

cross. The raft, bound together with withes, was soon made, and Tom on it, floating quickly down the stream. Our return path was nearly the one by which we had come, but doubly intricate on account of the darkness; but an half hour's walk brought us to the ford, where Tom was awaiting us with his raft, ready to ferry us over. His small and slippery craft would support but two at a time, so one by one, we were ferried over and landed without any mishap, except an unlucky slip of one of us into the river, where the water was waist deep and icy cold. Shouldering the deer, our guides led the way, and an hour's walk brought us to a comfortable cabin beneath the shadow of a mountain by the river bank. That night we sat long by the great, crackling fire, listening to tales of sport and danger from our hardy companions, who little thought there was a "chiel among them taking notes."

XIII.

THE last night we had spent at the lake was one of storm and tumult: such a night as made the cabin of Ellis a shelter not to be despised.

All the day, the near mountain tops had been wreathed by heavy mists, which at intervals came down before the sleet-laden gusts, enveloping the forest and the lake in vapory shrouds.

We had found it difficult to keep our fires ablaze upon our stands that stormy noon, and as the chance of driving a deer to water seemed rather doubtful, our spirits and the weather were well nigh congenial. It was to be our last *rendezvous* at the shanty, and as we pulled our skiffs ashore under the drooping hemlocks, which the clear, cold waters, over which they hung, mirrored so perfectly, I stood for a moment to indulge the reflections which the scene engendered.

Here and there upon the opposite shore, the blue smoke of our untended fires was curling gracefully upward and mingling with the white mist that lay along the tree-tops and the hillsides. A log canoe, with shattered side, which a wandering Indian had

used in hunting a year ago, lay half sunken near the shore, and not far distant were the remnants of the cabin he had built, and when departing, burned, that the white man might not have it for a shelter. I thought of the red men and their fate, and how in days gone by, their council-fires had blazed upon these very shores, and the forest around me echoed with their war-songs.

But they are gone now, and the few wandering outcasts that remain, are but the mockeries of former greatness. Alas, for the red man! Well has the poet said—

“Nor lofty pile, nor glowing page,
Shall link him to a future age,
Or give him with the past a rank:
His heraldry is but a broken bow,
His history but a tale of wrong and woe,
His very name must be a blank.”

But my reveries were broken by the stentorian voice of Ellis, calling me to “come and get dinner,” or I would lose my share, as he was “orful hungary.”

Thinking this would suit Kossuth about as well as myself, though I was rather more interested in and anxious for the “material aid and comfort” the good hunter promised, I was soon seated by the great fire before the shanty, with the smoking wing of a par-

tridge in one hand, and a chunk of bread in the other, expatiating between the mouthsfull, upon the extreme liberality of the party in my behalf, in regard to my appetite.

“So much for standin thar, a strainin yer eyes arter nothin,” says Ellis.

“We’re all starved *here*—fust come, fust sarved,” chimed in Tom. And so I felt very much like a martyr to my silent sympathy for the red man.

My delicate dinner was soon finished, and so, packing our small stock of cooking utensils in carrying condition upon the broad shoulders of Tom, who was to go to Salmon river that evening, where we were to meet him on the morrow, we once more returned by the lake to Ellis’s cabin.

Ere we reached it, the storm had increased almost to a gale, and the snow now falling rapidly, was drifting before it in blinding clouds.

Right glad were we to reach our shelter, and exchange our damp clothes for others kept in reserve for just such an occasion.

When supper was served and we were enjoying it, I fancied, and Ellis asserted that my appetite had improved wonderfully since morning; he was even commencing to philosophize as to the cause, when I reminded him of my partridge wing and bread, *minus* butter, at the shanty.

I even went farther, and committed the imprudence of informing him what I was thinking of, when he supposed I was looking for a deer, and cut short my reverie by his call to dinner.

Ellis had some sympathy akin to mine, for the unfortunate Indian, but O——, our other companion, had none.

“You needn’t preach to me about the tarnal redskins,” said he, “for didn’t that skulking rascal that hunted here a year ago, steal a buck saddle of mine what hung in the gap yonder; and didn’t he steal Bill Parris’s powder-horn too? Don’t talk to me on em, they’re a bad brood.”

So much for my sentiment in that quarter, and on that subject: there was no need of preaching any more, and I did not.

Supper over, we each employed ourselves as pleased us. Ellis and W—— were soon playing “pull and haul” from one side of the cabin to the other, by the medium of a rifle and its refractory cleaning rod, which no gentler persuasion could move one way or the other.

It came at last, however, by a dexterous jerk of Ellis’s, and with a corresponding movement in the opposite direction, W—— went, and some crockery went too, to say nothing of the rather severe concussion another individual received, whilst poring over

the pages of “Bleak House” by the dim light of a deer-tallow dip.

O——, who was inclined to be taciturn at times, sat in one corner of the room, quietly enjoying his pipe and W——’s overthrow.

We sat up late that night, for it was to be our last there, unless the storm should continue and detain us.

The wind made a great strife amidst the old trees that long wintry night, for they flung their huge arms about, and intertwined their long, giant fingers, till some were broken and disjointed, and came crashing to the ground.

How mournfully wailed the wind through the dense pines; how it whistled and soughed amidst the close and swaying spruces! Its voice brought to me memories of a long gone night at sea, when a noble ship, in which strong men trembled and frail women wept, bravely struggled and outlived the storm.

There were tones on the gale that night which the forest seemed to echo back in all their wildness of grief and terror.

“It was such a night as this,” said Ellis, “the wind made just such a mournful noise like, when Bill Parris went off. He was my nighest neighbor then—about four miles away west, towards Ragged lake. He took a bad cough, sugar makin time, and, though I guess he was a deal heavier than me, before September he

didn't weigh more than a spike-buck. Along towards winter, the doctor gin him up, and Bill kinder felt he wouldn't last long, and gan to get uneasy about his family; for he had a woman and two young gals. But somehow, he got all that fixed, and sold his clearin besides, and gin her the money, so arter he should be dead, she should go back to her folks down on the Black river. Bill sent over arter me one cold November mornin, for, as I said before, I was his nighest neighbor, and he wanted me to see him buried, for he said he wouldn't last the night. It was gloomy enough there, I tell you, and the way it came on to storm that night was a caution. There was a growth of heavy pine timber just behind the cabin; and when the wind came in gusts like through the trees, it sounded like uneasy spirits a groaning and sighing. Bill was very restive all the arternoon, and when it got dark, so he couldn't see plain, he had a dip lighted, and got his woman to read him a psalm out of the Bible.

"Once in a while he would groan, and kinder jump up and look wild, and say somethin to himself. I thought he was wanderin, but I don't think so now: for I heerd some one tell since, that know'd him, how he was rich once and his father lived down in Warren county, and he used to go to York sometimes. Bill must have seen better times some day, for he was smart and had considerable larnin. But let the dead

be: he was a good feller as ever lived, and I allers liked him. Well, as it got towards night, he grew worse, and he called the children to him, and gin them some advice, and then he told his woman what she must do; and after that, he made me promise to bury him under an old hemlock back of the house. It wasn't till nigh mornin that he died, and jest before, he asked his wife to turn him on his back. That brought on a coughin spell and a gush of blood: so that was the last of poor Bill.

"I came over home and got my boy to go and help dig the grave, and that arternoon we buried him under the old hemlock. We all brought over what we could of the truck and notions in the cabin, and left the rest for the new settler. The woman and her gals staid with us awhile, and then went off to the settlements down on the Black river. Poor Bill! we missed him a good deal, loggin that season, for he swung a powerful axe and was a right jovial feller when he was wel, and strong. But jest hear how the wind blows: it ain't often so here, the woods to the nor'-west is so thick."

It was a fitting time for such a tale, and we, almost strangers to the gloom and loneliness of the forest, could only fancy the awful solemnity of such a death scene.

The morning hours had come before we laid down

to take a short nap previous to our tramp; but the narrative of Ellis had put us in a wakeful mood, and we listened with interest to farther tales of excitement and wild adventure. Many were the stories they told us of daring encounters with bears and catamounts, and hair-breadth escapes of life and limb too, from the noble moose, which, wilder and fiercer than either of the others in close combat, was their choicest game. These, more shy in their habits than deer, have gone farther into the wilderness, amidst the recesses of the Adirondacks and the Raquette river, where we may at some future day strive to follow them.

With all our fondness for forest scenes and associations, and enjoying as we did the rough though exciting life of the hunter, we were sorry not to be able to spend a week longer in the woods.

We had tramped many miles, day after day, over swamps and hills, and through pathless forests, and when night came, we had slept none the less soundly because our couch was of hemlock twigs rather than feathers, and our shelter none the closest. Yet—

“Fresh we woke upon the morrow,
All our thoughts and words had scope;
We had health and we had hope,
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.”

XIV.

It is a dreary winter night, and the snow is falling fast, and drifting deep about the mansion at Briar-cliff. Yet within, all is glowing and cheerful, for every one is happy. Minnie and I are storm-bound for the night, so we make ourselves at home.

“Come Harry,” says Frank, “take the easy-chair and draw up to the fire; I want you to read a page or two from my journal that I kept during my last year’s travel. To-night is the anniversary of one I shall never forget. You have heard me speak of my college chum Larry G——, haven’t you?”

“Yes—he is living at the South, is he not; was he not a Virginian?”

“Why no, Harry! I thought I wrote you that I met him abroad: you are thinking of Travers, quite another person.”

“You are mistaken, Frank, you only wrote me one long letter whilst you were away; the rest were very unsatisfactory, I assure you. But I remember now that you were obliged to go somewhere South after your return; to convey bad news, I remember you