The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is a deep red color with a fine, woven texture. In the center, there is a gold-colored wreath made of leaves and flowers. Inside the wreath, the words "THE HOFLAND LIBRARY." are printed in a gold, serif, all-caps font. The text is arranged in three lines: "THE" on the top line, "HOFLAND" on the middle line, and "LIBRARY." on the bottom line. The wreath is positioned within a large, vertically oriented, arched frame that is embossed into the cover. This frame is surrounded by a decorative border of repeating scroll and floral motifs, also embossed into the cover. The overall design is classic and elegant.

THE
HOFLAND
LIBRARY.

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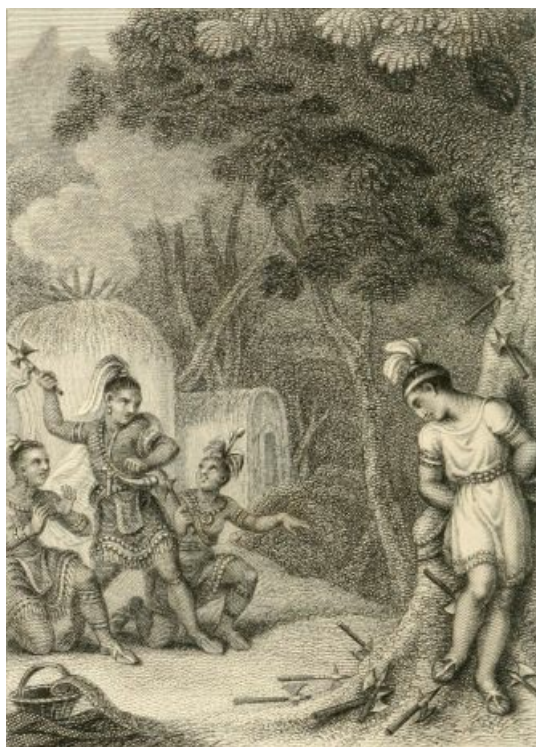
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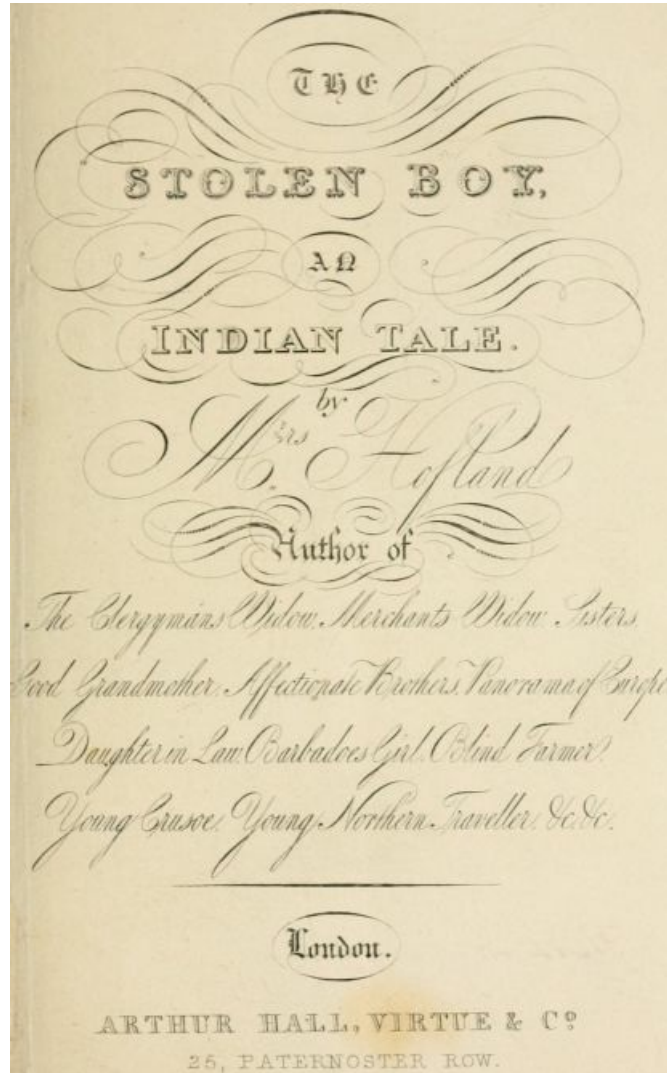
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THE STOLEN BOY.



"Until the eleventh struck into the calf of his leg."

Page 57.



THE STOLEN BOY.

A STORY,

FOUNDED ON FACTS.

BY MRS. HOFLAND,

AUTHOR OF

**THE CLERGYMAN'S WIDOW; YOUNG CRUSOE; BLIND FARMER; THE SISTERS;
BARBADOES GIRL; MERCHANT'S WIDOW; PANORAMA OF EUROPE; YOUNG
NORTHERN TRAVELLER; DAUGHTER-IN-LAW; AFFECTIONATE BROTHERS;
WILLIAM AND HIS UNCLE BEN; GOOD GRANDMOTHER; ELIZABETH AND HER
THREE BEGGAR BOYS; ALICIA AND HER AUNT; GODMOTHER'S TALES; &c., &c.**

**There might you have beheld one joy crown another so, and in
such a manner, that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them,
for their joy waded in tears.**

SHAKESPEARE.

New Edition.

LONDON:

ARTHUR HALL, VIRTUE AND CO.,

25, PATERNOSTER ROW.

TO THE READER.

The following Story, in its principal incidents, was published in the Juvenile Souvenir for 1828; but being necessarily curtailed so much as to exclude that development of mind in the subject of the tale, and those affecting circumstances which give deep interest to his long and extraordinary escape, it is now offered to the youthful public in a more finished state.

It is perhaps necessary to repeat, that the Story of the Stolen Boy is founded on facts, which were communicated to the writer by Mr. Parker, a gentleman now in this country, but who resided at Nachitoches at the period of the boy's return, where the circumstance created considerable sensation among all classes of the community who became acquainted with the extraordinary escape of the boy.

THE STOLEN BOY.



CHAPTER I.

"Dear, father, pray come and look at some of the strangest people that ever were seen, who are sitting opposite to the garden. They are not gipsies, such as we used to see in Spain, but yet they seem to be wanderers like them, and to live out of doors. They all look as grave as judges, and have very comical-looking clothes. Do pray come and see them."

Such was the entreaty addressed to Don Manuel del Perez by his son, a boy between eight and nine years of age, a few days after himself and family had arrived at the town of San Antonio, in the province of Texas, a country which joins Louisiana, on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Don Manuel's family consisted of an amiable wife (Donna Seraphina), the son we have already introduced, a daughter two years younger, and a babe of six months old.

Little Manuel was a sensible, active, lively boy, and being newly released from the confinement of a long voyage, beheld the new scene around him with great delight; but never had his dark eyes glistened with so much pleasure as now, or his inquiries on subjects of curiosity been made with so much interest. His kind father, therefore, did not hesitate to go out with him to see the objects of his attraction; and having done so, he replied thus, in answer to his inquiries:—"These people, my dear Manuel, are Indians, the descendants of the original inhabitants of America. Like those of other continents, they are divided into tribes or nations, none of whom are fond of European settlers, though some are friendly in appearance. These people are come to trade with us, and will, I doubt not, conduct themselves with great propriety. I perceive they are of the tribe of Choctaws, who, with another called Cadows, never come hither for any other than peaceable errands."

"And do they all go half naked, father, and paint themselves so strangely, like these poor creatures?"

"They all greatly resemble each other, and term themselves, aptly enough, 'red men,' as you see their skin is copper-colour. They are, as you must perceive, finely-formed athletic men, spare of flesh, in consequence of their temperance, but possessing much muscular strength, which results from their habits of exercise. Their countenances are indicative of deep thought, mingled with an expression of cunning and ferocity."

"As they looked so very grave, I took them to be good people, father, only ignorant. Do you take them to be so?"

"Indeed I do not, Manuel."

The poor boy, looking exceedingly disappointed at this short answer, which by no means accorded with the benevolent wishes of his warm little heart, Don Manuel soothed him by adding—"My dear, though I am not partial to the Indians, many people are, and I dare say there are persons in San Antonio who can give you many instances of their good properties. It is certain they are very hospitable, for they will suffer no stranger to enter their abode, without relieving his wants; and even if he is of a white nation with whom they are at war, they will treat him with kindness, and conduct him in safety beyond their own precincts. And although they consider us (with great justice) as intruders on their land, yet when they sell any portion of it, they rigidly adhere to their bargain, and depart altogether to a proper distance. In their less important concerns, they are not less punctual; and if they agree to bring a certain quantity of skins (which are the principal produce with which they supply us), we may always depend upon them, even if we had paid them beforehand, in the spirits, arms, and blankets, they require from us."

"Then surely they are very honest, good people?" said Manuel, eagerly.

"These qualities are very good, certainly, my dear, and cannot be too much praised; but there are other points about them, that more than counterbalance their virtues. They are so revengeful, as to be never known to forgive an injury, even though it was inflicted on a distant relation, and could have nothing to do with their personal feelings. They are so bigoted to their former opinions and customs, as to resist all improvement, thereby rendering the gift of reason useless; and, what is far worse, they are so cruel, and they destroy prisoners of war by the most horrible torments, a conduct, of all others, most repellant to our ideas of justice, which teaches all men to respect that valour in another, which he is proud of in himself."

"That is very wicked, certainly—do these Choctaws do this?"

"All the Indian nations do it, the Choctaws among the rest. The Alonquas are, however, much worse than these, for they

are cannibals, which even the Indians consider to be hateful. The Cumanches are a nation scarcely less dreaded, for although they do not eat their victims, they sacrifice more than other tribes do, since they not only frequently torture their prisoners of war, but those unhappy people whom they seize in their robbing expeditions, which are frequent. These people are remarkable for always travelling on horseback, and their appearance, even at a considerable distance, never fails to inspire terror in our settlements, as it is well known that they are in quest of plunder, and will stop at no means to attain it. They frequently take away a great number of mules and horses, and never fail to murder their owners, unless they reserve them for more cruel sport at their own residence."

Manuel looked very grave whilst Don Manuel spoke, but as he was not told that these terrific tribes ever visited San Antonio, their enormities of conduct soon vanished from his mind; and being permitted to cultivate an acquaintance with the Choctaws, he soon became amused and interested, in the greatest degree, with every thing concerning them.

Like most lively children of an enterprising temper, he was delighted with their power of throwing the hatchet, shooting with bows and arrows, tracing the woods through impervious paths, and enduring pain and hunger without complaint; and he soon learnt so to practise these accomplishments, as greatly to surprise his mother and sister, the latter of whom was charmed to see him dressed in a coronet of feathers, and a pair of mocassins. In the course of their intercourse, he also picked up a good deal of their language; for being much struck with the attitude and delivery of one of their orators, he could not help earnestly desiring to know what he was saying, and never rested till he had so far attained it, as to comprehend all their common forms of speech, and their names of those things amongst them in general use.

When the Choctaw tribe had finished their bargains, had received their rum, brandy, guns, beads, and blankets, they returned to their own distant settlements, but not before many of their wisest and gravest chiefs had exhibited that terrible propensity to drunkenness, which is such a remarkable trait in their characters. Manuel was much shocked at this degradation, and for some time ceased to praise them as he was wont, or to display the feats of activity they had taught him; and the circumstance of his father's purchasing a large house at a little distance from the town, and the pleasure and trouble of removing thither, soon occupied his mind so much, that he nearly forgot his old friends the "Silver Fox" and the "Black Bear," and began, as little Inez, his sister, told him, "to find himself very happy with his own family, even though they wore decent clothes, eat good dinners, washed their faces in pure water, and prayed to God, as good Christians, both night and morning."

CHAPTER II.

Don Manuel had suffered his son to mix much with the Indians, from a persuasion that the love of exercise they were likely to inspire, could hardly fail to be beneficial to a Spanish boy, being well aware that his nation are (generally speaking) much too indolent; and being a sensible, well-informed man, calculated for residing in any country, and learning what was most valuable in each, he wished to render his son alike fitted to become a citizen of the world. He was not, however, sorry to see that the boy returned to his usual avocations with pleasure, and he determined that when he had passed his ninth birthday, he should enter on a more regular course of study than had hitherto been required from him, the course of his education having unavoidably been interrupted by the voyage to America, and the unsettled state of the family before they could procure a permanent abode.

The birthday of their eldest son was fixed upon, by his affectionate parents, as a proper time for giving a suitable entertainment to the principal inhabitants of San Antonio; and accordingly his entrance into his tenth year was celebrated with the united luxuries of the old world and the new; and for the day, Manuel was treated with much consideration as well as affection. He had a handsome new dress for the occasion, and among other presents, he received, from one of the guests, a very beautiful galloway, suited for his age and size; and as he had learned to ride, it will readily be conceived that nothing could exceed the pleasure he promised himself with this pretty animal, which had been properly broken in for him, and on which he mounted in the presence of his mother, and the ladies of her party. The address with which he managed his steed, the grace of his motions, and the firmness and agility he displayed, excited the admiration of every one; and the heart of the fond mother beat high in her bosom, as she inwardly predicted the future greatness of her beloved boy; whilst her young daughter, not less happy, bounded round her brother, extolling all he did to the skies, and allowing (for the first time) that even the Choctaws had improved him in some things; "for though they did not teach him to ride, yet they did teach him to shoot, and he could now do both, at the same time, most surprisingly."

All pleasure, as well as pains, must have an end; and poor Manuel, in despite of his temporary greatness, at length sunk into such deep repose, that it encroached considerably on the following day; but his parents would not allow him to be disturbed, because he had never been up so late before. In consequence, when other persons were inclined to take their siesta after dinner, Manuel was quite upon the alert, and instead of going to sleep, determined to pay a visit to his pretty horse, and perhaps take a short ride with the groom. Accordingly, having received a nod of approbation from his father, he went up to the stables, which lay at some distance from the house, and finding there Diego, a favourite servant, who had accompanied the family from Spain, he began immediately to beg he would saddle the new favourite for him, and accompany him a little distance.

Diego readily promised to fulfil his wishes, but observed, "that he must, in the first place, put the finishing stroke to what he was about, which was cleaning a very fine mare of his master's, which had been out that morning."

To this, of course, the boy made no objection, and he continued to caress his own pet, and feed him with the best food in the stable, whilst the man pursued his task.

In a moment both were astonished by a loud outcry, of a nature which was utterly incomprehensible to them, since it neither resembled the roaring of wild beasts, nor the voices of human beings; it was wild, terrible, and wonderful—advanced nearer every moment—and was soon heard in conjunction with the sound of horses' feet. When this sound struck on the servant's ear, he exclaimed—"This must be the Cumanches—fly, my dear young master, fly to the house this moment!"

But all flight was impossible—even whilst he spoke, the stable was entered by a whole troop of terrible-looking Indians. Diego was seized on the instant, and hurried out by two of them; and although Manuel instinctively crept under the animal he was caressing, he, too, was presently seen, and felt a strong arm dragging him from his hiding-place. All resistance appeared vain, and only likely to produce instant death; but Manuel for some moments called on his father, in a loud shrieking voice, and afterwards knelt and held up his hands in supplication to the ferocious savage who stood nearest him. Alas! both were in vain; his father at that moment slept, unconscious of all danger; and the only sensation produced in the breast of the savage by his entreaties, was that of contempt; nevertheless, as he perceived that he was a handsome, well-grown boy, and from the situation in which he found him, likely to be conversant with the management of horses, and was, more-over, richly dressed, he determined on taking him with them, in preference to stifling his cries by killing him on the spot.

In a few moments the poor little boy was dragged out, placed on a tall horse, and held there with an irresistible arm, by the strong Indian, whose particular prize he was made. The horses and mules were all taken out, save one deemed too old to be useful, and each of them being secured by a noose, was led off by one or other of the Indians, poor Diego being bound fast to one of them, and led off with the rest. Whilst this was doing, hope revived in the breast of Manuel, and, despite of his situation in the gripe of the barbarian, he shouted aloud, though Diego called on him to desist, as he expected every moment to see him murdered in consequence. The poor boy knew that there were plenty of fire-arms in the house, and many hands that would rush to his assistance, and the dear home which he then beheld with his eyes, he hoped could be reached with his tongue; and in the frantic agony of the moment, it is certain that his shrieks could have reached the ears of the family, they were so loud and piercing, had they not been exhausted by the fatigues of the preceding day.

All this was but the work of a few moments, and Manuel soon found himself riding at a prodigious rate, in a direction he had never gone before; and being sensible that he might scream himself to death to no purpose, he ceased, and tried to comfort himself with the hope that they would shortly be pursued by his father and the servants. As his enslaver kept at the head of the troop, he was many times deceived with false hopes, when he heard the trampling of horses near him; and at one time, so sanguine were his expectations, that he called out—"Courage, Diego! they are following us; we shall soon be rescued."

"I can see, master, though you can't," answered the afflicted man, "and I perceive no help of any kind. Besides, how can they pursue us to good purpose, when there is not a single creature left for them to ride on?"

This melancholy recollection had not once occurred to the mind of the boy, who had hitherto buoyed himself up with the hope that his father would follow at the head of his friends and servants, whose guns and pistols he almost instantly expected to hear, thinking such sounds would be the sweetest in the world to him, and being willing to be wounded, and almost killed, so he might escape from the Indians. When, however, he recollected that indeed all the horses were gone, that his father would be obliged to send for others from San Antonio, and that the time which would elapse, rendered it utterly improbable that he could overtake them before their arrival in those interminable forests towards which they were directing their flight, his heart sank into despair, and he wept in bitter anguish for several hours.

The Indians, on entering the woods, slackened their pace, and rode on in silence, threading their way through the dark labyrinth of tall trees, with a precision and ability which, under other circumstances, would have recalled to the mind of Manuel his admiration of his old friends, the Choctaws; but he was much too unhappy to notice any external circumstance. Often had he wished to penetrate these sublime forests, to see those stately trees which rise higher than the towers of cathedrals, and whose branches are frequently adorned by beautiful flowers, at the same time that their trunks are entwined by other flowers, of the most dazzling colours and beautiful forms, presenting altogether an assemblage of the richest stores of nature. To him, these things were at this moment totally disregarded, for every moment that bore him further from his beloved parents and home was a new cause for sorrow, and every faculty of his mind and his memory was absorbed in the sorrow of his heart. Even the terror which rested on the future, as far as regarded his personal safety, was, for the present, suspended, and grief for the loss of his beloved parents filled his bosom, to the exclusion of every other regret.

CHAPTER III.

About midnight the whole party emerged from different paths, as it appeared, into an open glade, of considerable extent, through which a clear rivulet wound its way in a wavy line, the banks of which were covered with fine soft grass of the purest emerald hue. The moon was at this time high in the blue heavens, and the rays reflected in the stream, as it rippled over a bed of white pebbles, were so brilliant, that for a moment they roused the languid spirits of poor Manuel. He cast his eyes upwards, and said—"Surely there is a God in that beautiful heaven, who looks down on this earth, for it is very beautiful too, and he will take pity on me, and deliver me some time."

The Indians tied their horses to trees, and their prisoners also, in such a manner that the former could obtain food, but to the latter they did not offer any; neither were they observed to take any thing themselves, notwithstanding the many hours in which they must have been without, and the great fatigue they had encountered. Diego lamented this privation exceedingly, and dwelt pathetically on the comforts his supper was wont to afford him; but his wants were at this time not equally felt by Manuel, for his sorrow had completely taken away his appetite, and notwithstanding his extreme fatigue, his mind was actively employed in weighing the possibility of escape, whilst the Indians lay asleep around them. His ideas were revealed to Diego, who was not less alive to the subject; but they both soon perceived (with that dismay which can only be justly estimated by those who have suffered similar misfortunes) that although their ligaments did not appear strong, they were so ingeniously contrived, that it was impossible to unbind them, and also, that they were actually fastened to an Indian, whom on arising, they would inevitably awake. This discovery, of course, plunged them still deeper into affliction; and the night was spent by each in fruitless lamentations, which were, in one sense, solitary ones also, since they were at a considerable distance from each other; and this proof of the ability of the Indians led them to suspect that they might understand as much of their language as would render conversation unsafe; and the only consolation left to the unhappy prisoners was thus denied them.

Diego did, however, venture to hint to Manuel, that it would be advisable for him by no means to let the savages understand he had learnt any of their language from the Choctaws, as he observed—"That if he appeared to gain it from them, it would give them an idea of his extraordinary quickness, which would not fail to render them kind to him, and that during the time when he was supposed to be entirely ignorant of it, they would converse freely before him, and he might learn what they intended to do with their prisoners."

This advice proved to be very good, as it afterwards answered both these purposes. If it had not been given, poor Manuel would have acted precisely in a contrary manner, as it was his intention to beg the chief to release him, and restore him to his parents, in his own tongue, which he hoped would have a greater effect upon him than his supplications hitherto, and for that purpose he had been trying to recollect every word which could be supposed to move him. He now abandoned this idea, and determined to observe Diego's suggestions, remembering that the Indians were little likely to forego their intentions from any entreaties of his, as all he had learnt from their own people, or others, induced him to consider them inflexible: he was also persuaded, that his father would pursue them even to the Red River, on the banks of which he knew there were many settlers; and therefore, if they could gain time, they would eventually be restored to San Antonio.

The Indians, after a few hours' slumber, started up with celerity, liberated their horses and their prisoners, and after mounting and securing them as before, resumed their journey. It continued for about two hours longer, in the same woody kind of country, but after that, was continued over an immense plain, great part of which was exceeding swampy, and, of course, bad for the horses.

Diego observed—"That no European could have passed it with safety, nor indeed any other creature than an Indian, who, he firmly believed, was endued with more senses than his fellow-mortals, and therefore, in his opinion, akin to the devil."

When Manuel was enabled in any measure to overcome the severe grief which at this period might be said to bow him to the earth, he was more happy than his fellow-sufferer, in not thinking so ill of the persons by whom they were taken as he did. In fact, within a few months, Manuel had loved the Indians with enthusiasm, entered into their pursuits with pleasure, studied and extolled their virtues, excused their faults, and even fancied that he should enjoy their manner of living; so that it appeared possible, that if he were not destined for slaughter, he might exist amongst them happily enough. Far different was it with poor Diego; he was more than thirty years of age, his habits were all confirmed, and it had been no small trial for him to leave Europe at all, though his affection for his master had led him to a country which

he considered uncivilized at the best—of course, the prospect before him was doubly appalling; and although he bore it like a man, and a Christian also, by lifting up his heart to God, and praying for resignation, yet his spirits were depressed with the deepest sorrow, and he would have been thankful for relief, even by the hands of death. He had heard of the cruelty of the Indians to their prisoners; and they never turned their eyes upon him but he expected they were about to scalp him; and it might be truly said—

"He died a thousand deaths in fearing one."

About noon, the party again entered a mighty forest, to the great relief of poor Manuel, who had long suffered from the heat, and whose galled and wearied limbs, when at length they alighted, refused to sustain him when he was taken from the horse, so that he fell as if dead on the roots of a huge tree, beneath which the party were assembling. On seeing this, his new master gave him some water from a calabash, which was extremely refreshing to him, and afterwards some maize so prepared as to answer the purpose of bread, together with a small strip of dried venison. When the poor boy put it to his lips, he thought he could not swallow it, but when the first mouthful was gone, he found his appetite return to voraciousness, and he eagerly ate all that had been given to him. After this he dropped asleep, almost instantly, and doubtless continued unconscious of any thing many hours, since he was lifted upon the horse, and had travelled a long way, without being aware of his removal.

In two days afterwards, the troop arrived at the banks of a considerable river, where the wives and children of the party were waiting for them, furnished with plenty of provisions, which were now exceedingly wanted, also with canoes, by which they crossed the river.

After passing this boundary, their watchfulness over their prisoners greatly relaxed, being evidently unnecessary, since it was plain they had no chance for returning. Every thing now conspired to shew them that there was indeed a great gulf placed between them and the world behind them. All vestiges of civilized life had been lost to them nearly ever since they were carried away, and woods, almost equally impervious with the stream, to any but Indian feet, shut them out from all intercourse with their countrymen. They were surrounded by a new race of beings, who held them as enemies, though they had never offended them, and who, probably, only preserved them in order to make them a future sacrifice, and to whose imperious will they must in the mean time stoop, in the same slavery to which, it is true, they had seen many fellow-men (the negroes) devoted, but had never till now conceived that they could bend themselves.

Three days more elapsed before they reached the town, or settlement, of this Indian tribe; it lay on the banks of a stream which feeds the Red River (or Nachitoches), which, after passing through a great extent of country, scarcely known (even to the enterprising inhabitants of the United States), falls into the Mississippi in Louisiana. Here they were met by all the inhabitants, who came forth from their wigwams, or huts, to congratulate them on their safe return, and the success of their expedition, in which a valuable booty had been secured, without the loss of a single Indian. Manuel perceived that his master, who was called Tustanuggi, was held in high respect; but yet he learned that he was only a kind of second chief, the first being out with a troop of warriors, who were engaged in warfare against the nation of Alonquas.

Tustanuggi took Manuel to his hut, whilst another Indian made signs to Diego to follow *him*. This destination wrung the poor boy to the heart; he had no comfort on the face of the earth, but that of being near the faithful servant whom he had known from his cradle, and whom he well knew was willing to die in his behalf. Rushing forward, despite of his terrors, he threw himself into Diego's arms, clung round him, and sobbed on his bosom, in all that agony of sorrow and affection natural to his age and his situation.

On seeing this, one of the old Indians drew the young boys around, who were nearest the age of Manuel, and pointing out to them the weakness of this Christian youth, earnestly exhorted them never to give way to such weakness, especially before their enemies. He condemned tears, as a folly which belonged exclusively to women, and told them "the sons of their father should spurn it, as the proof of cowardice, and the companion of guilt." When the weeping boy heard this, he tried to wipe his eyes and look manful; but the grief of his heart was so great, it admitted not of control; he felt that he was torn from his last friend, for Diego was mother, sister, father, and friend, to him who was henceforward to be utterly desolate. His bitter sobs would have awakened compassion in the heart of any human being, save an Indian; but they are taught from infancy to quell all the natural feelings of the heart, and to despise that in which they disdain to sympathize.

Manuel was at length torn from Diego's bosom, but not before he had whispered to him an assurance of his love and watchfulness, and an exhortation "to attend to the words of all the Indians whom he should hear speaking of them."

Exhausted by the passion of sorrow he had undergone, Manuel now entered the wigwam of his enslaver, and after a short time, cast round his eyes to recognise his future situation. The wife of Tustanuggi was a woman apparently turned of thirty, and might be called a good-looking squaw; she was named Moscogi. They had two children, the eldest a boy about a year older than Manuel, the other a female child under two years; all were in the hut, and appeared anxious to pay all possible attention to the master of it, who received every mark of honour and affection in silence, neither encouraging their freedom, nor returning their caresses.

It is well known that the Spaniards are a proud people, of stately manners, and little given to that lively intercourse among strangers to which the French and other countries are subject. Within their own families this formality is entirely dispensed with, and there is a deep-seated affection towards those to whom they are attached by domestic ties, of the warmest description, and which displays itself by a thousand trifling attentions, indicative of what is passing in their hearts. When, therefore, Manuel perceived the coldness Tustanuggi displayed towards his own wife and children, after he had been so long divided from them (for Moscogi had not been one of the wives who attended on the river to forward their views), he could not help thinking, that to him he would be more severe than he had apprehended, and that his future life was devoted to a hard-hearted master, whom no submission could move, no service could soften.

This surmise did not appear to be well founded; Tustanuggi demanded nothing more than it was easy to perform, and when a failure took place, he resorted to no mode of punishment beyond quiet reproof. His wife partook his manners; she displayed none of that pity towards the captive, which his too frequent tears and evident suffering might have awakened; neither was she petulant or exacting in her manners. Silent and collected, with a pensive aspect, but unrepining temper, she performed her allotted task in the management of her household, and seemed to find her reward in the smiles and caresses of her little girl; for the boy, although he obeyed her commands, appeared to have little affection for her person.

Often did Manuel look towards this boy, as if he hoped to find in him a friend and playmate, for so we find, in general, all children of the same age do look towards each other, whatever may be the difference of their country, their situation in life, or their education; for nature alike inclines them to play and to friendship. But his efforts towards conciliating the good will of this young Indian were fruitless; he felt, in the glances of his keen black eye, that he was a despised creature, whom the little savage would have delighted to destroy; and he learnt, by several questions put to his mother, that Manuel was expected by and by to form a subject of sport for the boys, who hoped they might be permitted to torture him to death. On hearing this, Manuel listened, it may be supposed, with terrible interest to every thing that was said, and became anxious to the greatest degree to recal every word he had obtained from the Choctaws.

The second night spent in the wigwam was disturbed by the loud shrieks of the infant, who was seized with some internal disorder, for which the mother appeared to have no remedy, and which evidently awoke all her feelings as such. Manuel had frequently looked at this child with great interest, for he felt that she could not be his enemy; and besides, he was a boy of a truly compassionate disposition towards every one; so that it was natural he should rise eagerly and offer his assistance, though he knew not in what way to be useful.

They had not hitherto taken his clothes from him, and in taking them up in the dark, he got hold the wrong way, in consequence of which, a few little sugared balls, of the nature of peppermint-drops, which had got into the crevices of his pockets, rolled out on the floor. He well remembered that they were given to him on his birthday, but he did not know that there were any left, and he gathered them up very eagerly, thinking that their sweetness would render them pleasant to the child, to whom he carried them immediately, using the most affectionate gestures he could, to induce her to take them. The father had by this time struck a light, and with much less apathy than usual, gazed upon his child, and suggested means for its relief, which, however, did not appear in the least availing. Very soon, however, after the little sufferer had swallowed the comfits given her by Manuel, a great change took place, for the disorder probably proceeding from flatulence, the peppermint was extremely good for it, by expelling the wind. In a short time those alarming shrieks (so rarely heard in an Indian cottage) had ceased, her eyes again shone brightly, her labouring chest ceased to heave, and, as if sensible to whom she owed her restoration, she held out her arms to Manuel, who, taking her fondly to his bosom, lay down with her, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing her fast asleep and perfectly restored.

This amendment, which appeared almost miraculous in the eyes of the squaw, as might be supposed, was very valuable to Manuel, not only by disposing the hearts of the family favourably to him, but by inspiring the idea that he was become exceedingly attached to them. They had no idea of the existence of a principle of humanity like that which really affected his mind, because with them no general virtue or affection can be said to exist, such feelings never passing the bounds of family or country. To these they are firmly, inviolably attached; what they want in vividness and acuteness, they make up

in depth and perseverance; but never have the divine doctrines of forgiveness of enemies, universal love of their fellow-creatures, or pity for their misfortunes, been inculcated amongst them.

On the following morning, Tustanuggi convened a meeting of the chiefs and fathers of the settlement, which consisted of nearly three hundred huts, and afforded about thirty men of importance. To this meeting he took Manuel, and having placed him before them, declared "his intention of henceforth establishing him in his own household," in consequence of the talent which he protested he possessed of relieving sickness, and also in the belief of his management of horses, whom, in like manner, he expected him to cure.

Manuel heard this in silence, and with as much composure as he could assume; but his consciousness of total ignorance on those points, and his knowledge that not a single comfit remained now in his clothing, and of course that he had no power of cure in any future occurrence of the same nature as that of the preceding night, rendered him very unhappy. Earnestly did he desire to explain his situation, but the remembrance of Diego's advice had weight with him, and he studied to repress all emotion, even when the most aged man in the circle thus replied to his master—

"Son, thou hast spoken well; the Great Spirit hath doubtless sent this child amongst us, to preserve our children and our horses; see thou to him, that he become a man amongst men, and learn the usages of a true son of the Cumanches. The other Spaniard whom thou broughtest shall await the day when the warriors return; then shall he be brought to the feast, and the fire, and die with the enemies of the nation."

Every one present applauded this sentence of the aged chief, and in their self-gratulations observed not the situation of poor Manuel, whose blood was frozen with horror, when he thought on the fate which threatened his faithful Diego, whom, he apprehended, remained a prisoner in the house to which he had been taken, since he had never seen him since the time of their arrival.

CHAPTER IV.

When Tustanuggi returned home, he presented Manuel to Moscogi, his wife, and Uswega, his son, as one "who was henceforth to share their table and their home, not as a slave, but a son," information received by the squaw with evident pleasure, but by the son with disappointment, although, in common with all Indian sons, he revered his father too much to express his dissent, obedience being one of the chief virtues of these people.

The master of the house then proceeded, with an air of great solemnity, to strip off Manuel's clothes entirely, and rub his body completely with some kind of greasy mixture, which was in the first place extremely disagreeable, but was certainly necessary to guard his body from the musquitos and other flies, if for the rest of his life he was to go nearly naked, like the people by whom he was surrounded. He next put mocassins on his feet, a calico shirt over his shoulders, and a silver fillet round his head, and completed his dress by bracelets and armlets, having first cut his hair in the usual fashion of the tribe.

When Uswega beheld him thus metamorphosed, though he had seen the process sullenly, he yet condescended to shew him how to hold his spear, and proposed taking him to join the boys of the town, who, at his age, learnt to throw the hatchet, or use the bow and arrow.

To this the father made no objection, farther than to say, that on the morrow the son of the pale man must begin his duties of attending the horses, an employment he must share with the other captive, until the return of the warriors. Manuel was glad to hear he should so soon see his fellow-sufferer, but yet he dreaded answering the questions he would naturally ask; and again he spent a sleepless, ruminating night.

To his great relief, when on the morrow he met Diego, the poor man saw only, in the improved condition of his young master, reason to hope the same consideration would be extended to himself. This conclusion he had the greater right to make, because he knew himself to be a valuable groom, and that he had been of great use to several of the horses they had stolen from his master, and which, he observed, "it was quite natural he should have a regard for, wherever they might happen to be." He told Manuel every thing respecting the management of these noble animals, likely to be of use to him in his future occupation, repeatedly adding, "and it will be a strange thing indeed, if after a time, you and I being well mounted, and having well trained our horses, cannot make our escape, either to the Red River, at the time when some trading vessels are upon it, or to the Christian town of Nachitoches, to which it will be our guide."

Every time they met (which was now twice a-day), the instructions were repeated, and the hopes expressed: but though Manuel heard the first with due attention, the second frequently banished them from his mind, since they inevitably led him to the dreadful recollection of that fate which awaited poor Diego, and which was now frequently adverted to at home by Uswega, as an approaching festival. At these moments, his eyes would fill with tears, and he would try to throw himself into Diego's arms, that he might hide the anguish of his heart, whilst he gratified its impulse of affection; and scarcely did he know whether it was right to tell the poor man, in order to give him the means of seeking to escape or to die, or to preserve a silence, which saved him from a contemplation of the most appalling and heart-rending nature.

One day, a large party of Indians set out to hunt in the woods, and having observed that Diego was in every thing he did expert and courageous, they took him with them, ordering Uswega, Manuel, and a few other boys, to follow, for the purpose of collecting game, these children being quick of eye and swift of foot. The scene was entirely new to our Spanish boy, and with the hilarity natural to his age, he soon forgot his sorrows, and eagerly joined in the sport, feeling, for the first time, that it would be possible to him to live happy in that wild state, whilst actively employed, although he was miserable when in a state of indolence. During their excursion he saw several wild beasts, which were chased and killed with an amazing dexterity by the naked Indians, at the very moment of their becoming in the utmost danger; and he knew not how to admire sufficiently their presence of mind, the management of their weapons, and the acuteness of their perceptions; and he again thought they were a wonderful people. He had always had a great taste for natural history, as many children have, and had been permitted by his father to have a little aviary in the garden, in which he was making a collection of birds, at the time of his misfortune. He now saw innumerable birds, of form and plumage such as he had formed no idea of, and particularly the condor eagle, the vulture, and the wild turkey, contrasted with innumerable small and exquisitely beautiful birds, blue, green, and crimson, which darted like living gems from tree to tree, their own vivid hues catching the slanting beams of the sun as they penetrated the forest. These objects he might have noticed during his journey, but his mind was then sunk in all the stupor which follows a sudden and terrible misfortune; he was now to a certain degree recovered, and being at that happy season of life "when the tear is forgot as soon as shed," he became

capable of receiving at least a transitory pleasure, from the novelty of every thing around him.

Alas! poor Manuel's pleasure was indeed transitory; whilst gazing on an immense group of parroquets, who seemed to have taken possession of a beautiful flowering plant, and looked like moving foliage themselves, he was startled by a loud cry of pain and terror, and the voice that uttered it was doubtless Diego's.

Manuel hastened to the spot where several Indians were standing, and amongst them lay the unfortunate Spaniard, who had been bitten in the hand by a rattlesnake, as he was searching for a bird that had been shot by one of the company. The reptile had been instantly killed, but no attention whatever was paid to the wounded man, which not only distressed, but surprised Manuel exceedingly, as he had repeatedly heard that these people possessed a cure for the bite of this dreadful animal. In this distress he forgot his caution, and addressed every word in his power to use (as taught him by the Choctaws), first to one and then to another of the Indians, imploring them to assist Diego; but they either heard him in perfect silence, or commanded him "not to trouble them, seeing his friend was dying."

Meantime, Diego, in the agony of pain, earnestly besought the boy to cease his lamentations, and assist him by his prayers, seeing that he had not an hour to live.—"Pray for me, my dear Manuel," said he, "for, alas! I have no minister of religion to comfort me at this awful moment; and when I am gone, pray for yourself to that gracious God who can guard you in an Indian hut, as well as in your father's house. Oh! I have been much to blame, that when I gave you instructions how to manage your horses, I did not tell you also to hold fast your religion, to pray night and morning to your blessed Saviour; promise me that you will—it is the only comfort you can give me."

Poor Manuel, almost choked with grief, promised this, and began to repeat aloud his own evening prayer; but the increasing pangs of poor Diego rendered *him* unable to do more than cry fervently on Heaven for help, mingling with petitions for his soul, prayers for the deliverance of Manuel, who continued to kneel by him and kiss him, till the last awful moment was passed, and his bloated, disfigured corpse lay before him outstretched in the silence of death.

And thus he was compelled to leave it, for he had neither implements wherewith to dig a grave, nor strength to drag it into any recess. He wished he could have covered it, if only with leaves, but as he was called upon by his master, all he was able to do was to take off the cloak of Diego, and fasten it over the face, which he effected as quickly as possible. In doing this he found a small book, which he took, it being the only property their enslavers had left in his pocket, as being to them useless.

It will be readily conceived by my dear young readers, how deeply Manuel lamented the loss of this his only friend. Indeed, so lively was his sorrow, that, to a certain degree, his Indian friends sympathized with him; and Moscogi in particular lamented his loss, and shewed him considerable pity. One word, however, of her hard-hearted son consoled him for his present loss, much more than any circumstance beside could possibly have done. The young barbarian lamented "that he was lost in the woods, because he would not now afford them the opportunity of torturing him to death;" and as Diego was a fine athletic man, the young savage observed, "that it would be a great chance if any prisoner was brought in, capable of living so long under the torments they had intended to inflict upon him."

When therefore Manuel next fulfilled his promise, by offering up his prayers, most devoutly did he thank the all-wise Disposer that his faithful servant had been removed, by a death, which, though painful, was only so for a short time, and which, in being accidental, was infinitely preferable to that of murder and torture, which was prepared for him.

In the act of lifting up his feeble voice and throbbing heart to God, the poor boy found present comfort; and who shall dare to say that "still small voice" was not heard and answered by Him "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain?"

CHAPTER V.

If such were the just conclusions of Manuel, whilst the day of sin and sorrow was at a distance, much more decidedly did they soon become so. About a fortnight after the death of Diego, the long-absent warriors returned from a far-distant expedition, in which it was not doubted but they had suffered great loss, although it was hoped, from their long-trying valour, that eventual victory had crowned their expedition. The conjectures proved just—it was a most striking scene, when, on their first appearance, the whole population of the settlement turned out to meet them; wives and children pressing forward to find their husbands and fathers, or to ascertain the loss they trembled to learn. At this awful moment, the wisdom they affect, and the apathy they usually exhibit, all gave way before the dictates of nature, and mothers clamorously demanded their sons, wives sought eagerly for their husbands, and men demanded their friends and brothers.

When the result of the battle was known, the howlings and lamentations that followed were absolutely astonishing; it appeared as if these people, usually so firm and unmoved, had treasured up every warmer feeling, that they might give them vent at one eventful moment, or as if grief had suddenly rendered them frantic. The air resounded with their cries—the most dolorous eloquence burst from their lips; and although the women expressed their sorrow the most vehemently, the men joined them in the strongest demonstrations of it; and the whole settlement seemed moved as by one heart, and afflicted as by one sorrow. Manuel stood amongst them as the only stranger, but such was his compassionate nature, that he could not behold their affliction without in a degree sharing it; and often did he recollect, that he too had lost not only a friend, but parents, country, and home.

In the course of less than two hours, the principal warrior proclaimed his success, and exhibited eleven prisoners, who were the trophies of his victory: on this being known, the whole settlement passed in a moment from this expression of uncontrollable grief to the wildest signs of joy. They shouted in exultation, pressed round the prisoners, and demanded that they should be given to them, and hastily began to arrange the means of making a feast, and of torturing the prisoners—two circumstances which always accompanied each other.

Before this important affair was settled, seven of the women, whose husbands had been killed during the late affray, stepped forward, and claimed the right of choosing each a partner from the prisoners, that he might hunt for her and her children. This right was acknowledged by the aged men who presided over the assembly; and accordingly seven of the unhappy men condemned, though innocent, to suffer the most dreadful death, were led by the squaws to their own wigwams, and four only were left to glut the cruelty of the savages. The moment poor Manuel saw these victims led towards stakes, which some of the party were placing in the ground, he fled towards the place where the horses were sheltered, and mounting one of those committed to his care, rode out, as was his usual custom, towards the watering-place. By doing this, as if it were a duty he ought not to omit, he escaped the derision of Uswega, as well as the sight of barbarities it froze his blood to think upon: and when he returned, finding no one in the hut but the young child, he remained to take care of it, and in doing so, gained the praises of the mother.

Manuel thought himself happy in thus escaping the horrible scene; but, alas! he could not escape the recital with which his young companion thought proper to oblige him; and such was its effect upon his spirits, that all the grief which he had lately appeared to have conquered, returned upon him; his appetite forsook him; his sleep was disturbed by terrible dreams, in which he beheld Diego under those sufferings which had been intended for him. Sometimes he would cry out—"Oh, do not tear out his tongue!—let him speak to me once!—do not mangle him with those hot pincers!" and so much was his mind impressed by the horrible accounts he had received, that all the family were convinced he had witnessed them, and gave strict orders that he should never go nigh any prisoners again—an order which he had repeatedly reason to rejoice in having received.

Most of the Indian tribes live by hunting, and this settlement of the Cumanches cultivated only a small portion of maize, which was managed by the women entirely, who although great slaves to their husbands, were not so ingenious or industrious as many of the women are in less ferocious tribes. Moscogi was, perhaps, the cleverest woman in the settlement, and under her teaching, Manuel soon became expert in forming straw mats, and weaving baskets, at such times as he was not employed with the horses; but as his care of them (young as he was) had hitherto given great satisfaction to Tustanuggi, he had not much time for in-door employments. Happy was he to get a single half-hour to himself, in which to read the little book he had found in Diego's pocket, and which was entitled "The History of Saint Theresa." Perhaps had Manuel been at home, he would never have looked at it, as being too serious for his age, but now,

as the only book he had, it was inestimable in his eyes; and he read it over and over again with avidity, often thinking that the good woman whose life was recorded, was more happy in her state of suffering than if she had fallen into the hands of the Indians; for he would say—"She suffered for her religion, and set a glorious example to all the world; but here people are tormented for no fault, and die to no end—they are lost in the wilderness, and no one knows what is become of them.—Yes," he would add, "thou, Almighty Father, seest them, and either in this world or another, thou wilt assuredly relieve them: I will never cease to pray to thee, and hope in thee; and though I am but a poor, lost child, perhaps thou wilt have mercy on me, and release me."

With such pious aspirations as these, the poor boy frequently comforted himself, and by degrees he became so habituated to his mode of life, that he appeared to those around him well satisfied with it, especially as he grew fast, and looked remarkably well. The maize, prepared by long boiling into a species of food called hominy, agreed well with him; and when to this was added a portion of venison, he considered himself well fed, and forgot the dainties of his father's table, though he never forgot for an hour the dear parents who provided them. The first winter he lived with the Cumanches, inured him to that evil which they think (and justly perhaps) their greatest misfortune, viz. the want of sufficient nourishment; and after experiencing that for several weeks together, it was no wonder that he afterwards ate moderately, and with high relish, whatever was given to him.

It is only justice to Tustanuggi to say, that in the time of scarcity, Manuel shared the scanty fare of the family as a son, and that his own temperance offered an excellent example to those around him. Manuel had at this period gained a complete knowledge of the language, and as he attended many meetings of the warriors and elders, he was frequently struck with the wisdom of their remarks on the common duties of life, and the peculiar virtues called for in emergencies of this nature. Child as he was, he could yet see the folly of their conduct, in persisting so pertinaciously in the way of their ancestors, by never cultivating land, that they subjected themselves to starve in the midst of plenty, and in the possession of an immense expanse of fruitful country, remained liable to the most positive want.

So soon as there was a prospect of success, the men set out on various hunting expeditions, alike for the purpose of procuring food for themselves, and the means of barter, for clothes and blankets; this tribe greatly preferring the calico shirts and the blankets, which they procured by that medium, to the skins made up by themselves. Tustanuggi and his two boys were generally very fortunate, and procured many valuable skins, which the former intended to dispose of, together with a portion of his mules and horses, to the traders who annually came up the Red River for that purpose. To these visitants Manuel could alone look as the future means of his liberation, and therefore he carefully listened to every word which could throw any light on the subject of their arrival, the time they remained, the distance of the settlement from the Red River, the direction in which it flowed, and the probability that he should be concerned with any negotiation. He even learned as much of their language as he could obtain at second-hand, as he found many of the Indians spoke a little, and he thought that a few words would suffice to tell them who he was, and to move their compassion; and many a sleepless hour did he pass, in contriving the means of escape to their vessel, and arranging the words with which he would address the commander.

Poor Manuel, when the time came, had the mortification to find that all his ingenuity and his hopes had been excited in vain. Tustanuggi not only set out without him, but by his manner, indicated suspicion of that which was really passing in his mind, as he gave him to understand, "that any effort to escape would be severely punished," and recommended him to use double diligence towards the horses. This disappointment he felt severely; but he had the good sense to subdue his emotion, and by that means he eluded the vigilance of Moscoji, and at least obtained the mournful privilege of weeping in secret over his misfortunes.

CHAPTER VI.

Tustanuggi returned in good humour, for he had sold his horses to advantage, and bought blankets, which he greatly needed, and rum, which he liked much too well; and for some days a scene of drunkenness ensued, very inconsistent with the boasted wisdom and gravity of the Indians. Usweга, who had accompanied his father to the Red River for the first time, was exalted exceedingly by the honour conferred on him, and treated Manuel with the utmost contempt, forbidding him "to consider himself a Cumanche, or to associate with the boys of the settlement as he was wont to do;" and as his father appeared to warrant this insolence, since he did not reprove it, the stranger was, of course, compelled to submit. Formerly, when the youth of the town went in the cool of the evening to throw the hatchet, or the spear, and to shoot with their arrows, or pitch their darts, Manuel constantly made one of the party; and as he was singularly expert for his age, and the time he had practised, many of them were delighted to see him come amongst them; but now, all held themselves at a distance, and took care often to remind him, "that he had no red man's blood in his veins—he was a stranger, the son of the pale man, with whom they held no affinity."

It is very probable that, cautious as poor Manuel had been in guarding his words at the time when he sought to escape, that he had betrayed himself in his sleep, in consequence of which, confidence was withdrawn from him by the father; and the son (who had been always inclined to treat him ill) thus gained a power of effecting his wishes. The mother and the child, however, remained attached to him, and the caresses of the latter, in a great degree, consoled him for her brother's ill treatment. He now abstained from seeking any play, and applied himself to making baskets with double diligence; and forbore to reply when he was twitted by the boys with being "fit only for a woman," though, like all his sex, he felt it as a terrible insult. From being a lively, gay, and most amusing child, he sank into a deeply thinking little man, obtaining a kind of premature wisdom, far from being desirable at his early age. Living in the midst of people who, though ignorant, were cunning, treacherous, and implacable, he found all the sweetest affections of the heart, the bland ingenuousness of youth, blighted, as it were, in their bud; and he was constrained, from the principle of self-preservation, to weigh even the most insignificant words before he uttered them—to repress a sigh for the home he had lost, or a smile to the companion with whom he played, lest they should subject him to anger, which might be deadly, or imprisonment, which might be final.

One day, when poor Manuel had a little more time than usual, from Tustanuggi having taken out the horses himself, he ventured to a little thicket near the town, where the boys were wont to assemble. As soon as he was seen, the young fry set up a shout, but it was one of joy rather than welcome, for in a minute they all assembled round him, and instantly began to bind him, under the direction of Usweга; and he was given to understand that they were going to fix him in the opposite tree, in order to furnish them a mark at which to throw their hatchets or tomahawks. One of the boys told him good naturedly, that their object was to throw as near as possible to his body, but to avoid injuring him; but though this was better than his first expectation, he could not flatter himself that such young and unskilful hands could effect their purpose; and in a silent prayer he recommended his soul to God, and also begged a blessing on his far-distant parents.

At this time he was placed with his back to the tree, to which he was firmly bound. Knowing that no entreaties would alter the intentions of the Indian boys, and that all complaint would but subject him to their ridicule, he determined to endure his fate with firmness; and although he could not forbear shutting his eyes when the first of these tremendous weapons came whizzing close to his ears, not a single word escaped his lips, and many of the boys praised his unshrinking firmness. He learnt from their conversation, that the boy who should touch him would forfeit his weapon; it was therefore probable, that each would try to avoid to his utmost; but he found also that not one of the young urchins attached the slightest idea of harm to killing him, or even supposed they would be blamed for mangling him in the most terrible manner.

One after another did the hatchets approach the shuddering victim; yet such was the practice and abilities of the boys, that no wound was given, until the eleventh struck into the calf of his leg, from which the blood gushed in a torrent.

On seeing the sanguine stream flow from their innocent and uncomplaining victim, a loud shout of derision was uttered against him who had thrown the last tomahawk; but no pity was evinced for Manuel, who would probably have received the next weapon in a more vital part, if a dispute had not arisen as to whose property the forfeited one had become. Happily for him, Tustanuggi had heard the shout, and turned his horse towards the place from whence it proceeded. The animal he rode was one of those originally stolen from Don Manuel, the only one remaining unsold; and having been lately very ill, had been attended to by the poor boy, who was the companion of his theft, with unusual care, according to

the well-remembered directions of Diego—a circumstance which had given Tustanuggi a much kinder sensation towards our young friend than he had evinced for a considerable time. Under the influence of this sentiment, on seeing his present situation, he galloped hastily to his rescue, and loudly reprov'd the troop around him, particularly blaming his own son for suffering them to injure the boy, who was his father's property. He then applied a ligature to Manuel's leg, assisted him to mount his horse, and conveyed him speedily home, where his wound was dressed by Moscoigi with great care, as she applied to it a poultice of cooling herbs, and bandaged it with a skill which would not have disgraced an accomplished surgeon.

Whilst this was doing, the poor boy (whose generous heart was easily touched by kindness) felt, towards both his master and mistress, a sense of gratitude which almost amounted to affection, and enabled him not only to forgive the cruel treatment of their son, but to conceal all the share he had taken in the late affair. Uswega was sensible of this, since he heard the questions of Tustanuggi, and from this time his dark looks ceased to threaten him; but yet it was evident that he despised him for the very conduct by which he profited; for as revenge is a principle implanted in the Indian from his very birth, he considers it an act of weakness to lose any opportunity of taking vengeance.

Here let my young reader pause, and whilst reflecting on the vices of this misguided boy, let him devoutly and humbly thank his Almighty Father that he was born of Christian parents, in a Christian land; let him rejoice in that his heart is tender, that he can love, and pity, and relieve, every human being, knowing that he is commanded so to do, by that blessed Redeemer who laid down his life on the cross for sinners; and let him anxiously nourish these feelings, lest he should in any degree become hard-hearted, cruel, and revengeful, like the Indian of whom we speak: he must remember that he has not, like Uswega, ignorance to plead in excuse of such sin and folly.

CHAPTER VII.

Manuel now lay for several weeks on the mat in the tent, unable to move, suffering severe pain, and that sickness and weariness which is the consequence of confinement. During this period, a messenger arrived from a distant settlement of the Cumanche nation, calling upon them to go to war with the Choctaws, who were said to have made an irruption on their town.

The summons was met on the part of the Cumanches with great spirit, for an Indian in general thinks that fighting is the great business of life; and so subject are the various nations of Indians to warfare, that they have always remained few in number; and with a beautiful and fruitful country, rich in all the means of life, and capable of giving abundance to myriads, have continued to be mere patches of population, scattered over a continent that may give birth to empires. Had they been united in mind, flourishing in numbers, and improving in the arts of life, no stranger could have entered their country and taken possession of their birthright: they could not have been so situated that other nations might say (as they have said, in fact, and might do it with truth)—"Give place to me, for I am worthier than thou." In their history, every member of a family may see the value of union among themselves.

Manuel was surprised to see the numerous preparations now made by Tustanuggi for entering on the ensuing campaign. He had seen many instances of extraordinary personal vanity among the Cumanches, and found that the beaux of Spain were not more particular in their love of ornament than the barbarian beaux of an Indian settlement; but it is certain he did not suspect that a man of his master's age and gravity could be guilty of such weakness, till he beheld his present anxiety on the subject. It appeared to be an object of the last importance, in the present case, that his personal appearance should be imposing; and for this purpose, himself, his wife, and his son, were fully employed.

In the first place, his head was carefully shaved, on either side of the head, leaving a ridge of hair standing up in the middle, like a cock's comb; and in this state it was first rubbed with bear's grease, and then well powdered with swan's-down. The sides of his head were then painted with vermilion; and his ears, which had already been slit, were so loaded with ornaments, that they hung low down on his neck, and were made nearly to meet behind. Long black streaks were carried round his eyes, and spots of the same hue on his cheeks, so as to render his countenance terrific; but in his own opinion, and that of his wife, it was the perfection of beauty, not less than terror. It was certain, that when fully equipped, his appearance was grand and martial. He had a hunting shirt made of a beautiful deer-skin, which descended nearly to his knees; a belt, richly worked with beads of a scarlet colour, in which was slung his tomahawk; and he held gracefully in his hand a spear, of large dimensions. Thus equipped, he placed himself at the head of a small body, similarly ornamented and accoutred, forming one of three bodies, who were led by an experienced warrior as the general.

Moscogi evidently felt much anxiety on the subject of her husband's return; for little as the feelings of affection may be exercised, the wants of nature create a bond in the domestic life of a savage.—"Who will get us venison, if thy father falls?" were words frequently addressed to the little girl; for Uswega was seldom in the hut; and often did the heart of Manuel answer—"I will hunt for you—work for you;" for he was grateful for the kindness she had lately shown him; and he thought it very wrong in her son to stay at home so little, at a time when his mother required comfort. He found, however, that in general the sons of other women were attentive to their wants; and that on the death of a warrior, if their sons had attained manhood, they cheerfully undertook to provide for their widowed parent.

When Manuel was able once more to take exercise on horseback, his strength returned quickly, and as provisions were now very plentiful, he was well fed, and soon recovered his good looks. It was observed, "that he had grown much during his confinement," so that he was now very tall of his age; and it is probable that when Moscogi looked at him, she thought he might hereafter be as a son to her, seeing his obedience to her wishes, and his efforts to give her pleasure, far exceeded those of Uswega; and to him the child looked for all the pleasure her monotonous existence permitted.

Before the return of the warriors took place, the town was enlivened by the arrival of a party who had made a successful sally in pursuit of booty, to some town or village on the frontier, and brought back several horses, two of which were particularly valuable. Often did poor Manuel look wistfully at these animals, and wonder whether they also had been stolen from his father; and the sight of them brought forcibly to his mind those images which had naturally faded in the memory of one so young, and so continually called upon to attend to his personal duties and precarious safety. From what he could gather, through Uswega, who was now more conversant with him than formerly, they had been brought from a still greater distance than San Antonio, and were thought to be injured from the length of the journey. In consequence of this surmise, notwithstanding the absence of his master, they were given, in a great measure, into

Manuel's care, on account of the lightness of his weight, the gentleness of his treatment, and the skill he had already evinced in discerning the diseases of horses, and prescribing for them properly.

Despite of all his care, one of these valuable creatures soon sunk under its complaint, and the other remained too unwell to be taken to the Red River, when the season arrived for the annual visit of the traders; so that poor Manuel's chance for seeing them, and regaining his liberty, again went past unimproved; but it did not by any means affect him in the same way it had done before. He comforted himself with inwardly observing that he had excited no suspicion, that he was on good terms with all around him, and that if he continued to grow up strong and hearty, the time would come when his master would need his services, and perhaps grant him freedom, as a reward for them, which would be safer and better than seeking it by a medium which would expose him to lingering destruction.

At length the warriors returned, and again the whole population rushed out to receive them, and repeat the tragic mourning, and the barbarous rejoicing. To the great relief of Manuel, Moscogi was not among the widows, for Tustanuggi returned to his family; but by no means in the health in which he had departed, for he had lost much blood by the wounds he had received, and was evidently weak and dispirited. He saw with surprise the improvement which had taken place in Manuel, whom he had left on the bed of pain, pale and languid; and it was evident that he believed, as before, that the poor boy possessed some extraordinary knowledge of the art of healing, which he desired to benefit by—a conception that of course was very distressing to one who knew himself ignorant of the way to help him.

Happily the prisoners were few in number; and after the usual allotment had been made, two only remained for slaughter, and these were reserved until the night of the full moon, for some reason connected with the superstitions which indicate the only sense of religion they display; although it is certain that their orators frequently refer to a future state of existence, and speak of the Great Spirit as the rewarder of good and evil. Truly happy was Manuel to hear of this respite, for he flattered himself that some other person might be found to claim them, not yet sensible of their own wants; nor could he forbear to busy himself with plans for their liberation, especially after Uswega had informed him that one or both would be roasted at a slow fire, and pointed out the wood intended for the occasion. So far, however, was he from being able to assist them to escape, that he never could learn in whose wigwam they were confined; and indeed there was every reason to believe they would not themselves have consented to fly, for the courage of endurance is so great in them, that they have a pride in suffering, which enables them to sustain unheard-of tortures, and to challenge the inflictors to invent still greater.

Tustanuggi, under the care of his wife and Manuel, and principally in consequence of the repose he enjoyed, soon regained his usual health; and as he imputed this, in a great measure, to the charm which he imagined to be connected with the Spanish boy, of course he became more a favourite with him than before; so that at length Manuel thought he might venture to speak a word in favour of the prisoners, whose death had already been delayed till the following new moon. Such was his influence at this time with his master, and so great had become that master's importance from his courage and conduct, that a consultation was actually held on the subject, which was certainly a most extraordinary compliment to the young pleader, and probably without a precedent in the annals of the nation, and by no means likely to ensure the favour of the public for the original mover.

When Tustanuggi made this proposal to the assembled warriors, he gave, as a reason, the welfare of the community, who might, in his opinion, be more benefitted by retaining the prisoners as slaves, than sacrificing them for a temporary gratification.

In reply to this, an aged man observed—"That although the health of Tustanuggi (who was dear to them all as a son and a chieftain) had been indeed restored by the Spanish boy, who also had been useful to the horses, and was undoubtedly a prize of great value to the Cumanches, such arguments did not apply to the prisoners, who were Indians like themselves, gifted with no power over diseases, but able and willing to die the death of the brave, and that it would be alike an injury to their friends and enemies, to alter the customs of their fathers on the present occasion."

This advice being received with due applause by all the assembly, Tustanuggi departed in silence, and this he preserved after his return to the tent; so that Manuel knew not the consequences of his mediation, though he too truly guessed that it was not successful. He was, however, by this time, so well aware of the habits of the Indians, that he abstained from asking any questions; and aware that he had risked his own safety, he appeared to forget the subject, and redoubled his attention both to his master and the ailing horse already mentioned.

A short hunting excursion, in which Manuel was included (and in which he was very useful, and therefore distinguished),

relieved his mind from the anxiety he had lately felt, when the moon arrived at that period fixed on for sacrifice. The unusual bustle in the town, and the pleasure manifested by Usweqa, told him what was going forward, for Tustanuggi abstained, with much delicacy to his feelings, or with some mysterious reference to his own amendment, from speaking on the subject.

Gathering his materials together, Manuel sat down on the ground, to make himself a bundle of arrows, not sorry to find himself alone, for even the child would have been a trouble to him at this moment, when his heart was heavy, and his spirit restless.

Seeing he could do no possible good in the case, and that he had already risked his own welfare, perhaps even his life, in the service of these unknown savages, who were most probably not less vindictive and cruel than their persecutors, he thought the best thing he could now do, was, if possible, to banish them from his mind altogether, by bustling about, and going from one employment to another. This, however, he could only accomplish within the hut, for he would not go out, lest the fires or the victim should come before his sight, as it happened to be within a little distance, and almost in a direct line from the place of execution pointed out by Usweqa.

But it was in vain Manuel tried to polish an arrow, weave a mat, or sift the maize for boiling; he could not read in his book, which was generally the best expedient he found for restoring his mind to tranquillity; nor even frame one sentence of prayer to that God whom yet his heart looked towards as its only source of consolation. The circumstance of the prisoners being Choctaws, not only gave them a peculiar interest in his mind, but recalled more vividly than he had lately felt it, attachment to his family and his country. Every little circumstance connected with his first view of the Indians, and his communication with them afterwards, rose to his mind; and with these remembrances came a bitter sense of his own banishment. His own dress and imitations of the Choctaws—the innocent delight of his little sister—the fond smile and kiss of his tender mother—and the observations of his beloved father, rose to his mind; and though the tears slowly rolled down his cheek, he yet felt that it was sweet to recal the dear images to his mind, and dwell in idea on those features he would never more behold.

By a natural movement he placed his hands over his eyes, to exclude sight of the objects around him, in order that he might with better effect concentrate his thoughts, and feed his imagination with recollections of each of those relations. Father, mother, sister, and baby-brother, each rose successively before him, endued with every beauty that could give grace to their forms, and every quality that could endear them to the heart, in his partial view; and he wondered how it could happen that he could forget any one of them for a single hour.—"Not even you, little Juan," said he, as, in idea, he gazed on the fair child in its mother's lap.

Just at this moment he was startled from his sweetly-sorrowful reverie, by the entrance of some person into the hut. He took his hands from his eyes slowly, for he feared that the traces of tears might be displeasing to his master. But no master did he behold—a terrific spectre, such as his imagination, in its most vivid moments, could never have conceived, alone stood before him for a moment, and then staggered forward and fell, muttering, in an almost suffocated voice, a desire for water.

This was one of the victims, then in the course of torture; and with an agony to which no words can do justice, Manuel perceived also that he was the very Choctaw to whom, in days past, he had attached himself. Though his newly-scalped head was all one bloody wound, and one eye was torn from its socket, there was still some likeness left in his mangled form, which he recognised at the instant, and which served to increase the horror, pity, rage, and consternation, which agitated his heart, and rendered him for a short time utterly incapable of fulfilling the wretched creature's request. He was absolutely sick with the revolting spectacle, even whilst he would have given worlds to have relieved its misery: his knees smote each other; his teeth chattered; his hands refused their office; he believed himself to be actually expiring.

Again the poor wretch begged for water; and as he had thrown himself on the ground, his mutilated body was less exposed; and Manuel, rousing all the man within him, tried to fulfil his wishes. He brought him pure water, in a small vessel, which he held to his mouth (alas! he had no longer lips), and had soon the satisfaction to perceive that he swallowed it with avidity and thankfulness.

Having given him all that he would take, he went out himself for air, and rushing as fast as his trembling limbs permitted towards the open country, he soon placed himself beyond the view of the fire and the crowd, when he threw himself on the ground, and a flood of tears in some measure dispersed that swelling of the breast, which was so great as to threaten his instant destruction.

It is well-known, that the wretched victims of Indian ferocity are frequently permitted to rest during the time when they are undergoing torture, and that they will even sleep some hours in that deplorable situation. On this detestable subject we are unable to dilate; the heart sickens—the blood curdles as we approach it; nor will we afflict our young readers, or our own feelings, with one word on so revolting a theme, beyond what is necessary for the development of poor Manuel's feelings, and the progress of his story.

For nearly two hours the unhappy boy sat on the ground, almost stupified with contending emotions; sometimes he was overwhelmed with pity; at others with anger; and several times he started on his feet, determined to run into the midst of the crowd, and protest against their proceedings, even at the risk of sharing the horrible sufferings he had witnessed. There can be little doubt, that such would have been his conduct, had this circumstance happened soon after his arrival, for he was by nature high-souled and courageous (as he had proved to be, in the affair of the tomahawks); but as he had now been nearly two years among these people, their habits of caution and deep ruminations were grafted on his own quick passions. In consequence, he forbore all present action; and recollecting the hour for attending the horses was near, he withdrew for the purpose of watering them; and found the exercise salutary, in somewhat dissipating the terrible oppression of his spirits.

Whilst still employed in this duty, he was joined by Tustanuggi, who informed him, "that the feast was over, it being concluded sooner than was expected, in consequence of the elder prisoner having died in his wigwam, long before that event was expected."

The heart of Manuel at this moment felt a throb of joy, for he believed that the long draughts of water which he had administered had accelerated his death, and rendered it easy. This relief to his mind enabled him to imitate the Indian caution, and without replying to that part of his master's information, he made some observation on the state of the horse he was riding, and on the complaints which had been fatal to that which died during Tustanuggi's absence. In doing this, he removed all suspicion of his having seen the Indian; for his master, concluding the subject was hateful to him, said no more upon it; and desired Uswega also to be silent.

But although silent, the heart of Manuel was from this eventful day so deeply moved against the Indians, that every hour of his life he was brooding in his mind schemes for escape. All his prayers were now directed to this purpose—all his thoughts were given up to contrivances, and the cares which he gave to his personal comfort and improvement were directed to this end. Such was the loathing of stomach which he experienced, whenever the thoughts of the mangled prisoner crossed his mind, that it is probable he would have become seriously ill, from the loss of appetite at this time, if he had not continually sought to counteract it, by determining to eat, in order that he might become strong; and for the same reason he used frequently to bathe, and to run, and spend every spare moment in athletic exercises.

For this conduct Tustanuggi praised him highly, and spoke of him as one who would become a true son of the Cumanches: he took him out in every hunting-party, by which means he learnt the art of living in the woods; and as at this time they mixed more familiarly with their neighbours than usual, circumstances of great moment to Manuel arose, such as conversations on the subject of the traders, the course of the Red River, the distance and situation of Nachitoches, and other towns from whence adventurers might arrive.

From all these conversations, Manuel drew information which led him to infer, that although he was actually at a greater distance from Nachitoches than from San Antonio, and that the two places were at an immense distance from each other, yet that the former must be the point at which he must aim, since the country was in that direction less intersected by those dense forests through which he had been brought, and that there was no river so broad or deep as the one which he had crossed. Indeed, so far as he could learn, if he could reach the Red River, he might course on its banks all the way to Nachitoches, without meeting any stream over which a good horse could not swim, except one river, which, though important, was of a short course, and could be skirted without great loss of time.

Deep in the recesses of his mind did Manuel hide all the information thus gained; always, apparently, employed in watching for game, or preparing his weapons, he asked no questions, nor appeared to listen to any conversation. Sometimes, when the labours of the day were over, and the hunting-party were assembled in a pleasant glen, if they had been successful, the hearts of the party would open, their usual taciturnity give way, and they would "hold a talk," at which time the children stood in respectful silence around them, or couched in the grass at a distance. At these times Manuel always took care to be near, but he affected to sleep, as if wearied by the fatigues of the day; and thus he not only learnt many particulars of the country, but also that Tustanuggi never intended to take him down to the Red River. His master observed, with a just judgment of human nature—"That although his boy Manuel had now become Indian in his

habits and affections, yet, if he went amongst people who looked like his parents, spoke his language, or in any way resembled those amongst whom he had been born, probably his old feelings would return, and he would endeavour to escape from him." To the possibility of losing him he always adverted with pain, not only because he was useful, but because he had become "the son of his love."

When Manuel heard an expression of this kind from his master, his own heart never failed to warm towards *him* personally; but he did not the less resolutely persist in his intention; and added to his other preparations for departure, that faculty of abstaining from food, and subsisting on the smallest possible portion of it, for which the Indians are so remarkable. This is probably the most difficult of all attainments to a young boy, in habits of exercise, and in the enjoyment of health; nevertheless, Manuel voluntarily entered upon it, and, to a great degree, effected his purpose in conquering his appetite.

CHAPTER VII.

As Manuel, from the nature of his employment, had always the power of being well mounted, and was now fully trusted, he frequently was able to take a long ramble through the neighbouring forest, when he would sometimes climb high trees, in order to take a survey of the surrounding country, and more especially to trace the courses of rivers. In such a situation he could, of course, do himself little good, seeing that his view was continually impeded; but the experiments he made helped to keep up the spirit of enterprise in his heart; and the short glimpses he obtained at times, acted as a stimulant and refreshment to his spirits. One day, when he had gone to a much greater distance than he ventured on before, he reached a beautiful glade, which spread out like a vista for a considerable way, and in the extreme distance he saw, or thought he saw, a man, whose appearance denoted that he was not an Indian. The figure was stepping in a direction from him, therefore Manuel lost not a moment in descending the tree from whence he had seen him, and mounted his horse, by which means he hoped soon to overtake him; but rapid as his movements were, since they were unnoticed by the stranger, they failed to facilitate his wishes, as the figure was soon lost in the mazes of the wood. He saw enough to convince him that the person (although arrayed in articles of Indian apparel) was a civilized man, and, he was inclined to believe, was some one sent out for the purpose of reconnoitring the country on his behalf. For a moment the thought struck him that it might be his own father; but Don Manuel was remarkably tall, and this person, though of a good stature, was not of a description to warrant this conjecture.

For several days Manuel tried, but in vain, to get back into the woods; but the length of his stay on this occasion was the means of preventing his return; and since he had been in the very part through which he came from San Antonio, he apprehended that they suspected him of an intention to escape that way.

It is probable that they detained him, in the first instance, only as a punishment for loitering; but as a hunting-party, on their return from this part of the forest, declared that they had seen a man in the woods, who carried a gun, and other weapons of a singular construction, suspicion was excited; and Manuel was ordered to air the horses in a contrary direction for the future.

In his present state of excitement, from anxiety and curiosity, this mandate was hard to obey. It was impossible for the stolen boy to believe that any object, save himself, could have drawn a person such a long way from any civilised settlement; and being well aware that his father would offer a liberal reward to any person who would rescue him, he was led to this conclusion, "that, after long search, Don Manuel had at length found some person habituated to negotiate with the Indians, and who had come out for the purpose of ransoming him, but who, probably, had become terrified with the known ferocity of the Cumanches, and was likely to return without effecting his purpose."

"Oh that I could meet with him, and take from him some of the arms of which they speak! I am sure, if I were supported by a friend, and had a good pistol in my hand, I could make my way through all the Cumanches," were words frequently hovering on the lips of Manuel at this time; but, alas! they only served to irritate his mind, without in the least contributing to the end he so earnestly desired.

Twice afterwards the strange man was seen in the woods, and once observed to shoot a bird; but after that he was seen no more; and as conjecture respecting his appearance died away, the hopes of Manuel died also; but his resolution remained as strong as ever. He felt that he could only depend upon himself, and that, in pursuance of his object, he must risk the utmost vengeance of Indian infliction; but he thought that he could do this, rather than be thus exiled from all that rendered life happy, and be compelled to reside with those whom he at once dreaded and despised. He felt at this period of his opening mind, that necessity for the ties of kindred and friendly intercourse which are perhaps most acute in early life, when the heart is open to every amiable impression, and though subject to many errors, is seldom hard or sordid.

"I must," said he, "have somebody to love, and somebody to care for me. I must seek my dear parents and my sister; and even if I should be so unhappy as never to find *them*, yet shall I find some people in a Christian country, who will pity and protect me as a Christian. Go where I may, so I am in a civilised country, I must be better off than amidst a nation of barbarians."

During the succeeding winter, all idea of departure was suspended; but not less busily did the mind of the unfortunate boy labour in thought with the project he contemplated; and never did he in the least relax in his attentions to all the horses under his care, more especially that fine one we have already mentioned, since to his management of this animal he looked for his power of accomplishing that project which now so incessantly occupied his thoughts, that it might be

said to constitute alike his pain and pleasure, and become to him a kind of exclusive existence, unseen, but always operating.

CHAPTER VIII.

The schemes of Manuel were interrupted, though his intentions were only confirmed, in consequence of the present year being that on which the Cumanches perform those rites in honour of the dead, peculiar to the Indians, and in which they stand distinct from all other people who ever have existed, so far as their annals are transmitted. It is well known that all their tribes, at the recurrence of seven or ten years, repair to the graves of their relatives, whom they disinter with the greatest care, and lament over with every demonstration of the greatest sorrow. This dreadful view of mortality, in every stage of decay, so naturally disgusting to every sense, they endure without shrinking, and spend, upon the most loathsome objects the mind can conceive, that love and respect, which during the life of the subject they have seldom appeared to feel. They approach these perishing remains with profound respect, lavish on them the fondest caresses, water them with tears of sorrow, and shew in every respect an acuteness of feeling which no person could have supposed them capable of entertaining, especially when they recalled their cruelty on some occasions, and their gravity on all.

Manuel saw their emotions with a degree of pity, but he could not help thinking how much better it would have been to shew such affection to the living, whom it would render happy, than to the dead, who felt it not; and he considered that an act of lamentation intended to end with a feast, either must be connected with frivolity or hypocrisy. When the lamentations had ceased, he joined with the rest in restoring the disturbed bodies to their graves, and covering them with bark, and other substances, intended to preserve them; after which the ceremony concluded, with a much more plentiful repast than he had ever previously witnessed; and on their return to their own wigwams, he perceived no traces of that sorrow which had lately been so strikingly exhibited.

The whole design of an Indian, from his cradle to his grave, is to live as his fathers have lived before him. To this he devotes himself with the zeal of a martyr and the courage of a warrior; and without allowing himself to suppose that error can have existed, he continues to perpetuate it, even in cases the most opposite to those principles of reason which seem in many respects to guide him. He is sagacious, discriminating, slow in judgment, self-controlled, and generally temperate; but neither time nor experience improve his condition, remove his prejudices, ameliorate his hardships, soften his austerities, or advance his interests. Like the beasts and birds, who share his forest domain, he exists as if by instinct, contented to be neither better nor happier than the brood before him had been; and for him light shines in vain, since he prefers darkness to light, because his fathers were born in darkness.

So blindly do these men follow their guides, that Manuel found actions of revenge imposed as duties, from father to son, and, failing him, to far-distant kindred. Tustanuggi, who, considering him as a Cumanche, might be termed a man of amiable disposition, committed a murder, for the purpose of revenging the father of his mother, who was dead many years before himself, or the man he slew, saw the light; and in doing this, he excited the vengeance of that man's family, who, it was well known, lay in wait for the blood of himself and Uswega. Manuel was one day mistaken for the latter, as he was returning alone with a string of horses, and narrowly escaped having his skull cleft by the tomahawk that was thrown at him by a Cumanche, of evident skill, who, on picking up his weapon, gave him to understand that the blow was not meant for him; but if he kept not silence, another would soon lay him low.

The time again approached when the traders were expected on the Red River, previous to which parties of robbers had, as usual, visited the Spanish settlements, but, as it appeared, to little purpose, and, of course, the horses then in possession were doubly valuable. Every time this subject was alluded to, the heart of Manuel throbbed as if it would burst his bosom, and the blood rose to his cheek, and suffused his features with burning blushes, which were happily imputed by Tustanuggi to his vexation at finding Uswega was to visit the Red River, whilst he was still considered meet only for living with the women. The true cause of his emotion was, the consciousness that now or never was the time for his escape; that the effort so long contemplated must soon be made, or he must resign himself to an existence which every day became more hateful in his eyes.

Manuel had now for a long time so trained the horse on which he placed his dependence, that he knew it could far outstrip any other in the possession of the settlement; and having never seen any other equally good, he had contracted a belief that it was the best in the world; and that if he did not avail himself of its great properties, such a chance could never occur to him again. Subduing the perturbation of his spirits, lifting up his heart frequently to heaven, and eagerly listening to every word which threw light on the movements of the Indians, he now held himself ready for flight, according as circumstances might favour his intentions. Within a fortnight of the time fixed for their departure, which was the full of the moon, Tustanuggi ordered Manuel to ride the horse in that direction which he was hereafter to take; on

which occasion Uswega accompanied him, and occasionally mounted the favourite. As this boy was only an indifferent rider, the father did this to accustom the horse to the way, and the boy to the horse, which was a very spirited animal, and little likely to submit to a new master, especially a young one; but it was nevertheless necessary that he should be mounted by one of less weight, that his strength and beauty might remain unimpaired, on arriving at the place of barter.

The boys proceeded together for some time very well, but when it was the pleasure of Uswega to mount the favourite, it proved so restive, that for a long time there appeared little chance of his retaining his seat; and several Indians, who were also present riding other horses, destined to the future mart, condemned the command of Tustanuggi, as one likely to prove injurious both to the rider and the animal. At length, with a great bolt, the horse galloped, with amazing rapidity, completely out of sight, and the party followed, under a strong impression that both "the horse and his rider" were lost.

After traversing the same distance as fast as their inferior horses would permit them, Manuel and the Cumanches arrived at length to the spot where Uswega had been thrown on the ground, and was found covered with bruises; the horse could not be seen.

"Has he gone the way towards the Red River?" said an old Indian to the boy, as he assisted him to rise.

"No; he is gone the way towards Nachitoches, and will soon enter the forest that lies betwixt the morass and the river, if he is not there already."

The Indian thought for a moment, and then said to Manuel—"Go then towards the forest and seek him; he will know thy voice, and obey thy command; he is a beast of value, and must be restored."

"That he will obey my voice, I am aware; but I shall become entangled in that forest, and may never be able to return."

The Cumanche gave him exact directions how to proceed, by marking certain trees which he described, observing, that beyond the forest lay an open prairie, bounded by the Red River; and added—"But go thou fearlessly, and we will follow at a distance."

Manuel obeyed the command, and before he reached the forest, found his darling quietly grazing on a green turf of the finest verdure; at the sound of his voice, he readily came up to him, but would not suffer himself to be led; so that his old rider was obliged to mount him, and wait the arrival of the Cumanches; during which time he recognised the spot, and found readily every object described by the old Indian, who, on arriving, took charge of Uswega's horse, and highly praised the skill and intrepidity Manuel had displayed.

On returning home, whither the discomfited Uswega was slowly led, it was strongly insisted upon by the party, that Manuel was the only proper person to conduct the horse to the Red River; and it was so evident, from his conduct on that day, that he could have no intention to escape, that Tustanuggi seemed inclined to think of it. He, however, observed, that if the horse were taken every day over the same ground, he would not fail to become used to it: and this mode of conquering the difficulty should in the first place be resorted to.

The following morning this was had recourse to: but so strongly did Uswega himself recommend the rest of the company keeping at a distance, imputing his own misfortune to riding in company, that this caution was observed, and they only followed in such a manner as to witness his success. He caused the horse again apparently to run away, but it was now in the direction they intended him to go.

When this had been practised several other mornings, Manuel was permitted to go out alone; and Tustanuggi observed, he thought this trial would suffice, and that for the three following days the horse should be perfectly at rest.

The poor boy heard these words with a sensation that cannot be defined; his heart smote him as being guilty towards his master, in thus forsaking him; nevertheless, his reason fully acquitted him, seeing he had an unquestionable right to regain the liberty of which he had been unjustly deprived; and by the same rule, to take possession of one horse, in lieu of the many stolen from his father, a point he had often argued with his own conscience. The contending feelings which pressed upon his mind in this most awful moment were, however, such, that they entirely prevented him from securing a little stock of provisions which he had secreted; and the presence of Tustanuggi also hindered him from taking his bow and arrows, the only means of procuring food in the wilderness. Such, indeed, was his agitation, that many a time he reflected on it with surprise, and almost wondered that, with all his acquired stock of prudence, it had not led him to bid farewell to the good Moscogi and her beloved little daughter, in which case his scheme would have been utterly ruined,

and his captivity ensured.

CHAPTER IX.

Manuel pursued his journey as before, at an easy pace, till he reached that spot from which Uswega's unlucky flight might be dated, when he suddenly pricked his horse into a full gallop towards the forest, in order that if any Cumanche was abroad in that direction, it might be supposed he laboured under the same misfortune that his master's son had experienced. His quick eye darted far and near, to discover either friend or enemy; but neither appeared; and he had the satisfaction to enter the forest in less time than it could be expected that he should have taken half his usual airing.

He now, with all the Indian caution, noted every mark described by the old Cumanche; and dismounting, led his horse carefully for many miles; and to his great satisfaction, saw the day decline, at a place where a little sweet grass and a rippling stream promised the food greatly needed by his generous but jaded steed, to whose comfort he paid every possible attention. Such, however, was still his own anxiety, so instinctively did he listen for those sounds of pursuit which would have been to him sentence of death, under its most terrific form, that he could not venture to eat the piece of hominy designed for his breakfast, and concealed in his bosom, till he had climbed the highest tree in the vicinity, and crouched in its thickest foliage.

Here, indeed, he slept, for exhausted nature demanded repose; but his sleep was disturbed by terrific dreams; and but for the pity he felt for his horse, he would have pursued his journey by moonlight, unfavourable as it was for ascertaining those marks in the vegetation, which could alone enable him to gain the open country. On reflecting on the instructions he had so lately, and by such mere chance, received on this head, he could not help thinking that they had been given him by an especial Providence, for the most merciful end, seeing that all the knowledge he had previously gained, had related much more to the country in the neighbourhood of Nachitoches, and the banks of the Red River, than that which was to lead him thither; and that without his last instructions, all the former would have been void.

Under this happy impression, fervent were his thanks to Almighty God, when, with the first beams of day, he prepared to renew his journey. He found the forest now much more intricate than before, and decidedly more difficult to ride through than any which he had ever seen; but this circumstance he could hardly regret, since, as the Cumanches always travel on horseback, it would not be less difficult to his pursuers than himself; he trusted, however, that he had none, at least in this direction, and flattered himself (most probably with justice) that if he was indeed sought, they would go in that direction to the Red River, where the ship was expected, by themselves. This was in a contrary direction to that he pursued, because the difficulties of passing this very forest rendered it easier to the Indians to visit the traders considerably higher up the river, *i.e.* nearer to its source.

The situation of the sun was at this time a guide of great importance to Manuel, since he was well acquainted with the general bearings of the country he desired to traverse; and before his glorious guide reached the meridian, the forest was far less crowded with trees, and he saw that he should diverge into the prairie. When, however, this noble barrier between him and the Cumanches was passed, seeing the day was extremely hot, he thought it right that his faithful companion and only friend should enjoy some repose, before they ventured from under the shade; and accordingly they halted for a considerable space.

At this time Manuel began to suffer the pains of hunger, and bitterly repented his own deficiency of self-command, at the moment of his departure. When he saw that his horse, which (in memory of his home) he called Antonio, was asleep, and he had covered his head with leaves and branches, to guard him from the mosquitoes, he returned into the forest, for the purpose of collecting some kind of nuts and fruit, remembering that now he was entering the open country, he should have no chance for food of any kind. In a short time he found a tree of nuts, which, although of a bitter quality, allayed his hunger; after which, he contrived to stow a quantity of them in his bosom, and would certainly have made a good provision for the wants of another day, if the sound of a rattlesnake under the tree, prepared to strike a bird, had not exceedingly alarmed him, and caused him to fly with precipitation from such a dangerous neighbourhood.

In the evening he pursued his way more slowly, and, by the light of a beautiful moon, advanced towards the river, which had been so long the object of his wishes, and towards which numerous little diverging streams directed him; but he soon became aware that it was too probable he was wasting both his own strength and that of his horse, so that they stopped as by mutual consent, and laid down on the open heath until the morning.

CHAPTER X.

When the sun rose, Manuel stretched himself, and, gazing round on the boundless expanse, slowly lighted up as the mists dispersed, thought that he must feel at this moment as the first man felt on his creation. He seemed to be alone in the vast universe—a being cut off from every human tie, and left to steer his way in an unknown sea, without guide or compass.—"And yet," said the lonely boy, as he patted the sides of his loved Antonio, "I am not wholly alone, for thou, my good fellow, art a safe companion, and a good conductor; for, if I mistake not, we are within a furlong of the Red River itself."

Yes! indeed that long-desired object was now before him; and Park himself, when he beheld the majestic Niger, never could experience more delightful sensations, than those which now cheered the breast of the stolen boy.

Alas! he had need of comfort in mind, for little had he in body, seeing the nuts of the preceding day rendered him a very scanty breakfast; and so dried and bad was the grass around the place, that his poor horse was very insufficiently fed, and little inclined to pursue his journey. By slow degrees, they traversed the banks of the river, often looking round for a few stunted tufts of maize, but seldom finding any.

One object, however, soon struck, and for a moment delighted, the eyes of Manuel. This was a beautiful American vessel, the very one towards which his wishes so long had pointed. The first emotion he felt was a desire instantly to hail her, and request the protection and assistance he so much required. Before he attempted this, however, the caution he had acquired among the Indians induced him to pause;—he recollected that these people were going, not returning; and that if he entered their vessel, he should be carried into the very midst of the people from whom he had escaped; and even, if not delivered up to them, he could hardly hope to elude the vigilance of their observations, or be protected from the severity of their punishments. Besides, he had understood, from all he had heard, that these dealers were sordid and over-reaching—that they were well aware the horses and mules they purchased had been stolen from his countrymen; and, "if such was their disposition, would they not rob him of his horse, and leave him to perish in the wilderness alone?"

Pursuing these reflections, Manuel pushed his horse into a little hollow below the bank, where he quietly waited till the vessel was got to a considerable distance, when he again put his horse to its speed, nor rested till he had advanced so far, that the object of his suspicion had completely vanished from sight, and he again remained the only human being within the immense circle of cheerless desert by which he was surrounded.

But the sun did not go down on this day, before poor Manuel severely repented his want of confidence in the only persons whom he was likely to see in his long journey, in whose pity he could place any trust; and he now hated in himself that cold, suspicious temper, which had been nurtured in him by Indian education, and which he fancied could not be required in an intercourse with Christians of any country. He knew that the cannibal tribe of the Alonquas had a settlement at no great distance from the Red River, on the desert he was passing; and that the Choctaws had several towns betwixt this part and Nachitoches, and that in both he would find enemies; for the Cumanches, as the most warlike and formidable, are regarded with fear or dislike by all; and the Choctaws would revenge their late losses, by seizing any individual of that nation to whom they would assign him. Of course his only safety lay in keeping as near as possible to the river; but in this case famine, the most dreadful of all deaths, appeared inevitable.

Water, which happily was of the purest kind, was now the only refreshment Manuel or his horse partook, and that only made the pains of hunger felt more keenly: often would Manuel think of his bows and arrows, and sometimes he would try to make one from the trees that now and then might be found; but his efforts were ineffectual; and he could only travel slowly forward, in hopes of once more entering a wooded district, where birds might be plentiful, and his efforts to obtain them more successful.

In the lonely region he was now passing, the awful stillness was rarely broken in upon by animal life; sometimes a small hare or rabbit would dart past him into its burrow, or the flapping wings of some prodigious bird attract his eye, as it sailed through the bright firmament in solitary travel. Otherwise, for two successive days, he seemed alone in the universe.

His strength was nearly exhausted; his eyes grew dim; and he almost desired to lie down and die, when the welcome forest again appeared, which was not less necessary to his wearied and hungry steed than himself, seeing that although better fed than his master, it was several days since he had tasted any herbage sweet and nutritive; and his travel, except

during the hottest portion of the day, had never been suspended. In the recesses of the forest again glades of green grass were found; but, alas! there were no fruits save nuts, which, difficult of access, required strength Manuel no longer possessed; and to shoot, or kill a bird, appeared a more likely means of preserving existence.

In this pursuit he was continually foiled; but on arriving at a little stream abounding with fish, he plunged into it, and was so fortunate as to secure a fine trout, which having killed, he lighted a fire by rubbing sticks, as he had been taught by Tustanuggi, and roasted it by running a long stick through the fish, which was then thrust into the ground. Happily for him, his fire answered a double purpose, for whilst he watched with impatience this preparation for his food, a large beast of prey darted from the underwood, as if about to spring upon his horse, but on sight of the fire, fled into the recesses of the forest.

This new danger awoke painful surmises for the future in the mind of Manuel; but such was his present distress, that it only quickened his movements in securing his food, which he ate half raw, yet thought delicious. With the prudence for which it is certain he had to thank his former habits, he did not eat to excess, but carefully placed the remainder of his food in some leaves, and tied it with strings of grass round his body; after which, he stretched himself by the side of his fire, and in the belief that it would prove his protection, resigned himself to sleep, which he exceedingly required, as hunger lately kept him awake, though it happily had not the same effect on Antonio.

He was awakened by the startling and neighing of his faithful animal, which was laid close beside him, and which he instantly mounted, aware that danger of some kind threatened them. How to proceed he knew not, and therefore resigned himself to the instinctive wisdom of the alarmed animal, which threaded its way with wonderful velocity through the thickest part of the forest, and never seemed willing to halt till he emerged into the open country once more; but they had now lost sight of the Red River.

Conscious of his obligations to Antonio, Manuel would not eat again till he had attended to the wants of his wearied beast, which laid down at his bidding, whilst he sought about for little tufts of good grass, and occasional handful of maize, which he gathered for his food, making a bag of the calico shirt, which was his only clothing, in which he carried the result of his labours to the wearied horse. When the poor creature was fed, and laid down to sleep, Manuel thankfully untied his own provision, and fed also.

By climbing into the highest tree he could find (now a work of terrible labour), he had the satisfaction to see the course of the Red River, and be aware that he was still in the right track, and would probably before long reach that river, which was the only barrier of which he had any fear. For a moment his spirits rose, with the idea that he had accomplished much the greatest part of his journey; but they were as instantly repressed, from recollecting that he was now in the very neighbourhood of the Indian towns.

Trying to reassure himself, he proceeded now more cautiously, looking round on every side, and many a time fancying he saw a snake rise, when it was only the dimness of his own eyes, arising from diminished strength, that awoke his fears. Towards nightfall, however, it was certain that he did see an Indian town, and was in the direct way to enter it.

The question arose as before, "might he trust the well-known hospitality of the Indians?" These people were far, very far from the settlement he had left—they could undoubtedly forward him to Nachitoches, by a more direct road than he was pursuing—they might take pity on his youth, and relieve his wants—a few days' rest and food would restore him, for which he could hereafter reward them a hundred-fold, if ever he arrived in his father's house—"But how did he know this was not the tribe of cannibals, of whom he had the most unmitigated horror?"

The moment this question arose in Manuel's mind, he turned his horse's head from the settlement; yet with a melancholy smile he said to it—"It is certain they would get little picking from either your bones or mine;" and indeed, so thin and gaunt were both become, that one would not have supposed it possible they could have existed another day. To hide himself from the Indians, he entered a wood in the same direction, but remained during the following night in the skirts, being fearful of entering, lest he should encounter wild beasts, and not daring to make a fire, lest it should attract attention from the Indians. These evils in some measure diverted him from the pains of hunger which he again experienced, and which, during the hours of darkness, it was impossible to alleviate; but his horse, more fortunate, could nibble the herbage near him.

CHAPTER XI.

The following day brought no relief to poor Manuel, who now had no means of allaying the claims of his appetite, besides eating the young leaves of certain trees, and these unfortunately were immediately rejected by his stomach, so that he obtained no nourishment from them, and was at length compelled to abstain from eating them.

Towards evening he reached the river so long expected; and as he was now at a considerable distance from the Red River, into which it falls, and, of course, so much nearer to its source, there is little doubt but his horse could have forded it, or swam it, at an earlier period, but now it was impossible. Weak as he was, it was yet to him a source of comfort, and he would have laid down to sleep on its banks, if they had not swarmed with mosquitoes, to a greater degree than he had yet witnessed; and having lately suffered much from these insects, he sought to avoid more.

The following day, he pursued this stream towards its source so far, that he was enabled to cross it, and having done so, had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing a kind of village, or settlement, before him, but whether of Indian or civilized construction, he could not tell. He was now so wearied and worn down, that his mind was incapable of any strong emotion, and he wished only to creep into a hut and die; nevertheless, he combined with this idea a sense of consolation in the presence of his fellow-creatures, when that moment should arrive. He consequently exerted himself to the utmost to reach the village, and effected his purpose before sunset; but on entering the place, he saw no one stirring, nor heard sounds indicating human existence.

Manuel alighted, and entered the first hut he saw; it was perfectly empty, yet indicated that it had been lately inhabited. Another and another was found in the same situation; not a single human being was left in the settlement.

When he finished his search, it was quite dark, and the poor boy, sitting down on the floor of the last hut he had entered, wept bitterly over the most terrible disappointment he had hitherto experienced. He had, after so many toilsome days, reached the habitation of man, yet found no voice to bid him welcome, no hand to administer to his wants—life would close on him in the desert.

But the hour of dissolution, though expected, did not arrive; Manuel slept many hours, and on raising his head, found the sun was high. He rose, and going out, saw his horse apparently busily employed, at a little distance, in picking something from the ground. To his delight, he found that a bag of maize had been scattered there, and he had therefore every reason to believe that Antonio had made a hearty breakfast before his arrival, as indeed might be perceived by the renewed lustre of his eye, and the manner in which he approached his master.

It will be readily conceived with what eagerness the famished youth threw himself on the ground and ate those precious grains—how carefully he then gathered them, and sought in the first hut a vessel in which he could wash off the chaff. The quantity obtained was indeed far from satisfying his wants; but there can be no doubt but it sufficed to prevent him from dying of hunger, and the strength it imparted gave him power to make a diligent search through the place; and though only rewarded by obtaining a small portion of dried venison, in a state which we should consider loathsome, to him it was an invaluable prize.

On this slight refreshment, Manuel once more set forward, after carefully recalling to his mind all that he had heard calculated for his guidance to Nachitoches, and fervently thanking God for the mercies he had experienced.

When he had proceeded but a short way, he again became sensible of extreme weakness; but his horse was more effectually recruited, and bore him through the whole day in a wonderful manner; and he had the satisfaction of recognising many circumstances which proved that he was directing his course aright. He also obtained a few nuts, and might have got a fish, but he had not strength to throw it on the bank; so that he fancied he could already perceive he was drawing near the land of promise, and that the bitterness of death was passed.

But on the following day, his poor horse no longer obeyed his wishes, and his own strength failed so entirely, that all hope again vanished from his heart, until, at the evening hour, he again feasted his eyes with the Red River, now a noble stream, and affording him a positive assurance that he was within a short distance of civilised life. As the nights were now at the darkest, he was compelled to take up his bivouac as usual; but he could hardly help persuading himself that he was already near to human habitations; though in this he was mistaken.

The following morning he arose, as usual, with the sun, and tried, by every means in his power, to aid his drooping

horse; one of which was, plunging into a stream of pure water—a refreshment he always took himself, when it was practicable. He then took the last of his nuts, which only served to render his appetite more poignant; but he yet determined to resist eating the foliage which tempted him, for he said—"Who knows but I may see a village, or even Nachitoches itself? and then I shall have every thing."

But many a weary mile yet lay between him and the haven he sought, and his voice and caresses frequently failed to urge his faithful steed to further exertions; and often did his upturned eye seem to look reproachfully, yet pitifully, upon his wretched master. When, however, they obtained a near view of the Red River, and saw vessels indicating population in their vicinity, he, too, seemed inspired by a desire once more to visit mankind, and he stepped forward with renovated spirit.

As the sun grew high, Manuel was aware that it was time he should take his usual repose; but as at this time every thing around him indicated that the end of his hopes were obtained—that Nachitoches itself was before him—he could not bring himself to stop; and though he alighted to kneel and thank God for having so nearly accomplished his ardent desire, he instantly resumed his journey.—"Antonio, dear Antonio, only go a little longer, and you shall have corn and water of the best; and you shall rest, day after day, in a comfortable stable, or lie in a green meadow the rest of your life."

Such were the promises and consolations offered continually to the poor animal; but on his actual arrival at that place, so long the object of his incessant desire, there seemed little probability of their fulfilment.

It was the Sabbath day, a day unregistered by the Indians of course, and which had in a great measure, faded from the memory of Manuel. Many of the inhabitants of Nachitoches were returning from their place of worship, or walking to the outskirts of the town, and the appearance of numbers which they presented seemed wonderful in the dazzled eyes of poor Manuel. He had long desired to see his fellow-creatures, but he felt at this moment rather distressed than comforted by the view; and that most heart-sinking of all sensations, being solitary in a crowd, pressed heavy upon him.—"No one," said he, "approaches me, no one speaks to me—do they not see that I am dying with hunger?"

It was yet plain that every eye was bent upon him, as well they might, for he appeared to all a terrific phantom. Both himself and his horse were so attenuated, that their ribs were seen as plain as those of a skeleton; and they moved so slowly, that there was something awful in their gait. The few tattered rags which still clung to Manuel waved in the wind, and his hollow cheeks, staring eyes, and matted hair, united in his person the representation of famine and madness—of every thing that was at once deplorable and terrible.

Still he went on, and still the people gazed after him; but at the corner of a street, a gentleman was crossing with his son, and the horse, wearied beyond endurance, stumbled and fell just before him. At this moment, Manuel, collecting all his energies, threw himself on his knees before the stranger, and holding up his bony hands, cried out, in his own language, in a faint, hollow voice—"Oh! sir, have pity on me—I am a Christian boy, and not a Cumanche."

"Whatever you may be, I will take care of you; rise if you can, my poor child, and go with me."

But, alas! this was beyond his power; the stranger had spoken to him in his own language, and in a tone of kindness, which so deeply affected the poor long-suffering boy, that he instantly fainted, and was believed to be dead by all who saw him fall, and beheld the situation to which he was reduced. Luckily, amongst other gazers at this strange spectacle, was a medical man of great experience, by whose skill the weak lamp of life was again rekindled.

So soon as he could bear motion, his first friend, whom I shall call Mr. Osborne, had him conveyed to his house, when he was placed in a comfortable bed, provided with clean linen, and attended with the utmost humanity and skill; by which means he was, in a few hours, placed out of immediate danger. The first words he spoke were an inquiry after his horse; and when told that it was as well provided for as himself, weak as he was, he expressed his gratitude warmly; on which he was earnestly advised not to say any thing more at present, and to endeavour to keep his mind as calm as possible.

In the mean time, many conjectures were made respecting poor Manuel in the town; and public curiosity and compassion once excited, every one became impatient to know something respecting him; and as many strangers were there, and amongst them several Spaniards, in whose tongue it was said he had spoken, these especially greatly desired to question him. This interference with his *protégé* Mr. Osborne resisted, saying, that until the boy was considerably better, not a single question should be asked, nor a remark made in his presence, which could agitate him.

As, however, every day rendered his son more intimate with Manuel, it was not surprising that this young gentleman was soon able to inform his father of the principal circumstances connected with his history, both as to his being stolen from San Antonio about three years before, and his miraculous preservation through a journey of nearly four hundred miles.

These particulars Mr. Osborne immediately communicated to Don Ignatio, a friend of his, who had often been to San Antonio, and was acquainted with Don Manuel del Perez, who, he observed, did indeed lose his eldest son at that time, and was, together with his wife, plunged into the deepest affliction for the loss of him, insomuch that he had left San Antonio in consequence, but not, he believed, till he had been satisfied that both his son and his servant were dead.

This account of the affair was confirmed by another gentleman, who had resided in San Antonio at the time, and said, "that he had actually seen the clothes worn by the stolen boy in possession of his father, to whom they had been brought by an aged Indian." This gentleman said further—"that so bitterly had the mother of the stolen boy grieved for his loss, that her youngest child had died, in consequence of the effect on his sustenance occasioned by her sorrow; and that the continual anxiety produced on both parents was such, that they had at length removed to New York, where he believed they were, with their only daughter, living at this very time."

It was evident from these accounts, either that the parents of Manuel had been imposed upon with a false account of his death, or that the youth now calling himself Manuel was an impostor; and to the latter belief every person seemed inclined, probably because it added considerably to the wonders of the tale. That a Cumanche Indian should conceive it possible to step into the place of a Spanish gentleman's son, and suppose that in three years all traces of identity would be lost—that he should seek, by native ingenuity, to supply all original peculiarities and attainments—was really so surprising, and argued such talents, that Manuel became not less an object of curiosity in the second place, than of interest in the first.

This view of the matter Mr. Osborne could not for a moment take; for although Manuel did not speak his own language fluently, from so long disuse, yet he spoke it very differently to what any Cumanche could do; and as he began to recover, it was evident that his skin had originally been of a different colour, and what might be expected in an European Spaniard. Why the Cumanches should, at the risk of being punished, take the pains to send his clothing to his parents, so long a journey, he could not, in the first instance, conceive; but when poor Manuel was able to converse on the subject, he then saw clearly that Tustanuggi, having determined to adopt him as a son, took this method of deceiving his father, in order that he might prevent him from all further search after a son, for whom it might be supposed he would never cease to inquire.

So soon as his kind protector had satisfied his own mind on this important point, he began to make enquiries as to the possibility of informing Don Manuel on the subject of his son's safety. In the course of his conversations on this point, he learnt, to his great satisfaction, that it was not to New York, but Savannah, that he had removed; and this point once ascertained, he determined to complete his "labour of love," by taking the boy thither himself, and restore him to those who had long lamented him as dead.

As it will be evident to our readers that only vague reports have hitherto readied them, as to the actual situation of Don Manuel's family, we shall now leave our stolen boy to the kind nursing of his American friends, and look into the house of his father, on that eventful night when he entered upon a life of such peculiar character. Happy are we, that although still pale and weak—still surrounded by strangers, and scarcely assured of the existence of his parents—we yet consider him placed under the kindest protection, making sure progress in improvement, in health, education, and consequently, happiness.

CHAPTER XII.

It may perhaps be recollected, that at the time when poor Manuel was borne away from his father's stables, he did not cease to shriek with all his might, so long as he had breath or strength. His voice, there is every reason to believe, awoke his mother, as she started from her couch, exclaiming—"That Manuel must have fallen, and hurt himself."

To this observation her husband replied, by an assurance that she was mistaken, as he had heard no sound of any kind; and when, in answer to his inquiries, the servants assured him that Manuel was then gone to the stables to visit his pony, it was concluded that her fears were entirely false, and she was entreated to compose herself, and finish her *siesta*.

This she found impossible; but supposing herself to be in error, she remained for some time in the apartment, and then went out to walk in the garden, and enjoy the evening air. Whilst there, finding her spirits much oppressed, (for the sound of her dear son's voice still seemed ringing in her ears), she sent a servant to the stables, to desire that he would come and walk with her, till it was his hour for retiring.

The servant so dispatched, before he arrived at the place, was sensible that many horses had been there, and that something particular had occurred; and he ran forward in great consternation. The total emptiness of the stable, the signs of scuffling on the ground, together with a part of Diego's torn clothing, told the fatal truth, that robbery had taken place, probably attended with murder.

The alarm was now given to the family; and Don Manuel, who was just awake, lost not a moment in calling on his friends to join him in pursuit; whilst Donna Seraphina, almost frantic, ran from place to place, in agony, calling in vain on her lost child, and bitterly reproaching herself for having allowed the cry of her son to sound in her ear unheeded.

By the light of the moon the path of the Cumanche horses was for some distance visible; and so soon as horses and men could be collected, adequate to the proposed rescue, Don Manuel set out with a well-armed troop, in that direction where the tearing of the turf was visible. It afterwards appeared, that the cunning marauders had descended in one direction, and returned in another, a circumstance not discovered till the following morning, when, from the marks of the hoofs, it was found that Don Manuel had taken the wrong direction. His pursuit was indeed checked by the intervention of the broad forest, in which himself and followers soon became involved, and wandered in hopeless perplexity, until conscious that, without proper guides, they could never penetrate it, they returned by degrees, and with great difficulty, after experiencing for several days all the evils of hunger, apprehension, and fatigue.

Don Manuel's next effort for the recovery of his son, was by engaging the Indians themselves in his service, particularly the Choctaws, who knew and remembered his son; and through their mediation he hoped to trace the place to which he had been conveyed, promising, through them, to pay a princely ransom for their prisoner, and freely forgive their offences towards him. From these people, however, he could gain no information; and although he sent to examine all the settlements of which he could obtain any tidings, he still remained in total ignorance of the fate of his son and servant. Neither could he learn that any horses or mules, of the description of his own, had found their way into the United States on the one hand, or into Mexico on the other; in every respect to him, darkness sat on the fate of his son, which neither his cares, his activity, nor his wealth, had power to unveil.

Whilst the father thus searched unavailingly for that beloved child, so long his pride and delight, the unhappy mother, devoured by the most distressing anxiety, experienced still severer sorrow; and her youngest offspring pined away like a withering flower.

On returning from the last fruitless expedition he had made, Don Manuel determined, that although his inquiries after his child would never cease, that he would not again subject his wife to the increased solicitude occasioned by his own absence; and he sat down once more in his own house as an inhabitant. Scarcely had he done so, when that Indian arrived who had doubtless been dispatched by Tustanuggi, but was not of his own nation, and who, after a long oration on the shortness of life, and the folly of grief, presented the afflicted parents with the garments of their child, and informed them that he slept in a far distant grave.

Many times had Donna Seraphina, in the first days of her sorrow, protested, "that if she knew her child was dead, she should be resigned to lose him, but that the dread of his sufferings among the Cumanches, or Alonquas, was more than she could endure;" and in this sentiment her husband had concurred. But when the awful destiny of the poor boy was announced—when they conceived him to have pined away in sickness and sorrow, among a savage tribe—they could not

forbear to lament his death, with all the poignancy of a new and unexpected sorrow; and they hung over his well-known garments with bitter anguish and floods of tears.

When Don Manuel was able to examine the man farther, he was informed truly that poor Diego had died of the bite of a rattlesnake, and his body been left in the woods; but the time of his death was specified as occurring in the course of the journey, the real time being probably unknown to the relator, as being a circumstance deemed immaterial by Tustanuggi, when he prepared the fictitious narrative of Manuel's death.

Orders were given to the servants to feed the Indian with whatever he liked, and reward him liberally; whilst the unhappy parents shut themselves up in their own apartment, to seek in prayer and meditation, aided by the ceremonies of their religion, that support in their affliction, which it might be said their new loss demanded.

In the mean time, the servants, who were attached to their superiors, and particularly fond of little Manuel, sought to gain from the Indian all particulars of his death; and finding him (according to their universal custom) exceeding silent, they plied him with liquor, as a temptation he could not resist, and which would not fail to render him more talkative.

From all which they now gained from him, the more intelligent were led to believe that their young master was not dead, and that the clothes had been only sent as a feint, to deter Don Manuel from farther search; but as they were led also to believe that the poor child was reserved for some horrible fate, they resolved not to add by such surmise to his present affliction.—"In the morning," said they, "we will tell him what the Indian has said in his cups, and he shall examine him more closely."

But when the morning came, the Indian was gone; though secured, as they thought, by his own complete intoxication, as well as by the fastenings of his chamber, he was gone forth, and never could be traced.

Often did the servants consult together on the propriety of revealing their suspicions, but they could never find a time when it would not have been cruel to add to the sorrows of their afflicted master. These sorrows were now multiplied; for the infant boy died within a month after Manuel's death was announced; and his mother was pronounced in a state of the utmost danger.

Regardless of every thing, save the health of his beloved wife, and convinced that every thing around her contributed to remind her of her twofold loss, Don Manuel hastily arranged his affairs, and determined to leave for ever a place which to him had proved so disastrous. He could not, however, quit America altogether at present, without injury to the property of others as well as his own; therefore he determined, in the first place, to procure change of scene, and the best medical aid, for his lady, and afterwards fix on some seaport town suitable for his views as a merchant, yet removed from scenes connected with his irreparable losses as a father.

In consequence of this determination, he now sailed with his family for New York, where he had several friends, who entered into his feelings with the warmest sympathy, and left no means untried to restore the health and cheer the spirits of Donna Seraphina. This was, however, best effected by her own sense of duty to her beloved husband, and the delight she was still capable of taking in her little daughter, who, having the advantage of instruction in this large city, improved rapidly in her education, and daily drew her mother from sorrowful contemplation on the past, to thankfulness for the present blessing. But the time too soon arrived, when the health of this their only blossom suffered from the climate, which was too cold for a southern flower; and the parents were warned to depart, lest their last hope should be taken from them.

CHAPTER XIII.

On quitting New York, the long-treasured secret of the servants of Don Manuel escaped them, by one of those accidents that can neither be foreseen nor guarded against. In the vessel in which they now proceeded to Savannah, two of the passengers were dilating on the deceitfulness of the Indians, and giving an instance, in which, without telling a lie, a Creek chief had yet fully embued a story with untruth; when Donna Seraphina's maid, looking at her master's valet, observed—"That was just the way in which that old man who brought master Manuel's clothes told lies about his death. I believe him alive yet."

"So do not I," said the man.

As these words were unfortunately spoken within hearing of the master and mistress, both servants were immediately questioned by them; and in consequence, those wounds which time and absence had somewhat healed, again bled in both their bosoms, and neither the caresses of their little girl, nor the anxiety they felt to preserve her from partaking their emotions, and thereby adding to her complaints, could save them from renewed sorrow. So decidedly was the distressed mother persuaded that her son had been preserved, that he might become a future victim, that at some moments she believed he was still living, and besought her husband again to seek him, protesting that she would accompany him all over the continent of America; at other times she would consider that he had already suffered under the most cruel tortures, and she would rend her own heart, and that of her husband and child, by witnessing the ill-suppressed agonies this thought awakened in her bosom.

Such was the state of their minds on their arrival at Savannah, which, though not a healthy place to the inhabitants of cold climates, was a present restorative to the little girl, whose recovered looks consoled her parents, who endeavoured to overcome the pangs of memory for her sake, and look forward with hope, and backward with resignation.

But, alas! an arrow was planted in the heart of each, which never ceased to rankle, and which was rendered still more acute, because each felt it a duty to conceal the fears and feelings which now agitated them from the other. Continually did Don Manuel repeat, that "he believed his poor boy was long since dead;" and he would argue on the utter improbability that a child of his age and sensibility, brought up with so much tenderness, could long survive the terror he experienced, when torn from his home and parents, and the hardships which naturally followed. In tracing his fate he uniformly spoke well of the Indians, and doubted not their kindness; but he maintained that Manuel could not live on the food they used, or endure the exercise they practised. But even while the anxious husband thus sought to alleviate the sufferings of his wife, his mind (at variance with his tongue) was employed in devising a thousand means for farther search after the child he pronounced dead; and if he could have formed any idea whither to direct his steps, he would, like the Indians, have opened the grave, to have convinced himself that those precious remains were indeed returning to their native dust, and that the hand of violence had not precipitated them thither.

Sensible that her husband had done his utmost to discover their son, and believing that he was indeed satisfied that Manuel was dead, the unhappy mother brooded in silence on the subject; again the colour on her cheek became paler, and the strength she had in a measure regained was declining, when those circumstances occurred which furnish the subject of our concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Osborne, fully satisfied that his new guest and *protégé* was indeed all that he pretended to be, became every day more interested in his welfare. To those who suggested the idea that the stolen boy was an impostor, and not the son of Don Manuel, he had uniformly answered, "There is no imposition in his desolate condition; every body may see that he is starved to death, and therefore it is my duty to relieve him first, and examine his character afterwards."

This judgment of the case was both just and benevolent; but all my young readers will be aware, that when this kind-hearted man was convinced that the unfortunate boy had told him no lies, nor affected to move his compassion, and awake his admiration, by any false account of his past sufferings and former situation, he felt for his misfortunes a double pity, and for his character a sincere respect; since, young as he was, he had evinced high and estimable qualities. He had shewn a strong and enduring affection to his parents, a reliance on Almighty goodness, an abhorrence of all cruelty, and a firmness of endurance, seldom exhibited; and therefore, had that in his character which promised still more, when his education could be formed, and his morals attended to. Often would Mr. Osborne point out these qualities to his son Henry, as worthy of the highest praise, even whilst he lamented the circumstances in which the stolen boy now stood, as being ignorant on many points, well known to children much younger than himself.

When Mr. Osborne had ascertained that Don Manuel del Perez was indeed at Savannah, and had made up his mind to take Manuel thither, he had a dress made for him as much like that which he described as being worn by him when stolen, as the tailors of Nachitoches could manage; and in this dress, so soon as it was deemed prudent for him to go out, he took him, in the first place, to the house of God. Often as the feelings of devotion had been strongly excited before, in this singularly-situated boy, never had they risen so highly to the great Source of good as on the present occasion. Though every eye was turned on him (for, alas! human nature is easily drawn from its duty), his eye was on no one; he looked only to that God whom he conceived to be more especially looking upon him from heaven, in this place, and claiming his gratitude, his promised obedience for the future, and his faith in the doctrines to be revealed by the preacher. He thought this the day when his emancipation was completed, his restoration ensured; and it was observed by all around, that although he scarcely uttered a word, even after he had returned from the church, yet that his countenance was expressive of the purest and serenest pleasure; yet tears frequently filled his eyes, and there were moments when he pressed his hand upon his heart, as if to repress the violence of its throbbing.

He still remained extremely thin in his person; but his sunken cheeks began to resume the plumpness and smoothness of young flesh, and the colour of his skin resumed its original olive cast; whereas, on his arrival, it was nearly black, from constant exposure to the sun, in addition to starving, which has always a tendency to darken the complexion. As soon as he could crawl out, and use the most trifling exertion, he had gone to visit his horse; and it was curious, and even affecting, to see the joyful recognition of his young master exhibited by the poor animal. After he visited him, Antonio fed better, and gained good looks much faster than before; and therefore Mr. Osborne never interfered to prevent him from performing the offices of a groom, so far as he had strength for it, to a creature so well meriting all his kindness; but he nevertheless lost no opportunity of impressing on his mind the necessity there existed that he should now turn his thoughts to totally different pursuits, and seek very distinct accomplishments from those to which he had been so long accustomed.

Happy was it for him, that the little book found in poor Diego's pocket had been so long cherished, seeing it had preserved to him the power of reading; the faculty of writing was entirely lost; but even in his present weak state, he made considerable progress, under the tuition of Henry Osborne, in regaining it—"for the purpose," as he said, "of writing to his sister," when he could find any person to carry the letter. Mr. Osborne informed him of the means by which letters were conveyed in organized society, and many other circumstances in common life, as we enjoy it, which seemed entirely eradicated from his memory, and which excited his wonder and delight. It was yet found that some particular scenes and circumstances were impressed on his mind so vividly, that they might be said to be painted there indelibly, and were described by him in language sometimes uncouth, but always striking and accurate, uttered with grace and energy. He remembered the ship in which he had sailed from Europe, the garden of his father's house, at San Antonio, when filled by gay company on his birthday; and particularly his mother's dress, on which he dwelt with that fond enthusiasm which accompanied all his feelings for her and his father. He was also fond of her maid, who had accompanied him from Europe, but he could recollect the name of no other servant; nor had he any remembrance of his former friends, his usual playmates, occupations, or books. It appeared as if some things were completely eradicated from the tablets of memory, that others might be engraven there the deeper.

With respect to all later transactions, his recollection was so vivid, that in recounting the circumstances of his long and melancholy journey, which had lasted thirteen days (if the last is included), he appeared to live it over again, with all its fears in the first part, and its sufferings in the latter. The circumstance of finding an empty village did not surprise Mr. Osborne in the least, as there are times when the inhabitants of each settlement go out in a body to the woods, or the harvest; but he did not the less feel for the poor disappointed boy, and thought it a wonder that he did not there end the hardships of his long wanderings. It is probable that the circumstance of being near the end of his labours, sustained him for the last three days; but it was the opinion of his friends, that he could not have lived through another night, at the time when he reached Nachitoches.

In recounting the history of his residence, he necessarily mentioned the extraordinary circumstance of seeing a man in the woods, whom, with the quick discernment of an Indian eye, he had pronounced civilized, an opinion confirmed by several of the Cumanches. On hearing this, that gentleman immediately exclaimed,—"I have no doubt but the person you saw was my worthy friend, Audaubon; he is an artist of great merit, who has demoted himself to the study of birds; and in pursuit of his object, with all the enthusiasm of genius, penetrates the deepest forests, encounters dangers of every kind, and sacrifices every personal comfort—yes, you have seen Audaubon, undoubtedly, and I wish he had seen you."

The time came, at length, when it was convenient for Mr. Osborne to set out; and as he preferred going by water, for the way by land was full of Indians, many of whom were of the worst description, he looked out for a vessel about to fall down to the Mississippi, from whence he knew he could proceed without difficulty.

Whilst making his bargain, he was accosted by one of those persons who had returned from their expedition up the Red River, desiring to know, "if a report he had just heard were true, that a boy was under his care, who had come from a Cumanche settlement, and of whom Tustanuggi, a chief of that nation, was in search?"

Mr. Osborne answered, that he had seen such a boy certainly, but was too busy to talk on the matter at present; and on leaving the man, he hastened home, and in the course of an hour, himself, Manuel, the horse, and his own son, were on board. He had already promised the latter this journey, as a high treat; and as he expected to do business at Savannah, he wished, in some measure, to initiate his son, and introduce him to their future correspondents.

The voyage was found highly beneficial to the health of Manuel, so that he throve much better than he had done on land; and when they reached the shores of Georgia, his figure was that of a tall, handsome lad, above the usual height for his age, and singularly muscular and agile. The bad condition of his hair, which had been formerly shaven on the sides, and left thick in the middle, was hidden by his cap; and his open countenance, quick eye, and changing colour, gave an expression of sensibility and animation, which interested all who saw him. It was yet certain that it was his kind attention to Henry, who had been very ill during the voyage, and who was leaning upon his arm, that, more than his personal appearance, struck those who saw them land, several of whom remarked, that they would answer for it the taller of those boys was of a good disposition; and "he is exceedingly like a gentleman, I know," said one of them.

"Do you know Don Manuel del Perez?" said Mr. Osborne, somewhat quickly: "can you tell me where he lives?"

"I can," said the gentleman; "his house lies to the left, among these lime-trees; you may see a part of the verandah here; but you will not see him to-day; it is a day of mourning in his family."

Mr. Osborne, as it was still early, did not therefore despair, although it was not very material if he waited for the morrow; but after landing his luggage, breakfasting at an inn, and arranging his dress, and that of the boys, he proceeded towards the place of Don Manuel's residence, glad in his own mind, that by conversation with Manuel, he had renewed his knowledge of the Spanish language, yet feeling at a loss how to find words for the approaching occasion.

He found the dwelling situated in a beautiful pleasure-ground, indicating the residence of a man of wealth, and surrounded with those elegancies and conveniencies so desirable in warm countries. Directing the boys to seat themselves under the shade of the verandah, he proceeded to the house, and inquired if Don Manuel were at home, at the same time saying—"I am aware that your master does not in general see company to-day, but my business is of a very particular nature."

"It is not to-day, but *to-morrow*," replied the man, at the same time speaking to another servant, who in a short time ushered Mr. Osborne into the room where Don Manuel, his daughter, and wife, were sitting; but the latter, on his entrance, rose to depart.

"Pardon me, madam," said Mr. Osborne, with great respect, but considerable emotion, "if I request *you* to remain; my business is of such a nature, that if Don Manuel had not been within, it would have been my duty to have seen you upon it."

"Me, sir! I am too ill to be spoken with."

"Pardon me! a *mother* can endure much, when the subject is her child—when she is seeking even a painful conviction on a dubious point."

Donna Seraphina sank into her chair, pale as ashes, but utterly unable to speak; whilst Don Manuel, eagerly rising, exclaimed—"For Heaven's sake! sir, if you have any news to give us of our poor lost boy, speak quickly—but do not dare to trifle with our feelings; and I beseech you, deal delicately with a wife and mother, whose weakness you must perceive."

"Sir," said Mr. Osborne, "I am myself a father, and a widowed husband. I can feel for you sincerely, or I should not have come all the way from Nachitoches, to bring you information which was improper to reveal, or unworthy of attention."

"Speak on, sir, I beseech you."

"About two months since, a Spanish boy, escaped from a settlement of the Cumanches, arrived in Nachitoches, after passing through an uninhabited country, about four hundred miles. I need not tell you he was on the point of perishing with hunger, and that it was some time before he could inform us who he was, and how he came in this condition; but when he could speak, he said, that he was stolen from San Antonio, at the same time with your son and your servant Diego."

"Does he say Manuel is dead?" cried the mother.

"On the contrary, he spoke of him as growing very fast, and being expert at all Indian exercises."

"He lives! he lives!" cried the mother, and instantly sunk fainting on the floor.

The more immediate attention of Don Manuel was now called to his wife, whom, when she was restored, he now earnestly desired to withdraw; but she declared—"that since she knew her son was alive, she could bear any thing;" and she entreated Mr. Osborne to proceed with his narrative.

"Alas!" observed Don Manuel, "to us it must be painful, even if true; if these wild people have rendered our child one of themselves, he is as much lost to us as if the grave had closed on him; so young—so very young, he could be modelled to any thing; and if I had the power to compel his return, no doubt he would fly to his old haunts, and render us more wretched than ever."

"But this boy declares that Manuel pines after his parents, whom he loves most tenderly; that the cruelty of the Indians was so abhorrent to his nature, as to disgust him entirely, and induce him, at the utmost risk of life, to return to them. I must not, however, disguise from you, that this boy is thought by many an impostor, though I could pledge myself for his truth."

"Alas! I fear you are deceived; for it is certain we should have heard if any such boy had been taken with our own: it is true, our servants believed the tale told by the Indian was false: can this boy account for our son's clothes being sent back to us?"

"Very easily: Tustanuggi, who had taken him captive, and, unquestionably, conceived for him a great affection, by this means sought to divert you from pursuit. My informer says, that after he saw Manuel dressed as an Indian, he never found any vestige of his former clothing."

"Does he seem to know any thing of Diego?"

"Yes; he speaks of him with great affection, and was with him when he died in the woods, from the bite of a rattlesnake."

"How strange!—had he any knowledge of me, or any of my household?"

"He knew you well, for he described you to me exactly; also your house and garden at San Antonio. He told me also, that

on the day when your son completed his ninth year, which is some time in this season, Donna Seraphina wore a lemon-coloured dress, trimmed with white bugles, and a veil most richly embroidered."

"So I did; the poor boy is right; undoubtedly he is no impostor. Our own sorrows absorbed us so much, we knew not of our neighbour's loss."

"We will atone for it now," said Don Manuel; "I will take upon me henceforward the fortunes of this poor boy. He shall be restored to his friends at San Antonio, and all his wants provided for."

"Ah, sir! let us see this boy instantly. Why—why did he leave my Manuel? How much must he suffer from the loss of his companion! If one escaped from the Indians, why could not two?"

"*This* boy obtained a horse of extraordinary qualities, as you shall convince yourself, madam, by and by: but I am anxious fully to convince you that the child I am about to present to you is indeed no impostor. I presume every circumstance of that memorable birth-day is faithfully registered in your mind?"

"Yes; indeed I remember them too well."

"In descending the stairs from your dressing-room, you made a false step, in consequence of which a string of pearls round your neck was broken; and this boy declares that he tied the beads with his own hands."

"Mother! mother!" cried the lovely girl, who had hitherto stood in silent astonishment, gazing on Mr. Osborne, "it was Manuel who tied the string, and I gathered the beads. Eulalia will remember it, for she was following you down stairs."

"I remember—I remember all," gasped the trembling mother; "it is my child—my own first-born child, of whom you speak. May God so deal with you and yours as you have dealt with him! But where—where is he?"

As Donna Seraphina spoke she rose, as if to fly to her long-lost son; but her trembling limbs refused to sustain her; and her wild glances conveyed almost the idea that she was seized with sudden madness. At this moment, however, the violence of her emotions was arrested, and happily transferred to her husband, who burst into a passion of tears, and sobbed aloud.

Such an uncontrollable transport, in a person of his description, was an event that had the effect of alarming all around him; for although a man of the deepest feeling, it was so controlled by reason and religion, that any ebullition of passion seemed foreign to his nature. At this awful and ecstatic moment, however, his joy and gratitude to Heaven agitated him in the same manner as some persons feel the effects of sudden misfortune. He had listened with intense expectation and doubt; he had perceived, from the manners of the speaker, that he at least believed Manuel in a state of safety; but it was not till the affair of the necklace was mentioned, that he durst allow his trembling heart to admit the full tide of joy that overwhelmed it.

Mr. Osborne having (with even female tenderness) taken off his neckcloth, suffered his feelings to take their natural vent, happy to see that in her momentary alarm for her beloved husband, Donna Seraphina's agitation on her son's account was suspended. When some degree of composure was restored, he told them, that if they could now bear the sight of his impostor, he would bring him in, and submit him to their inspection; but he added—"I must beg you, on his part, to remember, that although, from long habit, he has attained much self-command, and may not, in the first instance, exhibit that intense affection or extravagant joy which would be natural in most children, he is yet a boy of acute feeling, and even now in too delicate a state to have it severely exercised."

With these words Mr. Osborne quitted the apartment, and went out to the place where he had left his son and Manuel; but, to his great astonishment, found only the former.

"Where is Manuel gone to?" said he, in alarm.

"Oh, papa, half an hour since, a woman came into the house, having the air of a person who belonged to it. On seeing us, she gave such a loud scream, (I wonder you did not hear it,) and flung her arms round Manuel, as if she would have hugged him to death. Then there came several servants, some of whom remembered him perfectly well; and they all joined to carry him away somewhere, and lock him up; for they said, if his mother saw him, she would die upon the spot."

"His father, however, in my opinion, would have been the more likely to do it," said Mr. Osborne; "but I now trust both are prepared to see him; so we will follow, and make inquiries."

It was found that all the family were assembled in the most distant room, where Eulalia and Juan, who, with the unfortunate Diego, had formed their European attendants, were descending to the rest on all that had passed in their minds on the subject of Manuel's captivity, declaring, in the same moment, "that he was so grown, and so altered, nobody could believe he was their own dear Signor Manuel, and that they could have owned him amongst ten thousand." One moment they bemoaned over him, as the most injured and ill-used of all the human race; and the next protested "that he looked quite charmingly; and that after all which could be said, the Indians were very respectable people, and had behaved exceedingly well to him."

Mr. Osborne broke up this *coterie*, by entering, and desiring Manuel to accompany him to his parents and sister; for he was not conscious that the latter had followed him, and was at this time slyly, but fondly, gazing on her brother. He found Manuel standing silently and abstractedly in the midst of the party, looking pale and forlorn, and by no means wearing the joyous face of one returned from long travel and many hardships to his father's mansion.

"Come, come, my good fellow, your parents are impatient to receive you."

At this moment Manuel darted through the crowd, and throwing himself on Mr. Osborne's bosom, he cried long and bitterly.

"Why, how is this?" said his kind benefactor: "surely these are tears of joy; yet they seem like those of sorrow."

"Oh, sir!" said the poor boy, at length raising his head, "you have been so long—so very long, in persuading my parents to receive me, that never since the day when I was taken from them, did I suffer so much as I have done in the last hour. I am sure that Tustanuggi and Moscogi would receive me more speedily than they have done. Perhaps they think me that thing some of the people of Nachitoches called me?"

Mr. Osborne hastened to assure him it was rather on account of his own fears that they would be injured by their overwhelming joy, than any doubt on the part of his parents which had occasioned the delay; and when he assured him that even then his father was weeping with delight, the boy exclaimed with transport—"Ah! then I am sure he loves me yet, for he is as little likely to weep as a red warrior."

To poor Mr. Osborne it was a mortification to usher his *protégé* into the presence of his parents with red eyes and disordered hair; but the recognition of the servants had effectually paved the way for that of the parents. Indeed, the likeness of the father in Manuel's person was only rendered the more striking, from the recent agitation both had experienced; and not a shadow could exist in the minds of any person who beheld them, on the subject of the stolen boy's identity.

How the mother gazed upon him, pressed him to her bosom, traced every lineament of his features—how, with streaming eyes, she thanked God for this unexpected and inestimable gift, every one will imagine. They will conceive what was the delight of the father, when he found that even in the wilderness, his son had retained a lively sense of affection to him, a degree of observance of the rites of his religion, and a deep feeling of humanity. Nor can any one doubt the unbounded gratitude they experienced towards that kind friend, whose hand had been held out "to save him when he was ready to perish." No! often would Donna Seraphina turn to Mr. Osborne and declare, "that never man had shewn such sympathy in another's feelings as he had done, and that but for him, she never could have sustained the joy with which her spirit was loaded."

As all parties by degrees became more composed, Mr. Osborne begged to know, "if the following day, which he understood was consecrated to mourning in the family, had any thing to do with Manuel's return?"

"Every thing," said Don Manuel, "for this is his birthday—he is now twelve years old; and to-morrow, the day on which he was torn from us three years ago. We will now hold it as a day of solemn thanks and rejoicings; the poor shall be comforted—the hungry fed."

Manuel turned his eyes full upon Henry, who was a fair handsome boy of pleasant countenance, but who had not hitherto obtained due attention.—"My dear child, I read your wishes—be assured I can fully estimate our boundless obligation to Mr. Osborne, and your friendship for his son—these are matters for a future consideration: but if there is any kind of

present you wish either to receive, or to give, on this eventful day, speak your wishes—they are not likely to be refused."

Manuel looked for some time very thoughtful, and then said—"I wish you, father, to send for Antonio, and let him be taken very good care of; indeed, I shall be very glad to attend to him myself—he was my friend when I had none beside in the wide, wide world."

"Be he who he may, he shall share my house, and my table, whilst I have one."

"It is my horse, father, that I mean; not indeed that he is mine, but I was forced to take him."

"Be assured he will be no small favourite here—is there any thing else in your mind?"

"Yes, when Mr. Osborne returns, I wish to send blankets, a gun and powder to Tustanuggi, and several useful things to Moscogi, and little Scrogonori. I think I shall be much happier when I have sent these things, not merely as payment for the horse, but because it will shew that I can forgive what is past, and remember them all with good will; and I will also send Uswega a knife, in token that I have forgiven him also, although he is an unfeeling boy."

How many questions arose as to the respective merits of these parties—how many tears were shed over circumstances on which Manuel slightly touched—we must leave to the imagination of our readers. It is certain, however, that Mr. Osborne's description of the state in which he found Manuel, though much softened, was the most affecting of any thing that was offered to his hearers.

Happy was Don Manuel to find that it was in his power, as a man of large property and connection, greatly to assist this gentleman in his commercial views, and render his voyage as prosperous as it was considerate and benevolent. To his son Henry he offered a home in his house, that he might finish his education under the eye of a clever tutor, whom he procured for Manuel—an arrangement equally delightful to the son, and satisfactory to the father; and it was unquestionably of the greatest utility to Manuel, whose studies were rendered more agreeable by so dear a companion.

It is now between eight and nine years since Manuel entered Nachitoches, in the deplorable condition we have related, and therefore he is by this time a young man of two or three and twenty; and we sincerely hope is now, by his good conduct, rewarding his parents for their care and anxiety, and proving that the life so wonderfully preserved, was spared to good purpose. We shall only observe further, that when Mr. Osborne took leave of Don Manuel's family on his return to Nachitoches, he was loaded with marks of the gratitude he had so justly excited, and was the bearer of a present to Tustanuggi, which he sent up the Red River the following season. It consisted of every thing which could contribute to the comfort of an Indian wigwam, more especially in those articles calculated for female use; for so thankful was Donna Seraphina to the people who had caused her so much misery, because they had not rendered it more complete by destroying her son, that she thought she could not reward them sufficiently. Happily her health returned with her peace of mind; and being a woman of highly-cultivated mind, she applied herself diligently to assisting her son's education; and left no means untried to strengthen the principles, enlighten the understanding, and confirm the affections of her long-lost stolen boy.

THE END.

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hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved as in the original

Page 27, into the Mississippi ==> into the Mississippi

Page 86, on some occarions ==> on some occasions

[The end of *The Stolen Boy, an Indian Tale* by Mrs. Hofland]