: when he recovers he will surely be calmer.«

The three, for the Indian girl silently and efficaciously lent her aid, bore the suffering sailor to the open window, where the fresh air, after coursing over lawn and meadow of silvery green, and kissing the very lip of the current, came cool and soft to the heated brows of the grieving husband, who—and no shame to him—did not, under his affliction, stand

*»As some rude tower of old:
Its massive trunk rearing its rugged form,
With limbs of giant mould,
To battle sternly with the winter storm.«*

His native constitution, however, did him good service, and he soon opened his eyes, to look around with something more of composure. They rested first upon the glorious sky, which, blue and silent, shed unseen calm into his agitated bosom; then descending from heaven to earth, upon the changeful stream, coasted by cedar and tamarac, while from the same came

*»The drowsy tune
Of the bright leaping waters, as they pass
Laughingly on amid the flowing grass.«*

And so akin were these to the bosom of the sailor, that his soul was at once lifted up in thoughtfulness to the great Giver of good; and instead of being only regretful and sorrowful for what he had lost, found some heart-stirring influence, which made him send up an unspoken vow of thankfulness for what God had left him. There are silent prayers—prayers which were never clothed in language, even in thought, which are more powerful than all, because they are the aspirations of the soul.

»Thanks, my children, and you, good girl«, said the father, »I am better, much better now; but why is she here alone? where is our brave friend White Cloud?

»The White Cloud is a great warrior«, said the young wife, with flashing eye; »he saw that the black men were wicked, and had robbed his friend of his child, and he went in search of the singing-bird of the Whites. He met the black men; his warriors fell in the fight, like the autumn leaves of the forest, but the fair-haired girl was saved to her friends. Then came the paleface braves, and took White Cloud, and tomorrow he must die.«

Richly musical and plaintive were the tones of the lovely Indian girl, and not a word of reproach passed her lips. But there was a deep sorrow in her attitude of utter hopelessness, which deeply affected all who heard her.

»How is this, Harry?« said the Captain, recovering rapidly before the prospect of his energies being required; »this must not be; this gallant Indian must be saved.«

»I fear me, Uncle, it will be a rude task«, said Harry, gloomily; »White Cloud was one of those concerned in the night attack on Pionville, and you know that unexpected outrage made the State very determined. Every leader in that night's business is condemned to instant death as soon as caught. Major —— has only delayed until the morrow at my earnest request.«

»Until to-morrow, when?«

»At break of day—he, with Nero and four of the blacks, tried by a court-martial, will be shot.«

»Nero«, said the Captain, a shudder convulsing his frame, »and his gang, may die. They have earned their fate, but this gallant Indian must be saved. Harry, my lad, could you not ride to the camp of General Rusk, and back, in that time?«

»I will try, Uncle«, said Harry, rising with animation, »but. of what avail?«

»He is an old friend of mine, one whom I have served. I will write to him; I will detail the services, the generous devotion of White Cloud; and surely he will hearken to my voice.«

»Thank God, then, there is hope«, cried Harry, with animation; »write, Uncle. In five minutes I will be ready to start.«

»Harry«, said Etty, turning pale, »be cautious, be careful; some of these horrid Blacks are yet abroad.

»Fear not«, replied the young man, »I will go armed, and on a good horse— White Cloud must be saved!«

»The pale-face is a great chief—he is a true brother«, said the Indian girl, with majesty, »and a red-skin girl would go with him, but her place is by her husband.«

Captain Williams seized pen, ink, and paper, and though not much accustomed to their use, soon filled a sheet. His words were rough, but they were stamped with the eloquence of the heart, worth a whole waggon-load of fine phrases, which, in like instances, make us rather wonder »where you stole them«, than feel affected by them. He had scarcely concluded, ere Harry, booted and spurred, stood before him. The letter was then taken; and after a hasty farewell to the father and the young wife, the Captain of the Green Foresters, accompanied by Etty, hurried to the verandah, where he had ordered his horse to be led.

»Cousin Harry«, said Etty, mournfully, »this gallant Indian youth must be saved, even if General Rusk be not moved. When do you expect to return?«

»An hour before dawn, my beloved!«

»Then, Harry, if you be not—I will myself unloose the fastenings of his prison, and set him free.«

»Be careful, Etty«, said Harry; »misery enough, God knows, has visited this family, without your braving danger.«

»I will be careful now, Harry, if even only that my father shall not be alone.«

»And for my sake!«

»Always, Harry«, said she, while tears stood in her eyes: »be so for mine. Soon we shall be alone in the world.«

Next moment the young man was galloping over the sward in the direction of the camp of General Rusk.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIAN AND HIS WIFE.

The Major who commanded the detachment of United States infantry which had surprised the rebel negroes, having been directed to remain in the neighbourhood, had made Captain Williams's house his head quarters; and, the better to secure his prisoners, had divided them into squads, and placed them in the various out-houses which surrounded the principal building. Respecting the misfortune and character of White Cloud, he had assigned to him a prison apart from the blacks; and, what was quite as complimentary, because shewing how much more he was to be feared, two sentinels were placed over him. The shed in which he lay was one usually tenanted by the overseer of the slaves, and was so placed as to be commanded by the several sentries which the Major thought it necessary to station round the house. Built of heavy logs, and made all the stronger, in that it formed the corner of the palisadoes, there was no fear of the Indian's escape by destroying the walls.

Nero occupied a stable near at hand, being chained like a dog to the wall.

White Cloud sat with his back against a log—calm, dignified, but sad. His thoughts were evidently troubled. He could not but reflect how deeply he had grieved his fond young wife. Her innocent and devoted affection, which had never swerved, and which had borne up unchanged against the consciousness that she had heard him pour forth his feelings towards another with greater warmth than ever she heard before, now came reproachfully to his mind; and the stern Indian warrior, careless of death, perfectly prepared for the worst fate which might befall him, fit miserable while reflecting on this wrong.

Nero, brave only when surrounded by his fellows and flushed with power, crouched in his den, in the most abject state of terror. His teeth chattered, his eyes were haggard and sunken, all the worst features of a wicked slave were shewn in the ex-general of the rebels. He knew that he must die, and for him there was, he was quite conscious, no hope, no pity, no mercy. At length, however, a sudden light seemed to dawn upon

him, and, for a moment shaking off his abject fear, he rose. The hut occupied by the Indian, and the stable in which Nero was imprisoned, were contiguous.

»White Cloud«, said Nero, in a low voice, »him Nero spik wid great chief.«

No answer.

»Oh injun«, said the Negro, in a still louder voice, »they tell negro die. Him no die, him join wid injun and him get free.«

»A great chief has nothing to say to a creeping dog«, replied the Seminole calmly, his voice being heard with difficulty through the heavy logs, which had few interstices.

»Massa White Cloud«, shrieked the slave, »take pity on a nigger; say someting to gib him some consebblation, or him nigger die.«

The Indian either made no reply, or at all events the thickness of the walls prevented any from being heard. Nero, in despair, again threw himself on the ground and wept like a child, not tears of penitence, such as angels might weep, but tears of fire and blood, the raging tears of impotent fury and rage.

It was drawing towards evening, and about ten minutes before sundown, one of the sentries entered the Indians' hut, bringing a savoury meal, provided by the thoughtful care of Etty. Having set this down before the unmoved Indian, the soldier informed the prisoner that the Major had given permission to his wife to pass one hour with him alone that evening, to bid one another an eternal adieu.

»A chief hears: the squaw may come«, said the Indian coldly.

But whoever should have judged him from these cold and quiet words, would have done him injustice. No sooner was the soldier's back turned, than a smile of pleasure, a smile that made his stern and manly face beautiful for the moment, passed across his features. His eye, before half dimmed, grew bright and sparkling,—telling, that whatever might have been his feelings with regard to the Singing-bird of the »Whites, there was now, in this moment of peril and misfortune, but one emotion capable of moving him, and that was love for his Indian wife. After a few moments the warrior rose, and taking some mats of rushes which had formed part of a bed, made, near his own feet, a comfortable seat for his

squaw, and then returning to his former position, calmly awaited her approach.

He waited not long, for soon he heard the bolts and locks of his prison again removed; a gliding form passed, and White Cloud and his girl were alone. For some moments neither spoke, the chief drawing round him his buffalo robe, and waiting for the usual period of dignified silence to elapse. It would have been unwomanlike for the Seminole girl to have betrayed her eager desire to speak.

»A chief waits: what has his squaw for his ear?« said White Cloud, in quiet but affectionate tones. There was a softness and self-reproach in his manner, which made the wife's heart leap.

»The-pale face has said a great chief must die, and his Indian girl has come to ask him to kill her.«

»Why?« said the Seminole quickly.

»Because a great chief has taken his eyes from her—a black cloud is before them—he cannot see her.«

»Daughter of the Seminoles«, said the chief calmly, »live - you have a little bird must nestle in your bosom. He will be a great warrior.«

»His fathers are blind; he sees but the singing bird of the Whites. A Seminole girl will die.«

»Daughter of the Seminoles«, said the warrior, much moved, »a cloud was before my eyes. Some great medicine of the Whites must have charmed me; I could not see straight. But a wind from the hills has swept the cloud away, and a great chief sees only his wife and the Little Lion. He is all eyes, and they are for her.«

»Good!« exclaimed the wife, a calm joy suffusing her face; »a word of a warrior is great. It is passed, the medicine of the Whites is gone, and Monea is no longer sad. But the pale face has said a great chief must die. Monea's heart will break if his child looks not on his father again.«

»Monea«, said the Indian, overcoming all his native reserve, and clasping his wife to his bosom, »the warrior must die; but his spirit would go in peace to the happy hunting grounds, if he saw the face of the Little Lion once more.«

»Monea left the child with her people—it is far off.«

»Two suns«, said the warrior.

»Two suns!« exclaimed the mother joyously; »then let a great chief go. Monea will stay here, he can come back to die. He will have seen his little one.«

»When the sun rises, the White Cloud is to die«, said the warrior, shaking his head.

»No«, replied the mother anxiously: »the pale-face chief Williams send the Forester to great Father Chief, ask for White Cloud life. White Cloud is safe until the messengers come from the forest.«

»A warrior listens«, said White Cloud.

»See, an Indian girl thought of this; she thought the great chief would like to see his little one, and she dressed herself like a white girl«, continued the wife, rising and shewing her borrowed finery: »let the warrior disguise himself as a squaw and go; the Little Lion will cry until he comes.«

The White Cloud looked admiringly at his wife, and then continued the conversation.

»Monea loves her husband, she is a good wife; the White Cloud would die easier if he could see his little one. But does a Seminole girl say true?«

»Can a Seminole girl lie?« asked the Indian squaw proudly.

»Hugh!« was the reply of the warrior—« Monea is right. A great chief will go presently.«

»Not yet«, said the young wife eagerly; »it is not yet time. Monea has much to say to her husband.«

»Her voice is like the song of the birds, it fills the soul with music. Speak.«

»A great warrior has said, that he loves an Indian girl, the mother of the Little Lion. An Indian girl is jealous, she wishes to hear it again.«

White Cloud smiled, and, parting the long black hair of the Seminole beauty, kissed her on the forehead.

»Monea is a foolish girl—the heart of White Cloud is large—but it is full of Monea.«

»And the beautiful Singing-bird of the Whites?« said Monea now, archly.

»A dream, a vision—it is gone.«

»And if a great chief were not to die—and Monea were gone to the land of spirits?«

»The White Cloud would turn squaw, and nurse his little one. It should never call another woman mother.«

Could the warrior have seen the radiant beauty of his wife at the sound of this declaration, he would have been strangely puzzled to have explained to himself the motives which influenced his speech and conduct. But the dusk of evening had turned to night, and nothing but the tones of voice indicated the extent of her feelings.

»Death is very great, it often weakens the memory«, she said, half inadvertently.

»Would Monea choose another warrior, when death has made her forget White Cloud?« said the husband, speaking in tones of gentle and most soothing reproach.

»The sea is deep«, replied the girl warmly; »before Monea will call another warrior, husband, she will lay her bones in the beautiful waters of the great lake.« This was said with an earnest dignity, which carried truth on its face.

»Hugh! good!« said the chief; »but he will go—he is anxious to see the Little Lion. It is two suns' journey, and a chief must be back to die, or a Seminole girl will be slain.«

»No! no!« cried the wife, clinging convulsively to him—»not yet, not yet; a great chief will have time enough. Monea must not be left yet.«

»The White Cloud will stay«, replied the chief, tenderly embracing her; »but if he is to be back in two suns, he must go directly. The sun has been down an hour.«

Monea made no further opposition, and the change of costume took place. Monea herself wore the European dress so awkwardly, that the additional stoutness of the chief was the less likely to be remarked. In height they closely resembled each other; and, as it was a dark night, the masquerade was not very difficult to be carried out.

»The White Cloud is ready«, said the chief; and then he added proudly, »when the pale-face warriors come, let them see how brave is an Indian girl. But the chief will be back to take her place.«

»Manitou! Manitou!« said the wife, sobbing and clinging to her husband, half in desperation—»God! God! save him, Monea is a woman, and very weak.«

The chief hesitated—an idea crossed his mind, but the words »Can a Seminole girl lie?« still rang in his ears.

»I go to see the Little Lion—I will take a curl from his brow, and his mother shall keep it for the sake of his father when he is in the great land of spirits.«

»My child! my child!« cried the agonized mother; »go! son of Utica, the Little Lion calls you.«

Monea now wrapped herself in the buffalo robe of the Indian chief, and seated herself, assuming his customary erect and rigid posture; while the White Cloud, concealing his face in the cloak, which formed the principal part of his wife's civilized clothing, passed hurriedly out, and, following the minute directions which his wife had given him, stood in a few minutes beneath the portico of the house. Here he was to meet Etty, he had been told, but no Etty was there. The chief paused to reconnoitre, without one shadow of emotion in connexion with the white girl. He had truly said that the clouds had vanished, and no other image, save his wife and child, now were visible to his mind's eye. The Singing-bird of the Whites had been to him a day-dream—he had worshipped her as something above himself; but even this worship, which never had obscured his love for Monea, had now vanished before the stern duties of the parent.

»Monea«, said the gentle voice of Etty, next minute by his side.

»Hugh!« exclaimed the startled chief.

»White Cloud«, said Etty, delighted; »it is you—you are then free?«

»The White Cloud is free as the wind above the pine-tree tops.«

»Quick, then, follow me«, said Etty; »you see yon wood pile. Near that is a gate; of which this is the key. When you are outside, throw it over the palisades. I will find it in the morning.«

The Seminole chief briefly thanked his fair guide, and then, following her direction, disappeared the next minute behind the object she had pointed out. Etty watched his motions with deep interest; and it was only when he had quite gained the forest that she left her part of watcher, and went in to rejoin her father. By gentle persuasion she soon induced him to retire to bed; and having done so, another duty remaining, she wrapped herself in a hood and cloak, and again ventured into the open air.

The night was mild and still. The wind had died away with the setting of the sun, and nought was heard but the always audible breathing of night. Darkness is never silent. A brooding spirit seems ever abroad; sounds strange and gentle come clearly to the ear, as if it were the rocking of nature to sleep, the lullaby of heaven, the music of the spheres, in regret for the departure of the glorious light. Etty felt the delicious influence of the hour, and paused to drink in the full flood of sad and terrible recollections which crowded in contrast upon her. Fortunate that circumstances required action, and thus prevented her giving way to the rushing tide of sorrow which otherwise would have overwhelmed her. After sending up to Heaven a brief prayer, she hurried towards the hut which now, she supposed, contained the Indian girl. Ere she reached it, a groan of anguish caught her attention. She paused and looked around her. The sentinels had deserted their post, and were conversing together in a knot near at hand, but had not noticed the advent of the young girl.

»Oh, Miss Etty«, whispered the discordant voice of Nero, »spare him nigger life; him never hurt you—tink of dat.«

Horror-struck at her near contact with the murderer of her mother, Etty brushed past, and gained the entrance of the other prison.

»Monea! Monea!« she whispered. »Monea! Monea!« she repeated as she received no reply, speaking in a louder tone. But in vain, all was still as death. »She has escaped«, she added; »thank God, then, my duty is performed, and I can go to rest.«

The sad consciousness that no mother would now give a nightly blessing on her sleep, came forth upon her as she spoke; and gliding back to the house, she sought her chamber, not to rest, but to weep.

Meanwhile Monea had heard her call, but self-devotion had prevented her reply. Monea had deceived her husband, and Etty! Resolved to save his life at any risk and cost, the noble Indian girl had persuaded the chief that the hour of execution was altered. What it cost this glorious creature to look steadily in her husband's face and say, »Can a Seminole girl lie?« who can tell! The most self-denying devotion—the resolve that at all costs her child should not be fatherless,—that the White Cloud should not perish—alone supported her. Etty she had persuaded to join her, under the arrangement that as soon as the chief had escaped, she was to come and free her, if she fled not in the meantime. But Monea had not executed half her task. Her great object was to gain time, and to enable the chief to advance so far that pursuit would be useless; trusting to his returning with a sufficient band of warriors to protect him against the Whites. Yes! Monea had determined that word of hers should not hurry the pursuit, and that in the grey of dawn she would die for him rather than betray his flight. It was this feeling—the fear that they were parting for ever—that had during the last moments of their interview unnerved the noble girl.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORNING.

It was in the grey dawn of the morning. The chirruping songsters of the American wilds were waking the soul to a consciousness of existence, when the soldiers who guarded the house of Captain Williams were hurried from their beds to the sound of a muffled drum. The imperative orders of the government were about to be obeyed, and the Major, though deeply grieved at the task imposed upon him, yet schooled himself to forget all, save his duty. The White Cloud had been condemned to die by his superiors, and it was only when the deed was done, that he had any right to reflect on how terrible was the task he had gone through.

No sooner had the drum sounded its funeral summons, than the whole of those within hearing were on foot. Captain Williams and Etty bounded from their beds, and hurried to the portico, the former silent, gloomy, and overcharged with grief, the latter to assure herself of the safety of her friends, who she hoped were far away on the road to their native villages.

In the open glade before the door were stationed some sixty United States soldiery. At one end were the half dozen whose duty it was to act as executioners. They were loading the guns, that in a few moments were to deprive a fellow-creature of life, with that trained unconcern, which is, however, far more apparent than real, even in these who are schooled by habit and custom to death. Chained together and guarded by twice their own number, were the negroes, preparatory to being marched away for trial, while within a few paces stood the faithful servants, white and black, of the Captain.

»Nay, Etty«, said the father, tenderly greeting his child; this is no place for thee. Get thee in, and hide thee where not a sound shall reach thy ear, while I will, to my utmost, delay the execution. Harry is quick of action, and I doubt not will return in time.«

»But, father«, replied Etty, evasively, »White Cloud is my friend—he saved me from a horrible fate, and I cannot even in this hour desert

him.«

»As you will, my child«, and Captain Williams bowed his head, as mournful thoughts of the past day racked tumultuously upon him.

»Bring forth the prisoner, Corporal«, said the Major, who stood near the portico.

»But Major«, exclaimed Captain Williams, »why this haste? It is scarcely dawn. I cannot distinguish a soldier from a negro. Give the man the time allowed him by law, at all events.«

»My instructions are positive, Captain Williams«, said the Major firmly; »they are to shoot the prisoner, White Cloud—concerned in the attack on Pionville—at break of day on the morrow of his capture. Corporal, bring forth the Indian.«

The Corporal, accompanied by a file of soldiers, advanced towards the cell in which White Cloud had been placed. Etty stood breathlessly awaiting the result. There was no sound of surprise as if a prisoner had escaped, but next minute the guard advanced towards the officer in command, and followed by the the Indian, as at that hour it appeared.

Etty gave a stifled shriek and leaned against the portico, then with a beam of hope she bounded in the direction of the prisoner, who was advancing calmly to the spot where death awaited its victim. The quiet eye of the girl had at once seen through the deception.

»Monea! Monea!« she cried, »why is this? why did you not answer me last night, and why not have escaped with your husband?«

The Major was beside them in an instant. His brow was stern and cold. He wore all the mien of one who, having been deceived, was prepared to revenge himself terribly.

»Woman«, said he, fiercely shaking the young Indian wife's arm, »what is the meaning of this? Where is the White Cloud?«

»The White Cloud is a great chief«, said Monea, calmly shaking off his angry gripe; »he is gone to his people. The pale face could not take his life, but a Seminole girl can die in his stead.«

The Major stood with fierce and angry mien before her. He had been played upon in a manner which would militate much against his promotion. Having in his hands the life of a much dreaded leader in the

Florida, he had allowed that leader to escape. His determination was taken at once.

»Girl, you have said you can die. Go! you have freed your husband, but in his stead you perish.«

»Monster«, cried Etty, turning towards the gloomy and moody looking United States officer; »is it thus you reward the devotion and Jove of a young wife? Surely you are but trying her constancy and courage. You, sir, have had a mother, have perhaps a wife who would have done as much for you, as she for her lord. Then why, because you have been deprived of a victim, do you seek another, whom no laws, divine or human, give you claim or hold upon?«

»Pale face«, said Monea, »I am ready. Death is sweet if it saves a father for the little Lion.«

»No!« cried Captain Williams, firmly, »this cannot, shall not be. Major, while you had right on your side, I respected your power, but as a magistrate, now that you would stain your soul with murder, I place you under arrest, and I call upon every citizen of this republic to stand by its civil servant in the execution of his duty.«

»Captain Williams«, said the Major, much abashed, »you are quite right. If however you will allow me still to command here, this matter may be settled more to your satisfaction, I am sure.«

»With pleasure, Major«, said Captain Williams, »when a soldier knows how to use his power, no man is more respectable or honourable.«

»Indian!« exclaimed the officer, turning to the young wife, »you have by your act robbed me of a long-hoped-for promotion, you have brought on me the just censure of a civil officer; but you are a woman, and though as hostage for your husband, I must detain you-«

»To your tents, O Israel!« exclaimed a tall and fanatical looking sentinel, who had stood upon the borders of the wood, »to your tents, and defend your lives; the Philistines are upon us.«

»What mean you, Caution?« cried the Major; and then turning to his men, »Fall back on the house, reserve your fire, and form in half circle.«

The sentinel now approached. He was the very beau-ideal of one of Sir Walter Scott's puritans, as like the reality as I to Methuselah.

»Well, Caution, what is it?« inquired the officer anxiously.

»The wood is alive with red skins, and at the head is that enemy of the Lord's, the rampageous White Cloud.«

»It is well«, exclaimed the Major, with evident satisfaction, »that man must be taken alive.«

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO GIRLS.

Monea and Etty retired at once to a little parlour on the ground floor, which was the peculiar province of the latter to occupy. Here she was wont to read, to paint, to play upon her harp, and doubtless to think in happier hours of him whom her young heart had chosen for its lord, spiritual and temporal—for love is not of a day, but is something for all time. And what more sacred or holy than the boudoir of a young girl—that temple of innocence and purity, where, retiring from the world and its ways, she may, alone and in solitude, think upon the thoughts she best loves!

Books and flowers, and scattered music, were upon the tables and side-boards, while in one corner were the still more feminine implements which in all ages and all times have been an amusement and occupation of the gentler sex.

They were all now alike disregarded.

Monea and Etty seating themselves near the window, so placed as that no missile could reach them, could still see all that passed.

Their position was peculiar. The soldiers and other whites were collected in great force to their right and left within the stockade, but as, for the purpose of sheltering that very window, the stockade was higher in this place than elsewhere, not even a sentinel was employed in this particular position, the garrison trusting to the discretion of the daughter of the house, who was known to be watching at that spot. Between the outer palisades and the room were several huts of the slaves, and piles of firewood, leaving by this peculiar disposition a clear vista for the eye to range upon the plain and forest, which latter approached within thirty feet of the stockade.

»Monea, my sister«, said Etty, gazing affectionately on the grieving Indian girl, »Harry will come, and this fight will end.«

»White Cloud is brave as the black bear; he will risk his life, and Monea will be alone.«

»I, too, have a father«, replied Etty, a tinge of pallor overspreading her cheek, »and—and—a«, she paused—

»A lover!« said the Indian girl, with half a smile.

»Nay, I said not so, Monea, but a dear cousin«, replied Etty, blushing, »and yet I do not forget I am a soldier's daughter.«

»Child of the Whites«, said the Indian girl, sadly, »you have a father, and one who one day will be your husband—you love him, and the brave hand loves you—you will be happy.«

»Happy! never!« exclaimed Etty, whose powers were supported only by the terrible excitement of the events around her; »happy, and have you forgot my mother?«

There was a moment of silence. The Seminole respected the bitter anguish of her friend, and said nothing.

»Ah!« cried the white girl, as a heavy volley flew from side to side, »the struggle is beginning: heaven guard those we love!«

The two girls rose. A curious object caught their eyes simultaneously.

Alone, on the skirts of the forest, in such a position as to be seen only from that window, stood an Indian leaning on his rifle, with, in his arms, a bundle, which he held on high. His posture was that of patient waiting.

»The White Cloud«, cried Etty.

»My child!« responded the Indian.

And both girls waved their hands.

Instantly, without a moment's pause, the rifle being left against the tree, the Indian, waiting for another discharge of fire-arms, stooped low and gained the palisadoes.

»Etty, child«, cried the voice of the father from below, »are you on the watch? Saw you not a savage gliding to the stockade?«

Etty shuddered. To conceal the truth seemed as evil as a lie.

»Trust to your daughter«, said she, in an impressive voice, »there is no danger here. Whatever happens, I and Monea are here. And«, she whispered hurriedly, as her father advanced nearer, »keep the fire from below our window. A child is to be restored to its mother.«

»All is safe«, cried Captain Williams to his companion the Major, »we have two good sentries up there, who will not see our castle stormed in

silence.«

White Cloud was now standing at the palisadoes. Monea turned towards Etty.

»My sister has the boy. A Seminole girl will join her husband.«

»Monea«, said the White girl sadly, »it must not be. You have just heard what I have said, and the daughter of a soldier must not lie. I will bring the child to its mother.«

With these words Etty gently lowered herself from the window, and, unobserved during the confusion which prevailed, reached the palisadoes. This was not done without much of anxiety and trembling, for the task she had undertaken was no trifling one, but it was in a cause which our young heroine held to be a sacred one.

»Daughter of the Whites«, said the deep, guttural voice of White Cloud in tones of admiration and respect, »a great chief will remember your goodness.«

»Quick, White Cloud«, replied Etty, opening the sally-port; quick, give me the child, or I shall be discovered.«

»And Monea!«

»Is safe.«

»Why comes she not?«

»She is better where she is until this dreadful fight be over. Besides I am alone«, and Etty shuddered.

»Good«, said the Indian, »whatever the Singing-bird of the whites says is right. Here is the little Lion; he shall learn to love her who saved his father.«

»Indian«, said Etty, solemnly, »if you are grateful for what I have done, if you love me—«

Had Etty seen the flash of the other's eye, his secret would have been betrayed. But she was too much occupied in gazing on the unconscious infant, which, covered with its gaudy swadling furs and ornaments, looked full in her face, and seemed inclined to smile upon her.

»If you love me, as the friend of your forest companion, in this fight spare my people when you can.«

»Not a hair shalt fall, but in the prairie. A white head shall walk unharmed amid a cloud of bullets. I have spoken.«

»Thanks, Indian.«

»Daughter of the pale faces«, said the chief, staying her flight, Manitou is great. It may be his will that the chief may go to the happy hunting grounds of his people. If so, let Monea and his child be a white girl. The day of the red skin is gone! the red bow is in the clouds, and we fade as the green grass before the scorching fire of the prairie. Soon, and the bones of the Indian will whiten the plains where his fathers were masters.«

»Fear nothing, White Cloud. Monea is my sister.«

»Sister«, said the Indian, hurriedly, »the white girl is very good. Her voice is very sweet, she speaks music.«

With these words, the warrior hurried to rejoin his people, while Etty rushed back, and, in a few moments, placed the little child in the arms of its now delighted mother.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONCLUSION.

The position of all concerned was now most peculiar. In both camps were mutual friends, and even dear connections; while neither side regarded victory with any other feelings than regret. Captain Williams, who having lost a wife, clung the more tenaciously to his only child, could not forget that the Seminole chief had saved his daughter from the audacious insults of the negro general, and accordingly dreaded his capture, though opposed to him. Etty prayed that Heaven would guard friends and enemies; and as for Monea, she hoped that the great Manitou would watch over the fathers of her child and of her young white friend.

The American Major, however, who knew that rank and renown were staked upon victory or defeat, had determined to take the White Cloud, dead or alive, and took his measures accordingly. Though the Seminoles were more than three times his number, the United States soldier had too much confidence in himself and in his men not to feel that there was every probability on his side. He moved about, therefore, giving his orders with perfect coolness, watching for the moment when chance or the impetuosity of his adversaries might give him the hoped for advantage.

The fight grew languid after a time. The Indians, as the sun rose to the zenith, retreated to the cover of the woods, and held council.

»Now is our time«, said the Major, quietly, to a picked body of his men — »the red skins are gone to breathe, and hold a talk. I know little of the knaves if now their chief is not in our hands.«

The quiet on the part of the Seminoles was of brief duration, for they had not retired ten minutes beneath the cover of the sycamores and oaks, ere from every bush, from every tree, from every point which could conceal a man, there was a rapid and destructive volley. Four soldiers bit the dust beneath the Indian rifles. The Major turned livid. He began to fear that he was in the worst position. But rousing himself -

»Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis virgo«-

he stood calm and earnest in his look, still hoping for the chance which should place the chief in his hands.

A silence dead as night on the sleeping but deceitful ocean,

»That types the perpetual with its ceaseless motion,«

succeeded, and then a yell, horrible, clear, distinct, the yell as it were of many departed spirits, rose upon the midday air, rending the very tympanums of all hearers. It was the Seminole war-whoop—but it was the war-whoop of undoubted victory.

Two men at this moment left the skirts of the wood and advanced towards the stockades.

The first was an Indian, in the full penoply of his hideous yet meaning war-paint, but unarmed. »The other was a white man, who bore in his hand a flag of truce.

»The White Cloud!« exclaimed Monea, the keen eye of the wife having at once recognised her husband.

»Harry!« said Etty, the equally sharp vision of the fair pale-face having at once discovered in the white man the form of Harry Malcolm.

»Saved!« cried Captain Williams, joyously, forgetting his own troubles in ministering to the hapines of others.

»Lost«, muttered the Major, moodly, as he saw his hopes of taking the Seminole about to be defeated.

The soldiers had collected, at the bidding of their commander, in a double file before the chief entrance of the stockade, concealing as much as possible their losses, by placing the wounded between two more fortunate comrades.

The pace of the heralds of peace was rapid, and in a few minutes they entered the defences.

»Major ——«, said Harry Malcolm, addressing the United States officer, while an expressive glance intimated to his uncle that all was right, »I bear you a despatch from General Rusk. I have ridden hard and fast to bring it, and I rejoice that I am not too late.«

»You have done a very noble thing, Sir«, said the American officer, sadly, »I should be glad to see such zeal devoting itself to its country's service.«

»You will have that pleasure then, Sir«, said Harry, smiling. »I hold in my hand a commission, appointing me captain of a volunteer corps, called the Green Foresters, to act under the orders of General Andrew Thompson.«

A general movement of surprise testified the effect of the latter portion of the young man's speech.

»General Andrew Thompson«, exclaimed the Major, his whole frame trembling with excitement, »to whom do you apply that title?«

»To you, Sir. A despatch from Washington has lain some days at headquarters containing your appointment to the command of the left wing of the army.«

General Thompson, the wish of whose whole life was thus suddenly realised, turned towards the house, followed by the principal actors in this drama.

In the hall they were met by the two girls.

»Monea«, said the General, with a smile of regret at past recollections, »allow me to restore you to the arms of a noble husband. I bear in my hand a free pardon from General Rusk for White Cloud, in consideration of his conduct in putting down the negro rebellion, headed by Nero.«

In about half an hour more, the breakfast parlour was again tenanted, but by more guests than on the previous day. White Cloud and General Thompson were the additional personages; nor did the American officer do more honour to the room than the graceful-mannered Indian. Monea and Etty sat together, while Harry occupied a seat near his uncle, who, no longer under the influence of excitement, had relapsed into his deep and unquenchable grief.

the breakfast was taken in silence. At length it was concluded, and then up rose the Seminole chief, and spoke.

»Children of the pale-faces, and you young singing-bird of the Whites, a warrior bids you farewell. His time is come, and his people call him to go. Captain Defence«, he said, taking the old man's hand, »you are old, the hand of sorrow is heavy on you, but the Manitou of the Whites is good, may he make you see many happy days. A warrior bids you farewell for ever. If the happy hunting grounds of the white man and the redskin are the same, we shall meet again. Brother Unami«, he said,

turning to Harry, »you are young, you are fond of the woods. If you can leave the white lily«, and he glanced at Etty, »for a time, and hunt the deer and the bear in the woods, your brother will be glad to see you. Singing-bird of the Whites«, this time he spoke to Etty, and his tones were sadly musical, »a warrior bids you farewell for ever. Never again will you see the chief whose life you have saved, for never again will White Cloud enter the big wigwams of the pale-faces; but in the Spring, Monea will come and see her white sister, she will bring fer moccasins and deer skins for her chamber, and all the ornaments for her wigwam. Will a sister be welcome?«

»Most welcome. Gladly will I see her and you too, White Cloud«, replied Etty, with tears in her eyes.

»No. I have said. A warrior is not a woman. When he speaks it is done. Monea shall come.«

»For ever if she wished it, and wanted protection.«

»Is my sister in earnest?«

»From my heart.«

»Hugh! If her warrior is slain, Monea shall leave the woods and live with the pale-faces.«

»Never!« said the still small voice of the Seminole wife; »when White Cloud dies, Monea will die too.«

»And the little Lion?«

»He will be a warrior long before that«, said she, gazing proudly on her babe.

There was something so touching in the Indian girl's confidence that her husband would live to protect her, that no one spoke on the subject again.

»Pale-faces, friends of my husband«, said Monea, »farewell. What Monea feels in her heart for her husband being saved, she cannot speak. When the birds begin to sing, Monea will come and say more.«

After a general shake of hands all round, the young wife took up her babe and followed her husband towards the forest, beneath whose leafy arches the whole Indian band were soon lost.

Etty never saw White Cloud again. Harry Malcolm often hunted with him and spent many pleasant days in his wigwam.

Monea grew gay and merry, and every year or so she presented him a little dusky image of himself; the memory of the Singing-bird of the Whites faded from his thoughts, and Melancholy, which had marked him for her own, found herself very much deceived.

It was about two years after the events above narrated, and Harry Malcolm, with his wife Etty, were seated on a rude bench that overlooked the garden of their house, the same where once had passed events so bloody and terrible. They were conversing in those tones of deep affection and love which never are to be mistaken, and every now and then turning to watch the infantine struggles of a boy of ten or eleven months, which was fighting manfully with a huge shaggy dog at their feet. »See«, cried Etty, starting suddenly to her feet, »yonder comes Monea.«

The pair rose, and in a few minutes the graceful Indian girl, her boy running merrily by her side, stood before them. She bore the annual presents—doubly requited by the generous Whites—and with pride laid them before them.

A fur mantle was shewn for Etty, worked by the Seminole's own hands.

»Beautiful!« cried the young wife.

A hunting tunic, covered with porcupine quills, was next proffered to Harry.

»Tell my brother I will wear it ever for his sake.«

A pair of moccasins were next produced for the old man.

Tears burst simultaneously from the eyes of the young couple, and with one accord they pointed to an enclosure in the centre of the garden.

Captain Williams slept the deep sleep of death, beside his murdered wife.

»Manitou is great«, said Monea; and the whole party went in silence to the house.

[THE END.]