

# A Summer in the Wilderness

Embracing a canoe voyage  
up the Mississippi and  
around Lake Superior

Charles Lanman

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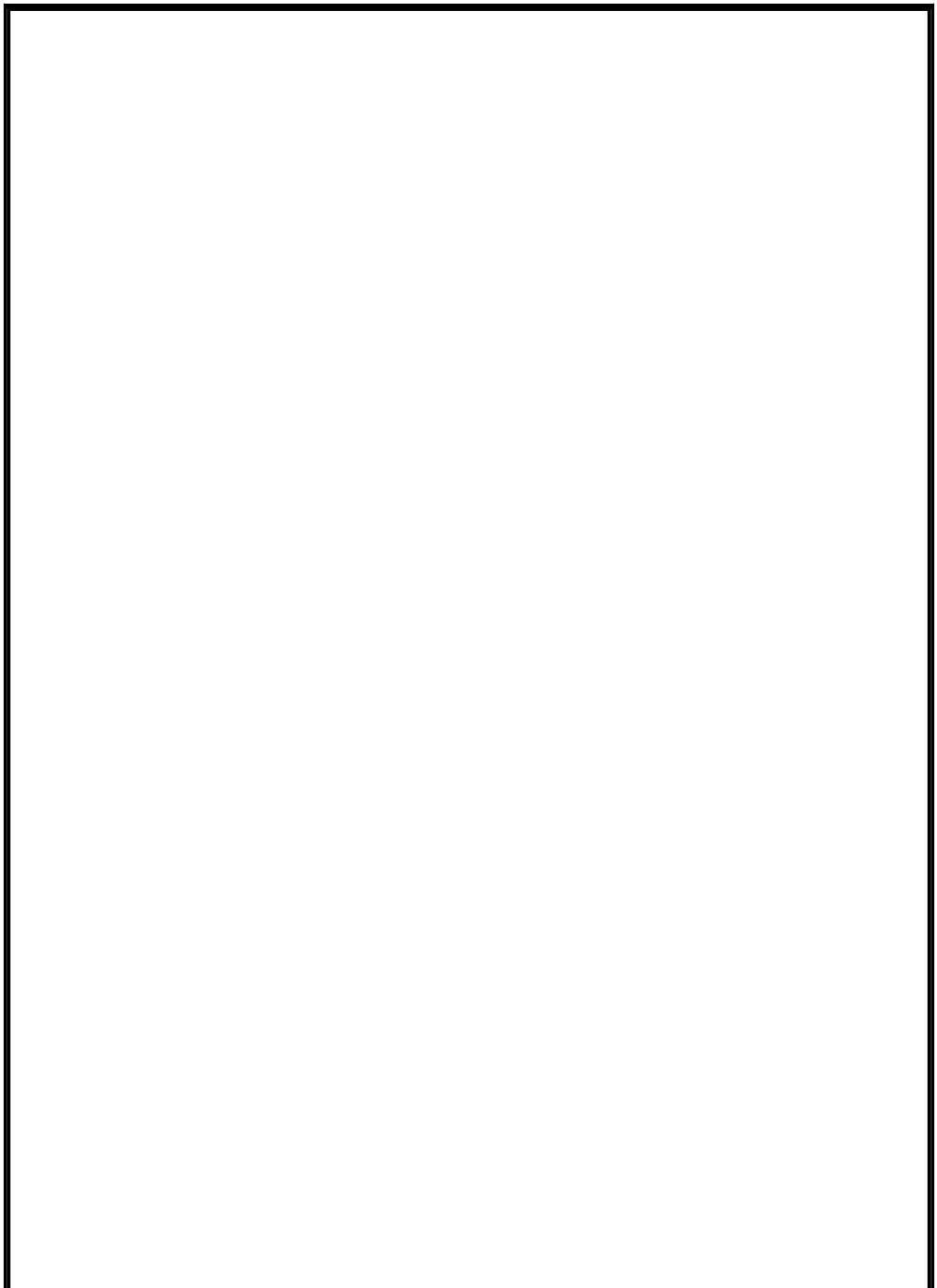


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A  
**SUMMER IN THE  
WILDERNESS;  
EMBRACING  
A CANOE VOYAGE  
UP THE MISSISSIPPI AND AROUND  
LAKE SUPERIOR.**

BY  
**CHARLES LANMAN,**  
AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS FOR SUMMER HOURS," ETC.

And I was in the wilderness alone.

BRYANT.

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TO  
JAMES F. MELINE, ESQ.,  
OF  
CINCINNATI, OHIO,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS,  
WITH FEELINGS OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT,  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS FRIEND,  
THE AUTHOR.

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# SUMMER IN THE WILDERNESS.

## CHAPTER I.

SAINT LOUIS, June, 1846.

The River Queen, as Saint Louis is sometimes called, is looked upon as the threshold leading to the wild and romantic region of the Upper Mississippi. It was founded in the year seventeen hundred and sixty-four, by two Frenchmen, named Laclade and Chouteau, who were accompanied by about thirty Creoles. The first steamer which landed here came from New Orleans in the year eighteen hundred and nineteen; but the number now belonging here is rated at three hundred, many of which are unsurpassed in speed and splendor of accommodations. The population of this city amounts to forty thousand souls. It is elevated some eighty feet above the low-water mark of the Mississippi, and from the river presents a handsome appearance. The old part of the town is inhabited by a French population, and is in a dilapidated condition; but the more modern portion is distinguished for its handsome streets, and tastefully built mansions and public buildings. Fronting the levee or landing are several blocks of stone stores, which give one an idea of the extensive business transacted here. On one occasion I saw this wharfing ground so completely crowded with merchandise of every possible variety, that travellers were

actually compelled to walk from the steamboats to the hotels. This city is the home market for all the natural productions of a wilderness country extending in different directions for thousands of miles, and watered by several of the largest rivers in the world. Its growth, however, has been somewhat retarded by the peculiar character of its original inhabitants. The acknowledged wealth of many of its leading men can only be equalled by their illiberality and want of enterprise. But time is committing sad ravages among these ancient citizens, for they are, from age and infirmities, almost daily dropping into the place of graves. Under the benign influence of true American enterprise, this city is rapidly becoming distinguished for its New England character, in spite of the retarding cause alluded to above, and the baneful institution of Slavery. In fine, it possesses, to an uncommon degree, all the worthy qualities which should belong to an enlightened and eminently prosperous city.

There is one unique feature connected with the River Queen, which gives it, at times, a most romantic appearance. It is the point whence must start all distant expeditions to the North and West, and where the treasures of the wilderness are prepared for re-shipment to the more distant markets of our own and foreign countries. Here, during the spring and summer months may often be seen caravans about to depart for California, Santa Fe, the Rocky Mountains, and Oregon, while the sprightly step and sparkling eye will speak to you of the hopes and anticipations which animate the various adventurers. At one time, perhaps, may be seen a company of toil-worn trappers entering the city, after an absence of months, far away on the head waters of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, where they have hunted the beaver, the buffalo, the otter, the bear, and the

deer; and as they steal away to their several homes, from the door of the Fur Company, where they have just rendered their account, it does the heart good to ponder on the joys which will be brought into existence by the happy return. And the Indians, from different nations, who often visit this place, also add greatly to the picturesque appearance of its streets. Summoned by curiosity, they congregate here in large numbers, and while their gaudy trappings and painted faces remind us of the strange wild life they lead, their prowling propensities and downcast eyes inform us of the melancholy fact, that they are the victims of a most heartless, though lawful oppression. This remark, by the way, reminds me of a living picture which I lately witnessed, and will briefly describe. It was the sunset hour, and I was returning from a ride on the eastern bank of the great river. The western sky was flooded with a saffron glow, in the midst of which floated unnumbered cloud-islands, tinged with deepest gold. Underneath lay the beautiful city, with its church-spires up-pointing to the Christian's home; then passed the rushing tide of the Mississippi ploughed by many a proud keel; and in the foreground was a woody bluff, on the brow of which sat a solitary Indian, humming a strangely solemn song, as his white locks and eagle plumes waved in the evening breeze. I asked no question of the sorrowing dreamer, but pursued my way, pondering on the cruel destiny which has power to make man a stranger and an exile, on the very soil from which he sprang, and where repose the ashes of his forgotten kindred.

Lover as I am of genuine art, it will not do for me to leave this city, the sturdy child of a new and great empire, without alluding to its treasures in this particular. The bright particular star, who uses the pencil here, is Charles Deas. He is a young man who left New-York about eight years ago, for the purpose of studying

his art in the wilds west of the Mississippi. He makes this city his head-quarters, but annually spends a few months among the Indian tribes, familiarizing himself with their manners and customs, and he is honorably identifying himself with the history and scenery of a most interesting portion of the continent. The great charm of his productions is found in the strongly marked national character which they bear. His collection of sketches is already very valuable. The following are a few of the pictures which I saw in his studio, and which pleased me exceedingly. One, called the Indian Guide, represents an aged Indian riding in the evening twilight on a piebald horse, apparently musing upon the times of old. The sentiment of such a painting is not to be described, and can only be felt by the beholder who has a passion for the wilderness. Another, Long Jake, is the literal portrait of a celebrated character of the Rocky Mountains. He looks like an untamed hawk, figures in a flaming red shirt, and is mounted on a black stallion. He is supposed to be on the ridge of a hill, and as the sky is blue, the figure stands out in the boldest relief.

Artistically speaking, this is a most daring effort of the pencil, but the artist has decidedly triumphed. In a picture called Setting out for the Mountains, Mr. Deas has represented a species of American Cockney, who has made up his mind to visit the Rocky Mountains. He is mounted on a bob-tailed, saucy-looking pony, and completely loaded down with clothing, pistols, guns, and ammunition. He is accompanied by a few covered wagons, a jolly servant to be his right-hand man, and two dogs, which are frolicking on the prairie ahead, and while the man directs the attention of his master to some game, the latter shrugs his feeble shoulders, seems to think this mode of travelling exceedingly fatiguing, and personifies the latter end of a misspent life. You imagine that a few months have elapsed, and,

turning to another picture, you behold our hero Returning from the Mountains. Exposure and hardships have transformed him into a superb looking fellow, and he is now full of life and buoyancy, and riding with the most perfect elegance and ease a famous steed of the prairies. The wagons, servant and dogs, are now in the rear of our adventurer, who, comically dressed with nothing but a cap, a calico shirt, and pair of buckskin pantaloons, is dashing ahead, fearless of every danger that may happen to cross his path. These pictures completely epitomize a personal revolution which is constantly taking place on the frontiers. One of our artist's more ambitious productions, represents the daring feat of Captain Walker, during a recent memorable battle in Mexico. The story is that the Captain, who happened to be alone on a plain, had his horse killed from under him, and was himself wounded in the leg. Supposing, as was the case, that the Mexican savage would approach to take his scalp, he feigned himself dead, as he lay upon his horse, and as his enemy was about to butcher him, he fired and killed the rascal on the spot, and seizing the reins of his enemy's horse, he mounted him and rode into his own camp. In the picture Walker is in the act of firing. But the picture upon which Mr. Deas's fame will probably rest, contains a large number of figures, and represents the heroism of Captain James Clarke, who, when about to be murdered by a council of Indians at North-Bend, threw the war-belt in the midst of the savages, with a defying shout, and actually overwhelmed them with astonishment, thereby saving his own life and those of his companions. This picture is true to history in every particular, and full of expression.

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But enough about these productions of art. I am bound to the fountain head of the Mississippi, and feel impatient to be with

nature in the wilderness. Before concluding this chapter, however, I will describe a characteristic incident which I met with in Saint Louis.

I had been taking a lonely walk along the banks of the Mississippi, and, in fancy, revelling amid the charms of this great western world, as it existed centuries ago. My mind was in a dreamy mood, and as I re-entered the city the hum of business fell like discord on my ear. It was the hour of twilight and the last day of the week, and the citizens whom I saw seemed anxious to bring their labors to a close that they might be ready for the Sabbath.

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While sauntering leisurely through a retired street, I was startled from a waking dream, by the sound of a deep-toned bell, and, on lifting my eyes, I found that I stood before the Catholic cathedral. I noticed a dim light through one of the windows, and as the gates were open, I remembered that it was the vesper hour, and entered the church. The inner door noiselessly swung to, and I found myself alone, the spectator of a most impressive scene. A single lamp, hanging before the altar, threw out a feeble light, and so feeble was it, that a solemn gloom brooded throughout the temple. While a dark shadow filled the aisles and remote corners, the capitals of the massive pillars on either side were lost in a still deeper shade. From the ceiling hung many a gorgeous chandelier, which were now content to be eclipsed by the humble solitary lamp. Scriptural paintings and pieces of statuary were on every side, but I could discern that Christ was the centre of attraction in all. Over, and around the altar too, were many works of art, together with a multitudinous array of sacred symbols. Just in front of these, and in the centre of the mystic throne, hung the lonely lamp, which seemed to be

endowed with a thinking principle, as its feeble rays shot out into the surrounding darkness. That part of the cathedral where towered the stupendous organ, was in deep shadow, but I knew it to be there by the faint glistening of its golden pipes: as to the silence of the place, it was perfectly death-like and holy. I chanced to heave a sigh, and that very sigh was not without an echo. The distant hum of life, alone convinced me that I was in a living world.

But softly! A footstep now breaks upon the silence! A priest in a ghost-like robe, is passing from one chancel door to another. Another footstep! and lo! a woman, clothed in black, with her face completely hidden in a veil, passes up an aisle and falls upon her knees in prayer. She has come here to find consolation in her widowhood. And now, slowly tottering along, comes a white-haired man, and he, too, falls in the attitude of prayer. With the pleasures of this world he is fully satisfied, and his thoughts are now taken up with that strange pilgrimage, whence travellers never return, and upon which he feels he must soon enter.

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Other life-sick mortals, have also entered the sanctuary, offered up their evening prayer, and mingled with the tide of life once more. But again the front door slowly opens, and a little negro boy, some seven years of age, is standing by my side. What business has he here,—for surely this offspring of a slave, and a slave himself, cannot be a religious devotee? I take back that thought. I have wronged the child. The Spirit of God must tabernacle in his heart, else he would not approach the altar with such deep reverence. Behold him, like little Samuel of old, calling upon the Invisible in prayer! What a picture! Twilight in a superb cathedral, and the only worshipper a child and a slave!



## CHAPTER II.

ROCK ISLAND, July, 1846.

I have sailed upon the Mississippi, from the point where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico, all the way up to the little Lake which gives it existence, and I now intend to record a description of its scenery and prominent characteristics. The literal meaning of the Chippeway word Meseeseepe is—water every where—and conveys the same idea which has been translated—father of waters. When we remember the immense extent of the valley watered by this stream and its hundred tributaries, this name must be considered as singularly expressive.

That portion of the river known as the Lower Mississippi, extends from New Orleans to the mouth of the Missouri, a distance of about twelve hundred miles. As the highway for a multitudinous number of steam vessels of every size and character, it is of incalculable importance, not only to this country but to the world; but with regard to its scenery, it affords little of an interesting character. Excepting a few rocky bluffs found some distance below Saint Louis, and in the vicinity of Natchez, both shores of the river are low, level, and covered with dense forests of cotton-wood and cypress, where the panther and the wolf roam in perfect freedom, and the eagle swoops upon its prey undisturbed by the presence of man. The banks are of an alluvial character, and as the current is exceedingly rapid, the course of the river is constantly changing. You might travel a hundred miles without finding a place sufficiently secure to land; and the water is always so

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very muddy that a tumbler full will always yield half an inch of the virgin soil. The surface of the stream is never placid, but for ever turbulent and full of eddies and whirlpools, as if its channel were composed of a continued succession of caverns. Snags and sawyers abound throughout its whole extent. They are taken from the shore by the rushing tide and planted in the channel quite as rapidly as the snag-vessels can extricate them from their dangerous positions.

The Lower Mississippi (always excepting the still more frantic Missouri) is probably the most dangerous and least interesting river in the world to navigate. When not in actual danger, you are likely to be so far removed from it, high and dry on a sand bar, that the annoyance, like a certain period in our national history, has a tendency to try men's souls. The following picture of an actual scene on this portion of the great river, may be looked upon as characteristic of the whole. On your right is a series of rocky bluffs, covered with a stunted growth of trees, before you an expanse of water ten miles long and two wide, on your left an array of sand bars and islands, where lie imbedded the wrecks of some fifty steamboats, and in the more remote distance a belt of thickly wooded bottom land. On the water, passing to and fro, are a number of steamers, and immediately in the foreground a solitary sawyer and the hull of a sunken steam-boat. This is the spot which has been rightly named the Grave Yard, for hundreds of souls at different times have passed from thence into eternity. When I left the turbid and unruly bosom of the Lower Mississippi, I felt towards it as a person would naturally feel towards an old tyrant who had vainly striven to destroy him in his savage wrath. I should remark in passing that the bottom lands of this river are not wholly without inhabitants; occasionally a lonely log cabin meets the eye, which is the only

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home of a miserable being who obtains his living by supplying the steamers with wood. Nailed to a stump before one of these squatter residences, which stood in the centre of a small clearing, I saw a board with the following inscription,—“This *farm* for sale—price \$1 50.” Though I could not help laughing at the unintentional wit of that sentence, it told me a melancholy tale of poverty, intemperance, and sickness, which are too often identified with the dangers of this wilderness.

I would now speak of the Upper Mississippi, and I only regret that I cannot strike the poet’s lyre, and give to this “parent of perpetual streams” an undying hymn of praise. The moment that you pass the mouth of the Missouri on your way up the Father of Waters, you seem to be entering an entirely new world, whose every feature is “beautiful exceedingly.” The shores now slope with their green verdure to the very margin of the water, which is now of a deep green color, perfectly clear, and placid as the slumber of a babe. My first view of this spot was at the twilight hour, when the time was holy, and every object that met my gaze seemed to have been baptized with an immortal loveliness.

Over the point where the sun had disappeared, floated a cavalcade of golden clouds, and away to the eastward rolled on, along her clear, blue pathway, the bright, full moon, and now and then a trembling star,—the whole completely mirrored in the bosom of the softly flowing but ever murmuring stream. On my right lay a somewhat cultivated shore; on my left a flock of islands, whose heavy masses of foliage rested upon the water; and in the distance was the pleasant and picturesque town of Alton, with its church spires speaking of hope and heaven. No living creatures met my gaze, save a wild duck and her brood gliding into their shadowy home, and an occasional night-hawk

as he shot through the upper air after his living food; and no sound fell upon my ear, but the jingling of a distant cow-bell and the splash of a leaping sturgeon.

Another picture which makes me remember with unalloyed pleasure this portion of the Mississippi, was a scene that I witnessed early in the morning. The sky was without a cloud, and the pleasant sunshine fell upon my cheek, like the kiss of one whom we dearly love. On either side of me was a row of heavily timbered islands, whose lofty columns, matted vines, and luxuriant undergrowth of trees, told me of a soil that was rich beyond compare but seldom trodden by the foot of man; and in the distance was an open vista, beautified by other islands, and receding to the sky. Now, unnumbered swallows were skimming over the water, uttering a shrill chirp; then, the cry of a disappointed blue jay would grate upon the ear; now, a boblink and black-bird held a noisy conversation, and then the croak of a raven would descend from the top of some dead tree; now the mocking-bird, the dove, the red and blue-bird, the robin and the sparrow favored me with a chorus of their own, while the whistle of the quail and the lark would occasionally break out to vary the natural oratorio. And to cap the climax, an occasional flock of ducks might be seen, startled away by our approach, also a crane feeding in a cluster of trees, or a bold fish-hawk pursuing his prey, while the senses were almost oppressed by the fragrance of blowing flowers, which met the eye on every side.

By multiplying the above two scenes almost indefinitely, and tinging them with the ever varying hues and features of the pleasant summer time, and by fancying on either bank of the river an occasional thriving village, "like sunshine in a shady

place," you will have a very good idea of the Mississippi scenery between the mouth of the Missouri and the Lower Rapids. These are twelve miles long, and the first on the river which impede its navigation. The water, during the dry season varies from two to four feet in depth on these rapids, but the channel is so very crooked that even the smaller steamers with difficulty find a passage. Below this point the eye of the traveller is occasionally delighted by a fine prairie landscape, but the following picture may be looked upon as a pretty accurate epitome of the scenery between Nauvoo at the head of the Rapids, and Rock Island. It was the noontide hour of one of those heavenly days which occasionally make very happy the universal human world. My own heart, which had been darkened by the shadows of human life, was made joyous by its dazzling loveliness. The sunshine slept upon the quiet landscape, as sweetly as if the world had never known a deed of sin, while every object which composed the scene performed its secret ministry of good. It was just such a day as William Herbert has made immortal in the following words:

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"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky;  
The dew will weep thy fall to-night,  
For thou must die."

At my feet flowed the tranquil waters of the superb river, from whose very margin receded a perfectly level prairie, which soon lost itself, in a rolling country, whose motionless billows receded to the far horizon. On my extreme left lay a range of wood-crowned and dreary looking hills, and on my right a solitary bluff which was as smooth on every side as the most highly cultivated lawn. The atmosphere was soft and of a rosy

hue, and made me long for the wings of a dove that I might float away upon its bosom in a dream of bliss. Flowers of loveliest hue and sweetest fragrance were on every side; and the only sound that fell upon my ear was a hum of insect wings. On the bluffs already mentioned a large herd of deer were quietly cropping their food; and in the air high towards the zenith was floating in his pride of freedom, an immense eagle, the seeming monarch of the western world.

Rock Island, whence I date this paper, and which lies in the river midway between the villages of Davenport and Rock Island, is one of the most picturesque points I have yet seen during my journey. It is literally speaking a rocky island, and is surmounted by the dilapidated walls of an ancient fortress, and was, in former days, the scene of many a struggle between the red man and his *brotherly* oppressor. But the place is greatly changed. Where once the gayly dressed officer quaffed his wine cup at the midnight hour, the lonely shriek of the owl is now heard even until the break of day; and the rat, the toad, and the spider have usurped the place where once the soldier hummed his thoughtless song, or was heard the roar of his artillery.

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## CHAPTER III.

ROCK ISLAND, July, 1846.

Starved Rock is the unpoetical name of a singular spot on the Illinois river about sixty miles east of this place, and eight miles south of Ottawa. It is a rocky bluff, rising from the margin of the stream to the height of more than a hundred feet, and is only separated from the main land by a narrow chasm. Its length might probably measure two hundred and fifty feet. Its sides are perpendicular, and there is only one point where it can be ascended, and that is by a narrow stair-like path. It is covered with many a cone-like evergreen, and, in summer, encircled by luxuriant grape and ivy vines, and clusters of richly colored flowers. It is undoubtedly the most conspicuous and beautiful pictorial feature of the sluggish and lonely Illinois, and is associated with the final extinction of the Illinois tribe of Indians. The legend, which I listened to from the lips of a venerable Indian trader, is as follows.

Many years ago, the whole region lying between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi was the home and dominion of the Illinois Indians. For them alone did the buffalo and antelope range over its broad prairies; for them did the finest of rivers roll their waters into the lap of Mexico, and bear upon their bosoms the birchen canoe, as they sought to capture the wild water fowl; and for them alone did the dense forests, crowding upon these streams, shelter their unnumbered denizens.

In every direction might be seen the smoke of Indian wigwams curling upwards to mingle with the sunset

clouds, which told them tales of the spirit land.

Years passed on, and they continued to be at ease in their possessions. But the white man from the far east, with the miseries which have ever accompanied him in his march of usurpation, began to wander into the wilderness, and trouble to the poor red man was the inevitable consequence. The baneful "fire water," which was the gift of civilization, created dissensions among the savage tribes, until in process of time, and on account of purely imaginary evils, the Pottowattomies from Michigan determined to make war upon the Indians of Illinois. Fortune, or rather destiny, smiled upon the oppressors, and the identical rock in question was the spot that witnessed the extinction of an aboriginal race.

It was the close of a long siege of cruel warfare, and the afternoon of a day in the delightful Indian summer. The sunshine threw a mellow haze upon the prairies, and tinged the multitudinous flowers with deepest gold; while, in the shadow of the forest islands, the doe and her fawn reposed in perfect quietness, lulled into a temporary slumber by the hum of the grasshopper and wild bee. The wilderness world wore the aspect of a perfect sabbath. But now, in the twinkling of an eye, the delightful solitude was broken by the shrill whoop and dreadful struggle of bloody conflict upon the prairies and in the woods. All over the country were seen the dead bodies of the ill-fated Illinois, when it was ordered by Providence that the concluding skirmish between the hostile parties should take place in the vicinity of Starved Rock.

The Pottowattomies numbered near three hundred warriors, while the Illinois tribe was reduced to about one hundred, who

were mostly aged chiefs and youthful heroes—the more desperate fighters having already perished, and the women and children of the tribe having already been massacred and consumed in their wigwams. The battle was most desperate between the unequal parties.

The Illinois were about to give up all for lost, when, in their frenzy, they gave a defying shout, and retreated to the rocky bluff. From this, it was an easy matter to keep back their enemies, but alas! from that moment they were to endure unthought-of suffering, to the delight of their baffled, yet victorious enemies.

And now to describe in words the scene that followed and was prolonged for several days, were utterly impossible. Those stout-hearted Indians, in whom a nation was about to become extinct, chose to die upon their strange fortress, by starvation and thirst, rather than surrender themselves to the scalping-knife of their exterminators. And, with a few exceptions, this was the manner in which they did perish. Now and then, indeed, a desperate man would lower himself, hoping thereby to escape, but a tomahawk would cleave his brain before he touched the ground or water.

Day followed day, and those helpless captives sat in silence, and gazed imploringly upon their broad beautiful lands, while hunger was gnawing into their very vitals. Night followed night, and they looked upon the silent stars, and beyond, to the home of the Great Spirit, but they murmured not at his decree. And if they slept, in their dreams they once more played with their little children, or held converse with their wives, and roamed the woods and prairies in perfect freedom. When morning dawned

it was but the harbinger of another day of agony; but when the evening hour came, a smile would sometimes brighten up a haggard countenance, for the poor, unhappy soul, through the eye of an obscure faith, had caught a glimpse of the spirit land. Day followed day, and the last lingering hope was utterly abandoned. Their destiny was sealed, and no change for good could possibly take place, for the human blood-hounds who watched their prey, were utterly without mercy. The feeble, white-haired chief crept into a thicket and there breathed his last. The recently strong-bodied warrior, uttering a protracted but feeble yell of exultation, hurled his tomahawk upon some fiend below, and then yielded himself up to the pains of his condition. The lithe form of the soft-eyed youth parted with its strength, and was compelled to totter, fall upon the earth and die. Ten weary, weary days passed on, and the strongest man and last of his race was numbered with the dead:—and a glorious banquet was presented to the eagle and the raven.

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## CHAPTER IV.

ROCK ISLAND, July, 1846.

On my way up the Mississippi, I tarried a few hours at the far-famed city of Nauvoo: and when I resumed my course, I felt like one just awakened from an incomprehensible dream. Surely, surely Fanaticism is a most foul fiend, and we ought to rejoice with exceeding joy that He who ruleth the armies of heaven, is yet the protector of earth, and its inhabitants, and will not leave all mankind alone to the mercy of their idols.

The Mormon City occupies an elevated position, and, as approached from the south, appears capable of containing a hundred thousand souls. But its gloomy streets bring a most melancholy disappointment. Where lately resided no less than twenty-five thousand people, there are not to be seen more than about five hundred; and these, in mind, body and purse, seem to be perfectly wretched. In a walk of about ten minutes, I counted several hundred chimneys, which were all at least that number of families had left behind them, as memorials of their folly, and the wickedness of their persecutors. When this city was in its glory, every dwelling was surrounded with a garden, so that the corporation limits were uncommonly extensive; but now all the fences are in ruin, and the lately crowded streets actually rank with vegetation. Of the houses left standing, not more than one out of every ten is occupied, excepting by the spider and the toad. Hardly a window retained a whole pane of glass, and the doors were broken, and open, and hingeless. Not a single laughing voice did I hear in the whole place, and the lines of suffering and care seemed to be imprinted on the faces of the

very children who met me in the way. I saw not a single one of those numerous domestic animals, which add so much to the comforts of human life; and I heard not a single song even from the robin and the wren, which are always so sure to build their nests about the habitations of man. Aye, the very sunshine, and the pleasant passing breeze, seemed both to speak of sin, sorrow, and utter desolation.

Yet, in the centre of this scene of ruins, stands the Temple of Nauvoo, which is unquestionably one of the finest buildings in this country. It is built of limestone, quarried within the limits of the city, in the bed of a dry stream, and the architect, named Weeks, and every individual who labored upon the building were Mormons. It is one hundred and twenty-eight feet in length, eighty feet wide, and from the ground to the extreme summit it measures two hundred and ninety-two feet. It is principally after the Roman style of architecture, somewhat intermixed with Grecian and Egyptian. It has a portico, with three Roman archways. It is surrounded with pilasters; at the base of each is carved a new moon, inverted, while the capital of each is formed of an uncouth head, supported by two hands holding a trumpet. Directly under the tower in front is this inscription, in golden letters: "*The House of the Lord. Built by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Commenced April 6th, 1841. Holiness to the Lord.*" In the basement room, which is paved with brick, and converges to the centre, is a Baptismal Font, supported by twelve oxen, large as life, the whole executed in solid stone. Two stairways lead into it, from opposite directions, while on either side are two rooms for the recording clerks, and, all around, no less than twelve preparation rooms besides. On the first floor are three pulpits, and a place for the choir; and on either side eight

Roman windows. Over the prophet's pulpit, or throne, is this inscription: "*The Lord has beheld our sacrifice: come after us.*" Between the first and second floors are two long rooms, appropriated to the patriarchs, which are lighted with eight circular windows each. The room of the second floor, in every particular, is precisely like that of the first. Around the hall of a spacious attic are twelve small rooms, with circular windows and a massive lock on each door. At the two front corners of the edifice are two winding stairways, which meet at the base of the tower and lead to the summit,—while the roof of the main building is arranged for a place of promenade; and the walls of the noble edifice vary from four to six feet in thickness.

Estimating the manual labor at the usual prices of the day, it is said that the cost of this Temple was about \$800,000. The owners now offer to sell it for \$200,000, but it will be a long time, I fancy, before a purchaser is found.

The Mormon, who took me over the Temple, and gave me the above information, was nearly broken hearted. Like the majority of his brethren, remaining in the city, he was without money, and without friends, and yet, it was to be his destiny, in a few days, to push his way into the wilderness, with a large family depending upon him for support. It was in a most melancholy tone, indeed, that he spoke to me the following words: "Mine, sir, is a hard, hard lot. What if my religion is a false one, if I am sincere, is it not cruel, in the extreme, for those, who call themselves the only true church, to oppress me and my people as they have done? My property has been stolen from me, and my dwelling been consumed; and now, while my family is dependent upon a more fortunate brother for support, my little children cannot go into the streets without being pelted with

stones, and my daughters cannot go to the well after a pail of water, without being insulted by the young and *noble* among our persecutors. I do not deserve this treatment. I am not a scoundrel or a foreigner;—far, far from the truth is this supposition. My grandfather, sir, was killed at the battle of Yorktown, as an officer of the glorious Revolution; my own father, too, was also an American army officer during the last war; and all my kindred have ever been faithful to the upright laws of the government. Knowing, therefore, these things to be true, and knowing, too, that I am an honest man, it is very hard to be treated by my fellow countrymen as a ‘vagabond.’ O, I love this sacred Temple, dearly, and it makes me weep to think that I must so soon leave it to the tender mercies of the *Christian* world.”

Thus far had this poor man proceeded, when his utterance was actually choked with tears,—and I was glad of it, for my own heart was affected by his piteous tale. I gave him a dollar for his trouble, when he was called to attend a new arrival of visitors, and I was left alone in the belfry of the Temple.

Then it was that I had an opportunity to muse upon the superb panorama which met my gaze upon every side. I was in a truly splendid temple,—that temple in the centre of a desolate city,—and that city in the centre of an apparently boundless wilderness. To the east lay in perfect beauty the grand Prairie of Illinois, reaching to the waters of Michigan; to the north and south faded away the winding Mississippi; and on the west, far as the eye could reach, was spread out a perfect sea of forest land, entering which, I could just distinguish a caravan of exiled Mormons, on their line of march to Oregon and California. As before remarked, when I went forth from out the massy porches

of the Mormon Temple, to journey deeper into the wilderness, I felt like one awakened from a dream.

# CHAPTER V.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, July, 1846.

Just above Rock Island are the Upper Rapids of the Mississippi, which extend some fifteen miles and have a fall of twenty-seven feet. They made a deep impression upon my mind, because it was there that our steamboat swung upon a rock for some thirty hours, and where, soon as we were clear, we ran into a downward-bound steamer, and settled her to the bottom;—but fortunately no lives were lost. I noticed on these and the Lower Rapids a certain fly or miller, which is found at the evening hour flying about in immense numbers. They are called the Mormon fly, and I was told were found on these rapids alone, and that wherever they alight, there they remain, if not disturbed, until they *die*.

Soon after we had passed these rapids I enjoyed another prairie scene, which was even more superb than the one I have already attempted to describe. On this occasion the bank in the foreground was covered with grass that must have been at least six feet high, and the only living creatures that I saw were a beautiful doe and her fawn—quenching their thirst in the limpid stream.

The Illinois side of the Mississippi, between the Upper Rapids and the Lefevre river which leads you to Galena, is characterized by an extensive range of fantastic bluffs and isolated rocks. Covered as they are with vines and mosses, they present the appearance of ancient ruins, and it requires no great stretch of the imagination to discover towers and turrets of

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ancient castles, fortress walls that have been partly battered down, and solitary pillars rising in gloomy grandeur, as if to preach a salutary lesson to the passing traveller, upon the ravages of time. This same kind of singular scenery ornaments the river in the vicinity of Dubuque (which like Galena is some distance from the Mississippi), and extends as far as Prairie Du Chien, only, as you ascend, the bluffs become more lofty and imposing. On the summit of one of the most beautiful of these bluffs is a small cabin and a large wooden cross, where the French trader and miner Dubuque was buried—according to his own request, and in a coffin made of solid lead.

Prairie Du Chien is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and beautiful places on the Mississippi. It takes its name from the fact that it was once the camping place of a Fox Indian Chief, whose name was—*The Dog*. The prairie extends along the river for about ten miles; on the one hand it slopes gently down to the river, and on the other is bounded by a range of bluffs, which are some five hundred feet high, and exceedingly picturesque. The houses that shelter the inhabitants of this place are planted without any order, but as it is one of our more ancient trading posts, there is a rude and romantic appearance about them which is quite refreshing. Here, in the form of an isolated square, lie the barracks of Fort Crawford, where the discordant sounds of the drum and the shrill whistle of the fife are often heard; while in another part of the plain are the ruins of an old fortress almost level with the ground. Now a lonely Catholic church is seen holding forth its gilded cross; and now, the store of the Indian trader is surrounded with a herd of Winnebagoe Indians, who resort here for the purposes of trade. The territory of this tribe lies directly on the opposite side of the Mississippi, where the

eye is again gratified by a range of wood-covered bluffs, rising directly from the margin of the stream. From the regular lines of naked strata which extend along the sides of all the bluffs in this vicinity, it is evident that the spot called Prairie Du Chien was formerly the bed of the Mississippi, but how many centuries ago this was the case, it is impossible to imagine. And yet if this conclusion is correct, and we remember that there are hundreds of similar prairies as well as bottom lands on the Mississippi, we must also conclude that this stream is now a mere rivulet to what it was in the times of old.

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On the bluffs, in the immediate vicinity of Prairie Du Chien, are some of the most remarkable of those strange memorials of a forgotten race which have yet been discovered in our country. Like those of Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois, those of the more northern wilderness will long continue to puzzle the antiquarian, and furnish food for the poet and the moralist. Here the mounds, trenches, and parapets are found connected in one series of works, which seem to have been used for military purposes. Deep under the surface of the ground, tomahawks of brass (differing materially from those now in use) have been found; and stories are told of gigantic skeletons having been disinterred in the neighbourhood. The only things which throw any light upon these singular ruins, are the uncouth and unsatisfactory legends of the Indians, who tell us that a race of white giants were once the possessors of the soil which they have inherited from their warlike and victorious ancestors. These vestiges of an extinct race, "lie in their sunless chambers like the spirits of the past, as if in mockery of an age which arrogates to itself the term of an age of light. They will probably remain for ever a signal rebuke upon the learning of modern times, assuming, as it does, the pride of universal knowledge."

At this place I met and had a long conversation with an Indian trader, who had lived in the wilderness for more than half a century. He gave me an interesting account of the battle of Bad Axe, at which he was present. This spot lies some distance below Prairie Du Chien, and received its name from an Indian, who was killed and buried there at an early day. The trader told me that the word *battle* was not the right one to use in speaking of that conclusion of the Black Hawk War;—it was a cruel *massacre*. The poor Indians were crossing the river (as they had been for days) with all possible despatch, when they were overtaken by a force of three thousand of our well-armed soldiers. The surprise caused great consternation among the Indians; all who could, made their escape, and the leader of *this crowd* was Black Hawk himself. Six of our people alone were killed: and *nine-tenths* of the two hundred red-skins slain, were *women* and *children*. The famished condition of the *enemy* on that occasion must have been melancholy indeed. My old friend told me, that among the scenes which he witnessed on the ground after this massacre, was a dead child, with the meatless bone of a young colt's leg, grasped firmly in its little hand;—it had died of starvation while clinging to the body of its murdered mother. And this is a portion of the payment that our Government has ever been in the habit of awarding to the poor Indian, for the splendid territories which were his only inheritance.

The Winnebagoes are about the only Indians who visit Prairie Du Chien for purposes of traffic; formerly however, it was the congregating place for the nations which lived upon the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, as well as those upon the head waters of the Mississippi. The Winnebagoes were once almost as numerous as the leaves upon the trees, but the nation has been so far reduced that only about three thousand now remain. And a more

unhappy people do not exist upon the continent,—warriors, women and children are all apparently broken hearted. In olden times they were a race of brave men and beautiful women, but now they prowl among their native hills a brotherhood of vagabonds, exceedingly poor and universally despised.

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And yet the white man who was the author of all this misery counts his gold, and congratulates himself with the idea that he is a Christian.

But I am wandering from what I was about to record, viz., the history of a visit to the lodge of Winneshic, head chief of the Winnebagoes. The business which had brought the old man to the Prairie, was, to exchange the skin of a recently captured bear, for a small bag of flour and some ammunition. I had made him a present of tobacco, (which is about the only currency that a traveller can make use of in the wilderness,) and when it was intimated to him that I should be pleased to visit his lodge, he immediately pressed me to become his guest, which invitation was duly accepted. He had come to the Prairie alone, in a small wooden canoe, in which, at the appointed hour, I seated myself and away we started up the Mississippi. With the language of my old friend I was partially acquainted, and this, with my knowledge of the Indian character, enabled me to carry on a respectable conversation. The old man told me that I must keep very quiet in my seat, as he thought me a novice in canoe navigation; whereupon I seized a paddle and feathered it a few moments in a style worthy of the chief himself, which not only surprised, but actually delighted him. After a quiet sail of about an hour, during which time I enjoyed some of the finest scenery in the world, and one of the balmiest sunsets I ever beheld, the canoe suddenly turned into the mouth of a little creek, and I was landed at the threshold of my companion's lodge. It was made of

buffalo skins and shaped like a sugar loaf. It stood upon a plot of level ground, in the centre of a brotherhood of elms, and at the foot of an abrupt hill. It was so far elevated as to command a southern view of the Mississippi, extending at least a dozen miles,—the river meanwhile making two or three magnificent sweeps as if in honor of the beautiful islands which rested like jewels on its peaceful bosom.

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The extent of Winneshic's family I was unable to learn, but the only individuals whom I saw at his lodge were his wife, a couple of fine looking boys and a little girl. They were all glad to see me, and treated me with marked politeness. I was invited to a seat upon the handsomest mat in the lodge, and while the chief sat by my side smoking his pipe and entertaining me with the strange wild stories of his life, the wife busied herself in finishing a pair of moccasons, while the children were cooking a wilderness supper. That supper consisted of boiled fish, a roasted duck, and a piece of dough about half baked, all of which we ate with our fingers, and without a particle of salt.

After the repast was ended I thought it my turn to entertain my friends, and for this purpose had brought my portfolio of sketches, which were carefully examined by the light of a blazing fire. Some of the scenes I had sketched were recognized by the whole family, and caused them to look with perfect wonder upon my supposed talent and upon the lead pencil which I also exhibited to them. Their astonishment amused me exceedingly, and I greatly increased it by sketching a profile of the chief and his better-half. It so happened that I was successful in my attempt, and when I presented the sketches to the individuals represented, they ransacked every nook and corner of their lodge for something to give me in return. The chief

handed me a beautiful pipe from the red stone quarry, while the wife presented me with the most fantastic pair of moccasons in her possession; the little girl gave me a cake of maple sugar, and one of the boys presented me with an eagle's plume, and the other with a bow and arrows.

It was near midnight before I was suffered to lie down to rest, but before taking this step I emerged from the wigwam for  
the purpose of looking upon the Mississippi at that hour.

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And a lovely sight indeed was it my privilege to behold. The moon was sweeping across her cloudless field of blue, a beautiful but impatient queen, while an occasional star gazed upward from its watchtower, as if in admiration of the heaven-born spectacle. All the hills and islands were in deep shadow, and before me, far as the eye could reach, lay exposed the windings of the stream, which was brighter than a shield of burnished steel. So very still was the air around, that you might now hear the shrill note of some frightened deer far away upon the hillside, and now the scream of a lonely loon, the splashing of a leaping fish, and the rippling of the rivulet at my feet, which glided into the bosom of its parent stream through a cluster of tall reeds. With this picture and its manifold associations deeply fixed in my mind, I re-entered the lodge, threw myself upon a mat in the midst of my Indian friends, and was soon in a deep sleep.

I arose, on the following morning, at an early hour, and after partaking of a breakfast of boiled fish, I entered, with the chief, into his canoe, and in forty minutes was at my quarters in Prairie Du Chien.

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# CHAPTER VI.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, July, 1846.

The lead region of the Mississippi occupies not far from one hundred square miles. The two principal towns are Galena and Dubuque, which are both handsome and flourishing. The original possessors of this land were the Sac Fox Indians, who used to sell to the white settlers on the frontier the ore which they often found upon the surface of their soil. The first white man who went into the mining business, (which was on a small scale,) was Dubuque. He was supposed to possess a cure for the bite of the rattlesnake. He became a great favorite with the Indians, and for a long time was the only man, not of their blood, whom they would suffer to live upon their soil. After his death, as already mentioned, they placed him in a leaden coffin of their own manufacture, and buried him on the picturesque bluff which bears his name; and after this, they destroyed every vestige of his property.

In process of time, extravagant mineral stories were circulated throughout the country, and the general government purchased the Indian El Dorado of its possessors. The first man who went into the mining business at Galena, after the country had become our own, was Col. Richard M. Johnson. Since that time, thousands of people, on various occasions, have made and lost money in this peculiar business, which, from its very nature, is in reality a perfect lottery. Lead, lead, is the burden of every body's song, and the quantities weekly shipped to St. Louis are truly immense. But a man may dig until doomsday without finding a *lead*, and consequently die a beggar

—while another, in a few months will realize a fortune, upon which he is too apt to retire, and then squander at the gaming table, so that you also soon find him an idler, and in want. One individual I have myself known, who came to Galena with \$500, and having labored with unceasing industry for about three years, and expended his little fortune, when I saw him, had not the means of purchasing a loaf of bread, and was utterly without employment. Notwithstanding the liberal mining regulations of the government, the fates were against him, and he was compelled to give up his mineral dreams in despair.

Another individual, whom I saw at Galena, was remarkably fortunate in his operations. A little more than a year ago he commenced digging a certain hillside, and the first thing he knew, his spade struck against a solid mass of ore. He was encouraged, and proceeded in his excavations, and, in the course of a single year, sold a sufficient quantity of 80 per cent. ore to amount to the sum of \$23,000. His mine is still yielding quite abundantly, and as it is probably the best in this region, I will describe it in a few words.

After descending a shaft of some eighty feet in depth, you find yourself in the centre of an immense cave, with chambers leading in various directions. The walls and ceilings are mostly of pure sand, excepting where an occasional solid mass of native lead glistens like silver or gold, in the torch-light. Square blocks of the ore, weighing from half a pound to one hundred, all lie as accurately dovetailed together, as if placed there by the hands of a master-mason. While looking upon these singular masses, I could hardly banish the thought from my mind, that we were in view of treasures which had been hidden here in those days when giants inhabited the world. When my curiosity was fully satisfied, I seized the rope, and with a palpitating

heart passed upward out of the bowels of the earth into the pleasant sunshine.

Major Campton is the name of a noted character, who once resided at Galena. He is a powerfully built man, who has spent his whole life among the wildest of mortals, and whose various occupations have caused him to be well known from the banks of the Ohio to the shores of Lake Superior, where he is now figuring in the copper line, having made and lost a fortune at Galena. A natural consequence of his peculiar experience is, that he perfectly understands the art of fighting: though he is so much of a gentleman, that he could not be called a bully.

It so happened that, while travelling in his own conveyance, and accompanied by his wife, during a pleasant day last summer he came to a halt on the margin of a certain river, and shouted for the ferryman. In due time the indispensable gentleman was ready, and while inquiring the news of the day, he was suddenly smitten by a new thought, and dropping the painter of the old scow, looked inquiringly into the Major's face, when the following dialogue ensued:—

“Stranger, isn't your name Major Campton?”

“Yes, sir, it is. What business have you to transact with me?”

“You are the very man I have long been wanting to see, for you must know that I am the Bully of the north.”

“Indeed! What do I care for that?”

“I've hearn tell that you are a famous fighter, and I should like to have you give me a thrashing if you can.”

“Why, man, I have nothing against you, and do not want to make a fool of myself.”

“But you shall, though, my honey; and you don’t cross this ferry until it is decided who is cock of the walk.”

Remonstrance on the part of the Major was all in vain, the ferryman was determined to fight. The Major held a short consultation with his lady, who was of course in great trouble, but taking off his coat and unbuttoning his straps, he stept out upon a grassy spot and waited for the ferryman’s attack. To shorten a long story, the fight was a tedious one, and ended in the total defeat of the challenger, who presented in himself, after the struggle, an admirable picture of a misspent life. He had strength enough left, however, to ferry the Champion over the river; and when the Major offered to pay the accustomed fare, the latter held not out his hand, but making a rude bow, he exclaimed;—“*Not a dime, sir: good afternoon.*”

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## CHAPTER VII.

LAKE PEPIN, July, 1846.

That portion of the Mississippi which extends from Prairie Du Chien to Lake Pepin is the most mountainous and truly beautiful on the whole river, and may with strict propriety be called the Alpine Region. The river here varies from a quarter to a full mile in width, and on either side throughout the whole distance is a range of mountains which sometimes actually bend over the river, and sometimes recede into the interior for several miles. The Mississippi here is rather sluggish, but perfectly translucent, and completely filled with islands which are covered with every variety of forest trees found between Kentucky and the Great Lakes. But the willow and the elm are pre-eminently beautiful. Well do I remember with what perfect delight I mused upon the changing landscape, as our vessel glided onward and onward into the wild and silent wilderness. The mountains of this region are not quite so lofty as the Highlands of the Hudson, (to which they have been compared,) but they are far more picturesque, fantastic, and extensive. At one moment may be seen a cone-shaped mountain rising to the height of some eight hundred feet, and completely covered, to the extreme summit, with a carpet of grass; now the eye will linger on a perpendicular bluff, pictured against the sky, like a fortress of the Mound Builders, and actually frowning upon the softly flowing stream that laves its foliage-hidden base; now, you sail in the shadow of a pillared temple that seems to prop the sky; and now, along a continued succession of peaks and points that fade away, until lost in the rosy atmosphere of evening. During all this time, your vessel will be

gliding around and between the most charming of green islands, some of them containing a solitary grave, others a little brotherhood of Indians, lounging upon the grassy opening before their wigwams; while some happy bird will favor you with an occasional song, or the leap of a trout take the fancy captive, to revel in the cool chambers of the stream. Here it is, too, that the famous Island Mountain rises to the height of five hundred feet, completely covered with trees, and capped by a cluster of broken rocks. It is several miles long and about one in width, and is the largest island in the Mississippi. From time immemorial it has been celebrated for the number of its rattlesnakes, and on a grassy plot at its base stands a cluster of graves, where repose the ashes of stranger Indians who died upon the island from wounds inflicted by these reptiles.

The next object that I would attempt to describe on my way up the Mississippi, is Lake Pepin. It lives in my memory as the Horicon of the wilderness. It is an extended portion of the Mississippi,—twenty-three miles long, and from three to four wide. It is surrounded with hills, which abound in almost every variety of game; its shores are gravelly and covered with the most valuable of agates and cornelians; the water is clear, and very deep; and it yields the very best of fish in great abundance. My first view of Lake Pepin (I wish I knew how it came by that name!) was on one of the most charming evenings that I ever witnessed. The cloudless sky was studded with stars, and the moon sailed upward and onward with an uncommon beauty, as if proud of the wilderness world she was then flooding with her beams. For hours did I sit musing upon the eastern shore, near the outlet, whence I could discern no less than sixteen peaks or bluffs, looming in perfect solitude against the horizon. “The holy time was quiet as a nun, breathless with

adoration." The water was without a ripple, and reflected in its pure bosom every star, while the moon, as if determined that it should so remain for ever, spanned it with a bar of gold. The only sounds that trembled in the air were the hoot of an owl, the wail of a loon, and a hum from the insect world. I looked and wondered, until the night was far spent, and the dew upon my brow was heavy and cold.

It was while tarrying at this lake that the Captain of our steamer was honored by a visit from Wabashaw, the head chief of the Sioux nation. He was attended by several of his counsellors, and in all his movements had the bearing of a proud prince. He is a young man, and said to be a brave and eminently successful warrior. Our captain treated him to wine, and I gave him a present of tobacco. The Captain was so pleased with the natural curiosity, as he called the chief, that he summoned all his lady passengers to obtain a glimpse. The ladies soon made their appearance, and while staring at the chief, now laughing, and now laying their hands upon his ornaments, a most ferocious glance all at once shot from his eye, and uttering a scornful speech, he bolted from the ring of impudent spectators. The cause of this singular movement was, that it is considered disgraceful for a Sioux chief to be seen in the company of women, or to be spoken to and stared upon by them. The only person whose hand he would take on going ashore was mine; and when I happened to meet this chief on a subsequent occasion, he treated me with marked attention, and presented me with a handsome pipe.

At the time that I visited Lake Pepin there were quite a number of Sioux Indians encamped upon its shores. Among the lodges which I visited was that of a woman, ninety years of age

and a widow. She looked exceedingly wretched, but was so intelligent and amiable that I almost fell in love with the old antediluvian. I cannot give the whole of her long story, but an idea of its character may be obtained from the following episode, which I listened to, seated by her side, and that of her only descendant—a handsome boy. Her attention had been directed to our steamer which lay moored a short distance off, when she suddenly broke out with the following:—“How rapidly does time fly! A short time ago the light canoe was the only thing that glided upon this lake; but now we often hear the groaning of the great fire-vessel, as it sweeps along like an angry stag. The white man’s conduct appears strange. I can not understand its purpose. O, I am an old woman and a fool!

“Many, very many, have been my trials. Thirty years has my husband been dead. Eight brave sons have I had, but they were all killed in battles with the Chippeways. I also had two daughters, who were like the does of the prairie, but the Great Spirit has long since taken them to the happy land. My only relative, now living, is this boy. O, I am an old woman, and have no business to live!

“But I will not despair. The Great Spirit is at my fireside, and has given me a helper in the dark evening of my days. This boy-hunter supplies me with food. His arrow never fails, and the winds always tell him where to find the sweet fish. He paddles my canoe, he brings me wood for my fire, and he sleeps sweetly by my side in my comfortable lodge. O, I am an old woman!—but what is there in the world that I need, and cannot obtain?”

May the smiles of Providence for ever rest upon this mother of a great nation, whose glory is personified in her feeble and

decrepit form.

The most romantic legend, however, associated with the Mississippi Horicon is the story of Winona. She was the daughter of a chief, and lived about one hundred years ago. She was exceedingly beautiful and universally beloved. Her father had promised her hand to a favorite warrior, but her heart had been pledged to another, not less brave, but more noble and youthful. For many months she would not listen to the wishes of her father;—but his sterner nature was roused, and he vowed that she *must* marry the object of *his* choice. Weeks passed on, and she knew that she must yield. Nightly did she meet her accepted lover, but always talked to him of the Spirit Land, as if she had been a queen of that fantastic realm. The marriage night had been appointed, and the chief had proclaimed a feast. To all outward appearance a change suddenly came over the daughter's mind, and she smiled and talked, like one about to be made a happy bride. Among the delicacies that were to be eaten on the occasion, was a certain berry that was found in great perfection upon a certain hill or bluff. It was a pleasant summer afternoon, and all the female friends of Winona, accompanied by herself, were picking the desired berries.

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Carelessly did they all wander up the hillside, while an occasional laugh would ring upon the air; but Winona was only seen to smile, for (though those loving friends knew it not) her heart was darkened by many a strange shadow. Carelessly did the berry-gatherers wander on; when all at once a low melancholy song fell upon their ears, and lo! upon the very edge of a beetling precipice stood the form of the much loved Winona.

Her song was death-like, and when her companions were intuitively convinced of the contemplated deed, they were stupefied with horror. Winona motioned them to keep back, while her song increased until it became a perfect wail. The burthen of it was,

“Farewell, sisters:—  
I am going to the Spirit Land;  
My warrior will come after me,  
And we shall be blessed.”

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One moment more, and Winona, the pride of all the Indian villages on Lake Pepin, was deeply buried in its clear cold bosom. And this is the story that hallows the loftiest peak of this lake. I obtained it, as here related, from one of her kindred, and I believe it to be true. As to Winona’s warrior, it is said that he lived for many years a hermit, and finally died a madman. So runneth many a song of life.

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# CHAPTER VIII.

MOUTH OF THE SAINT PETER'S, July, 1846.

The scenery between Lake Pepin and the Saint Croix is not as lofty nor as picturesque as that we have already passed, but its interest is greatly enhanced by the greater number of Indians that we here meet. The Red Wing village is nearly midway between the two lakes mentioned, and contains about six hundred souls. A short distance from this village are two isolated mountains, whence may be seen a most magnificent panorama of the wilderness, and when viewed at sunset presents more the appearance of dream land than reality. These mountains from time immemorial have been used as the altars where Indian war parties have offered up their sacrifices, previous to going to battle. At the present time, however, their only inhabitants are rattlesnakes, which slumber on their sunny slopes or in the clefts of the rocks during the long summer. And thus is it throughout the world, in the wilderness as well as the city, death and the beautiful are ever linked together in an unbroken brotherhood.

I only remained at the Red Wing village one night, but such a night I hope never to pass again. A perfect outcast of a trader had furnished the Indians with "fire-water," and the whole posse of them were perfectly mad, for spirituous liquor always makes the poor Indian miserably crazy. For want of a better place, I had to sleep in the cabin of this very trader. My bed was on the floor, while my host and his family occupied a couple of beds in opposite corners of the only room in the house. And such horrible yelling and screaming as I heard during the first half of that night, I can never forget. The noises were

perfectly unearthly and devilish. Now, you might hear the clashing of knives, as some of the more desperate spirits came together in a fight; and now you might hear the sobs and moanings of a miserable woman, as she exposed and mutilated her body, to perpetuate the memory of a dead husband or child.

But there was one incident which actually made my hair stand out like the quills of the porcupine. I should premise that the few white people of the wilderness never think of locking their doors at night; and also that the Indians of this region claim it as a privilege to enter and depart from your cabin whenever they please, and their intrusions are always looked upon as matters of course. It was somewhat after midnight, and the yelling of the savages had partly subsided. I had just fallen into a doze, when I was startled by the stealthy opening of our cabin door and the tread of a muffled footstep. It was intensely dark, but I *knew* it was an Indian, and thought that somebody was about to be murdered. The object in the room made just noise enough to rack my brain, and then was perfectly still. I listened, and with hardly a particle of breath in my body,—I still kept listening,—until I actually fainted upon my pillow with excess of fear. Finally I slept, and my dreams were of blood, and blood only. The first peep of day, however, awakened me, when lo! directly at my side, flat on the floor, was a huge black Indian, breathing in his deep slumber like a porpoise. The first intelligence that I heard on going out of the door was, that one Indian had been killed during the night, and that another was at that moment in the agonies of death. As may be supposed, I left the Red Wing village with pleasure.

Lake Saint Croix empties into the Mississippi, and its principal inlet is a river of the same name which rises in

the vicinity of Lake Superior. This is the valley through which the traders and Indians have been in the habit of passing, for a century past, on their way from the western prairies to Lake Superior, and from the lake back again to the prairies. The river is only distinguished for one waterfall of uncommon beauty. The lake is about twenty-five miles long, from two to five wide, and surrounded with charming scenery. The water is clear but of a rich brown color, and well supplied with fish, of which the trout is the most abundant.

At the outlet of this lake, I visited another encampment of Sioux Indians, where I saw a noted chief, named Little Crow. He was a handsome man, but both of his arms had recently been broken by a rifle ball, which was shot by one of his own brothers,—who was envious of his station as chief. As a punishment for his wickedness Little Crow had ordered four bullets to be fired at his brother, which of course numbered him with the dead. I saw his new-made grave, and his youthful wife wailing over it, like one that was sorrowing without hope.

From Saint Croix to Saint Peter's, the banks of the Mississippi are steep, but only about one hundred and fifty feet in height. The river is here studded with islands whose shadowy recesses are cool during the hottest weather;—and a more delightful region for the botanist to ramble cannot be found elsewhere on the face of the earth. The water is clear as crystal, and its bosom is generally covered with water-fowl, from the graceful snow-white swan to the mallard and wood-duck. Isolated Indian wigwams are frequently seen here, pitched on the margin of the stream, and at the foot of vine-covered precipices.

But there are three landscape views connected with this portion

of the Mississippi, which I thought perfectly magnificent. I witnessed them all during a single afternoon, and in the light of a mellow sunshine. The first was of a rolling prairie that faded away to the western sky, until its outline was actually lost in the hazy atmosphere. Not a solitary tree did I behold, but a perfect sea of grass, that was delightfully relieved with flowers of every variety of shape and color. Occasionally a breeze would pass across the scene, causing unnumbered tiny billows to quiver over the surface of mightier ones, which seemed to be careering onward to some unknown shore. Covering the foreground of this picture might be seen an immense flock of grouse, feeding, or chasing each other in sport; and then, an occasional prairie squirrel as it sat at the entrance of its hole; while in the middle distance a robber wolf glided over one of the ridges of the prairie, with his form pictured against the sky. The lone lost feeling which possessed my heart, when I thought of the great prairie-world, then lying before me, I cannot describe; it was composed of delight and melancholy, of perfect confidence and tormenting fear.

Another picture which I witnessed from a commanding hill top, was of an untrodden wilderness of woods, reaching to the extreme horizon on the north. Owing to my elevated position the forest-world appeared perfectly level, and, excepting one barren ledge, was without a single object to mar the monotony of the scene. On that ledge, however, with the aid of my glass I could just discern the dead body of a deer, with a black bear reclining at its side, as if sated with his feast; while in his neighborhood were standing some thirty vultures in a state of delightful anticipation.

The other scene which I mentioned, was witnessed from the

lofty bluff that fronts the mouth of the Saint Peter's river. Far beneath my feet glided the majestic Mississippi;—on my right stood the handsome and commanding barracks of Fort Snelling, surmounted by the stars and stripes; on my left, the naked peak of the Pilot's Nob, with a cluster of trading-houses at its base; directly before me, winding away like a mighty serpent between a multitude of islands, lay the deep and turbid Saint Peter's river; and far beyond,—far as the eye could reach—the prairie land, whose western boundary is the Rocky Mountains.

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The landscape was indeed glorious, and there was something to gratify my national pride in the flag that fluttered in the breeze; but when I thought of the *business* of that Fort and the *end* for which the people of the hamlet were living in the wilderness, the poetry of the scene was marred, and I longed to dive still deeper in the wild world which reposed so peacefully before me.

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# CHAPTER IX.

MOUTH OF THE SAINT PETER'S, July, 1846.

The hamlet of Saint Peter is at the mouth of the Saint Peter's river, and at the head of steamboat navigation on the Mississippi. My sojourn here has been interesting from many circumstances. I feel that I am on the extreme verge of the civilized world, and that all beyond, to the ordinary traveller, is a mysterious wilderness; and every object which attracts my attention is made doubly entertaining by the polite attentions I receive from several gentlemen connected with Fort Snelling and the Fur Company.

Here it was that I first saw an extensive encampment of Sioux or Dacotah Indians, who had, within six miles of the Fort, no less than three large villages. This, as is well known, is one of the most peculiar and savage tribes of the northwest, and as I happen to be here during their gala season, I have had an opportunity of being present at some of their feasts and games.

On one occasion it was announced throughout the village that the Indians were to have a Dog Feast, in which none but the bravest and most distinguished of the warriors are allowed to participate. The idea that lies at the bottom of this rite is, that by eating of a dog's liver the heart is made strong. The feast took place on the open prairie, in the afternoon, and was attended by about one hundred men, while there must have been a thousand spectators. The first step in the ceremony was for the Indians to seat themselves in a circle around a large pole, and devote a few moments to smoking. Their only article of

clothing was the clout, and their only weapon a long knife, while their heads were decorated with death-trophies, and their bodies encircled by a belt from which hung all the scalps the wearers had taken. Suddenly a whoop was given, and the whole party commenced dancing to the monotonous music of a drum. Then broke upon the ear the howl, and in a moment more the dying groan of a dog from without the circle of dancers. The carcass was thrown into their midst by a woman. A chorus of deafening yells resounded through the air, the dog was immediately opened, his liver taken out, suspended to the pole by a string, and the dance resumed. A moment had hardly elapsed, however, before the dancers, one after another, stepped up and took a bite of the yet warm and quivering liver. Soon as this was all eaten, another dog was thrown into the ring, and the same horrible ceremony repeated; and so they continued until the carcasses of ten dogs were lying at the foot of the pole in the centre of the dancing crowd. Another human howl ascended to the sky, and the feast was ended. All the while the river flowed peacefully onward, and the mellow sunlight bathed in its own gorgeous hues the illimitable prairie.

I have also had an opportunity of witnessing in this place the Indian mode of playing Ball. There is nothing exclusive in this game, and every male Indian who is sufficiently active may take a part therein. It sometimes lasts for several days, and when I witnessed it, was played by two companies or bands, of about one hundred and fifty individuals each. The balls used are formed of a deer-skin bag, stuffed with the hair of that animal and sewed with its sinews. The clubs are generally three feet long, and have at the lower end a sinewy netting, sufficiently large to hold the ball, and each player is furnished with one of these clubs. With these they catch and throw the ball, and

though they are not allowed to touch it with their hands, it is sometimes kept from once touching the ground for a whole afternoon. The station of each party is marked by a pole, on a line with which the players stand, just before beginning the game. The poles are usually about five hundred yards apart. The ball first makes its appearance midway between the parties, to which point a most furious rush is made, and the object to be attained and which talleys, is, for the player to throw the ball *outside* of his own line of standing.

The Olympic beauty of this game is beyond all praise. It calls into active exercise every muscle of the human frame, and brings into bold relief the supple and athletic forms of the best-built people in the world. The only *ornaments* worn are of paint and marked all over the body, which, with the usual exception, is perfectly naked. At one time a figure will rivet your attention similar to the Apollo Belvidere, and at another, you will actually be startled by the surpassing elegance of a Mercury. The only music that accompanies the game is a chorus of wild clear laughter. The only drawback connected with it is the danger of getting your legs broken, or the breath knocked out of your body, which are calamities that frequently happen.

There are not many particulars with regard to manners and habits wherein the Sioux Indians differ from their surrounding brethren. Living, as they mostly do, in a vast prairie region, their favorite and principal mode of travelling is on horseback, and away from the larger rivers, you will find them possessed of the finest horses, which they love and protect with true Arabian affection. They are of course admirable horsemen, and very expert in hunting the buffalo. They are most cruel and vindictive towards their enemies, and have, from time immemorial, been at

war with their neighbors of the north and west; and their hatred of the white man seems to be a cherished emotion of their nature. Physically speaking, they are a noble race of men and women, but universally considered as the Ishmaelites of the wilderness. Speaking of these Indians, reminds me of their pictorial historian, Capt. Seth Eastman. This gentleman is an officer in the army, and an artist of ability. He is a native of Maine, has been in the service about eighteen years, and stationed at Fort Snelling for the last five. All his leisure time has been devoted to the study of Indian character, and the portraying upon canvass of their manners and customs, and the more important fragments of their history. The Sioux tribes have attracted the most of his attention, although he has not neglected the Chippeways, and he has done much to make us acquainted with the Seminoles of Florida, where he was once stationed for several years. Excepting a few, which he has occasionally presented to his friends, all that he ever painted are now in his possession, and it was my good fortune to spend many agreeable hours admiring their beauties. The collection now numbers about four hundred pieces, comprising every variety of scenes, from the grand Medicine Dance to the singular and affecting Indian Grave. When the extent and character of this Indian Gallery are considered, it must be acknowledged the most valuable in the country, not even excepting that of George Catlin. But what adds greatly to the interest called forth by these pictures is the use to which they are to be applied. Instead of being used as a travelling exhibition to accumulate gold, this gallery is to be presented to a distinguished college, from which the artist will only demand the education of his children. There is something in this movement so foreign to the sordid passion of our age, and so characteristic of the true spirit of art, that the heart is thrilled with pleasure as we remember the American

soldier-artist of the wilderness.

I have also had the pleasure of meeting at St. Peter's M. Lamarre Piquo, the distinguished French naturalist from Paris. He has been in the Indian country upwards of a year, and is to remain some months longer. He is on a professional tour, collecting specimens in every department of natural history, and for that purpose is constantly wandering along the rivers, through the woods, and over the prairies of the northwest, with no companions but Half-Breeds or Indians. He seems to be a most passionate lover of his science, and the appearance of his temporary store-room or museum is unique and interesting. Here, an immense buffalo stares at you with its glassy eyes, while just above it, pinned to the wall, may be seen a collection of curious beetles, butterflies, and other insects; then an elk and a deer will display their graceful forms, while at their feet will be coiled up the rattlesnake, the adder, and other frightful serpents; here the otter, the beaver, the fox, the wolf, the bear, and other native animals; there a complete flock of web-footed creatures, from the wild swan and pelican to the common duck; here an eagle and hawk, a partridge and scarlet-bird; and there, embalmed in spirit, a vast variety of curious reptiles. M. Lamarre Piquo belongs to that honorable class of scholars whose labors tend to develop the glorious resources of our country, and among whom we find such men as Wilson, Audubon, Silliman, and Houghton.

Among the natural beauties associated with St. Peter's ought not to be forgotten Carver's Cave, the Cascade Waterfall, the Lakes, and the Pilot's Nob. The Cave is about four miles below, and was named after Carver, who was the first white man that explored it thoroughly; its Indian name however was Wahon-

teebe, which means Dwelling of the Great Spirit. The entrance to it is on the brink of the river, five feet high and about twice as wide; and the arch within is not far from fifteen feet high and twenty broad. The bottom is covered with sand, which slopes down to a lake of pure water, the opposite boundary of which has never been visited. On one of the inner sides, not far from the entrance, are quite a number of Indian hieroglyphics, partly covered with the moss of by-gone centuries.

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About two miles north of St. Peter's there empties into the Mississippi a small river, without a name, the parent of a most beautiful waterfall. The stream is perhaps fifty feet wide, and after a wayward passage across the green prairie, it finally comes to a precipice of more than one hundred feet deep, and in an unbroken sheet discharges its translucent treasure into the pool below. So completely hidden by a mass of foliage is this fall, that you would pass it by unnoticed, were it not for its ever-murmuring song. The array of luxuriant trees that surround it, seem to be acquainted with its sorrow, for they all bend gracefully over it in sympathy and love; while the spray which ascends from the abyss seems like the incense of a mysterious sacrifice. But before a thought of poetic melancholy can glide into the heart, the eye is delighted with the form and colors of a rainbow, and the contradictory and unaccountable influences of nature make us happy.

The Lakes in the neighborhood of St. Peter's, on the bosom of the prairie, number some four or five, the most conspicuous of which are Harriet and Calhoun. They are not deep, but perfectly clear, abound in fish, and encircled with sand. The Pilot's Nob is a grass-covered peak, commanding a most magnificent series

of views. To the west lies a boundless prairie; to the north and south the fantastic valley of the Mississippi; and to the east a wilderness of forests and prairie, apparently reaching to the shores of Michigan. But let us to the Falls of St. Anthony, which are a few miles above St. Peter's.

These Falls are more famous than remarkable. They were first visited by Father Hennepin in 1689, who gave them their present name, out of respect to his patron saint. Their original name, in the Sioux language, was Owah-Menah, meaning falling water. They owe their reputation principally to the fact that they "veto" the navigation of the Upper Mississippi. They are surrounded with prairie, and therefore easily approached from every direction. The river here is perhaps half a mile wide, and the entire height of the Falls, including the upper and lower rapids, is said to measure some twenty-five or thirty feet, and they are consequently without an imposing feature. The line of the Falls is nearly straight, but broken near the centre by a large island, and just below this are no less than seven smaller but more picturesque islands, which are looked down upon by steep bluffs on either side of the river. For half a mile before the waters make their plunge, they glide swiftly across a slanting, but perfectly flat bed of rock; and after they have reached the lower level, they create a perfect sheet of foam, as if venting their wrath upon the rocks which impede their progress; but in a few moments they murmur themselves to sleep, and then glide onward towards the far distant ocean in perfect peace.

These Falls seem to be the grand head-quarters for the eagles of the wilderness, which congregate here in great numbers. At one moment a hungry individual might be seen, struggling with a

bass or trout, directly in the pure foam; and then another, with well-filled crop, high up in heaven, would be floating on his tireless pinions. At another time, too, you might see a perfect crowd of them hovering over the body of some floating animal which had lost its life while attempting to cross the upper rapids, and fearful indeed was the shriek of conflict between those warriors of the air.

Associated with the Falls of St. Anthony is the following Indian legend. A Chippeway woman, the daughter of a chief, and 63 the wife of a warrior, had been cruelly treated by her faithless husband. She was not beautiful, but young and proud, and the mother of a lovely daughter-child. Goaded to the quick by repeated wrongs, she finally resolved to release herself from every trouble, and her child from evil friends, by departing for the Spirit Land, and the Falls were to be the gateway to that promised heaven. It was an Indian summer evening, and nature was hushed into a deep repose. The mother and her child were alone in their wigwam, within sight and hearing of the Falls, and the father was absent on a hunting expedition. The mother kissed and caressed her darling, and then dressed it with all the ornaments in her possession, while from her own person she rejected every article of clothing which she had received from her husband, and arrayed herself in richer garments which she had made with her own hands. She then obtained a full-blown lily, and crushing its petals and breaking its stem, she placed it on a mat in the centre of her lodge, as a memorial of her wrongs. All things being ready, she seized the child, hastened to the river, launched her frail canoe, and in a moment more was floating on the treacherous stream. According to a universal Indian custom, she sang a wild death-song,—for a moment her canoe trembled on the brow of the watery precipice, and in an

instant more the mother and child were for ever lost in the foam below.

# CHAPTER X.

CROW-WING, July, 1846.

My mode of travelling, from the Falls of St. Anthony to Crow-Wing river, was on horseback. I obtained my animal of a Frenchman, who accompanied me as a guide. There was no regular road to follow, but only a well beaten trail, which ran, for the most part, along the eastern bank of the Mississippi, where lies a continued succession of prairies and oak-openings. We were each furnished with a blanket, a small stock of bread and pork, ammunition and a gun. Our horses were young and fleet, and mine was particularly easy and graceful in his movements. The day was scorchingly hot, but I was so anxious to proceed that I ventured out, and by ten o'clock we were on our winding way.

A few hours had elapsed without meeting with a single adventure, when I fixed my eyes upon my gun, (which then seemed to be about six times as heavy as when we started,) and began to wonder whether I was not in a fair way of illustrating Dr. Franklin's story of the whistle. But before I had a chance even to cast a look behind, I was startled by the report of my companion's gun, when lo! just in the shadow of a neighboring thicket, I saw a large buck make two frightful leaps and then drop to the earth quite dead. In a very few moments the two hind quarters of the animal were enveloped in his hide, and strapped to my friend's saddle; the tune of my intentions was changed, and after taking a lunch of bread we continued on our journey.

Our route, during the afternoon, lay over a portion of the

prairie that was perfectly alive with grouse. My guide considered them unworthy game for his gun and skill, and left me to enjoy the sport alone. I had no dog to point them, but my horse was so well trained to shoot from, that he answered very well as a substitute. I only had to ride into the midst of a flock, frighten them, bang away, and dismount to pick them up. And this was the manner in which I spent the “lucid intervals” of our frequent “halts,” by way of *resting myself* and *keeping cool*. I do not desire to tell an unreasonable story, but I must say that at sunset I had, fastened to my saddle, upwards of fifty prairie birds.

We were now on the margin of a handsome stream, in a natural meadow, and as we found it necessary to feed and rest our horses, we gave them some water, hopped them, and turned them at large. In the mean time we amused ourselves by cooking and enjoying a portion of our game, and that was my first supper in the wilderness. We roasted our meat on one stick, while just above it with another stick we melted a slice of pork, for the sake of its salty drippings. We dispatched a comfortable quantity of venison, with an occasional mouthful of pork and bread, and used the brains, legs and breast of a grouse, for dessert. Our beverage consisted of the purest water, which we quaffed in a position approaching to the horizontal, though our heels were somewhat nearer heaven than our heads. We concluded our repast with an hour’s snooze, and by the light of a thousand stars, saddled our horses once more, and resumed our journey.

It was a cool, calm, cloudless night, and we were the only human beings on a prairie which appeared to be illimitable. I was informed, however, that a little speck that caught my eye far to the westward, was the cabin of an Indian trader, whose

nearest neighbor was one hundred miles off; also that the place was on the Mississippi (which we had left for a time) and was known as Little Rock. As I was a good deal fatigued, the poetry of that unique ride did not make much of an impression upon me. I tried to muster a little sentiment on the occasion, but just as it was about to manifest itself in words, my head would suddenly drop upon my shoulder heavier than a clod; and like a feeble, flickering lamp, my senses would revive, only to be lulled again into a doze and nod. But this sleepy state of things was not to last for ever. It so happened that we discovered directly in our pathway a solitary wolf, which was snuffing the ground as if on the scent of some feeble creature that would afford him a hearty feast. He was an ugly looking rascal, and called forth from my companion a bitter curse. At his suggestion we dismounted, and with our guns cocked, approached the wolf, using our horses as a kind of shield. We had approached within a reasonable shot of the animal, when it suddenly started, but seeing nothing but two horses, it paused, pricked up its ears, and seemed to be whetting its appetite for a supper of horse-flesh. In a moment, however, the signal was given, and the two heavy charges of our guns were lodged in the body of the wolf, which was at that instant supposed to be in a precarious condition; and having seen him die, and taken off his hide, we once more mounted our faithful steeds.

Our excitement having subsided, we gradually fell into a drowsy state that was "heavier, deadlier than before." But from this were we also roused, and by the tramp or pattering of feet in our rear. We looked, and behold! a herd of wolves were coming towards us on the keen run. Our horses took fright and became unmanageable. The prairie devils were now almost

upon us, when our horses actually broke loose and away they ran, swifter than the breeze that suddenly burst upon the plain. It was not long, however, before we left our enemies far out of sight, and at the very moment the day was breaking we reached the mouth of Crow-Wing river. My companion managed to retain his venison, but when I came to count my birds, I found only five remaining, the balance having unintentionally been left upon the prairie as food for the *beastly* robbers of the wilderness.

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# CHAPTER XI.

CROW-WING, July, 1846.

The spot thus designated is beautifully situated on the east side of the Mississippi, directly at the mouth of the river known by that name. It is here that the trader Morrison resides, whose reputation as an upright, intelligent, and noble-hearted man, is coextensive with the entire wilderness of the northwest. He is a Scotchman by birth, somewhat advanced in life, and has resided in the Indian country for thirty-five years. He possesses all the virtues of the trader and none of his vices. He is the worthy husband of a worthy Indian woman, the affectionate father of a number of bright children, and the patriarch of all the Chippeway Indians, who reside on the Mississippi. Around his cabin and two rude store-houses, at the present time are encamped about three hundred Indians, who are *visiting* him, and I am informed that his guests, during the summer, seldom amounted to less than one hundred. And this is the place where I have passed ten of the most truly delightful days that I ever experienced. It is at this point that I am to embark in a canoe, during my summer tour with Morrison, (accompanied by his unique suite,) who is to be my guide, counsellor and friend, while I wander, according to my own free will, over the lake region of the extreme Upper Mississippi.

Crow-Wing is not only one of the most delightfully located nooks in the world, but it is rich in historical and legendary associations. A famous battle was once fought here, between the Chippeways and Sioux. A party of the latter had gone up Crow-Wing river for the purpose of destroying a certain

Chippeway village. They found it inhabited only by women and children, every one of whom they murdered in cold blood, and consumed their wigwams. It so happened that the Chippeway warriors had been expecting an attack, and had consequently stationed themselves in deep holes on a high bank of the river at Crow-Wing, intending to fall upon the Sioux party on their way *up* the river. But they were most sadly disappointed. While watching for their enemies, they were suddenly startled by a triumphant shout that floated *down* the stream. In perfect agony they looked, when lo! the very party that they were after, came into full view, shouting with delight and tossing up the scalps which they had taken. Many a Chippeway brave recognized the glossy locks of his wife or child, and knew his gloomiest anticipations to be true. They remained in ambush for a few minutes longer, and when the enemy came within reach of their arrows, every single one of them was killed, while their canoes, plunder and bodies were suffered to float down the stream unmolested; and the pall of night rested upon the hills, the glens, the waveless river, and the Chippeway camp.

Among the many legends associated with Crow-Wing is one about a white Panther, whose home was here when the world was young. That Panther was the Prophet of a certain Chippeway tribe, and had power to speak the Chippeway language. A young brave was anxious to revenge the death of a brother, and had sought the oracle to learn the success of his intended expedition. The Panther told him that he must *not* go, but wait until a more propitious season. But the young man headed his party, and *went*;—and every one of his followers was killed,—himself escaping by the merest chance. Thinking that the Panther had caused this calamity, he stole upon this creature and slaughtered it, in the darkness of midnight.

The dying words of the oracle were,—“Cruel and unhappy warrior, I doom thee to walk the earth for ever, a starving and undying skeleton.” And it is said that this spectre man, whenever the moon is tinged with red, or the aurora borealis floods the sky with purple, may be seen flitting in perfect solitude along the banks of the Mississippi.

Crow-Wing is the Windsor of the wilderness, for it is the nominal home of the head Chief of the Chippeway nation. His name is Hole-in-the-day, and I had frequent opportunities of visiting him in his lodge. He is about sixty years of age, and a remarkably handsome man. He is stern and brave, but mean, vain, treacherous and cruel. He was in the habit of resorting to the most contemptible tricks, for the purpose of obtaining whisky, with which he always made a beast of himself. He was constantly in the habit of talking about himself, and exhibiting the official papers which he had received from the Government in making treaties. The following was the most famous of his deeds, and one that he had the hardihood to boast of as something creditable. He and some six warriors, while on a hunting tour, were hospitably entertained in a Sioux lodge, where resided a family of seventeen persons. The two nations were at peace, and for a time their intercourse had been perfectly friendly. On leaving his host, Hole-in-the-day shook him cordially by the hand, with a smile upon his countenance, and departed. At midnight, when the Sioux family were revelling in their peaceful dreams, Hole-in-the-day and his men retraced their steps, and without a reasonable provocation fell upon the unprotected family and cruelly murdered every member, even to the lisping babe. And it was in the lodge of this titled leader, that I spent whole hours in conversation, and from whom I received a present, in the shape of a handsome red-

stone pipe. It is indeed a singular fact, that the most interesting and intelligent nation of the West should be ruled by such an unworthy chief as Hole-in-the-day.

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A word now about his household. He is the husband of two wives, who pursued, while I was present, their various avocations in perfect silence. Each of them presented me with a pair of moccasons, and placed before me whole mocucks of maple sugar. In passing I might remark, that when the Indians are hard pushed for flour or game, they will resort to their sugar, upon which they can live for days, and which they consider the most wholesome of food. The children that swarmed about the chief's lodge, I was unable to number. His eldest son and successor I frequently met, and found him to be a perfect Brummel of the woods. The following story gave me a glimpse of his character. Some months ago, the idea had entered his head that his father was jealous of his increasing popularity among the *people*. He was seriously affected by it, and in a fit of anger resolved to starve himself to death. His friends laughed at him, but to no purpose. He left his home, marched into the woods and ascended a certain hill, (called Look-Out hill, and used from time immemorial, by the Indians, as a point from which to watch the movements of their enemies ascending or descending the Mississippi,) where he remained four days without a particle of food. He was only rescued from death by the timely discovery of his friends, who took him away by force, and actually crammed some nourishment down his throat.

But my Crow-Wing stories are not all related yet. I here saw, *alive and quite happy*, a warrior who was once *scalped* in a skirmish on the northern shore of Red Lake. His enemies left him on the ground as dead, but wonderful to relate, he gradually

recovered, and is now as well as any body, but perfectly hairless, of course, and wears upon his head a black silk handkerchief. The summer after this event he was hunting buffalo in the Sioux country, when he had another fight with two Indians, both of whom he succeeded in butchering, and one of those very men was the identical Sioux who had taken his scalp a few months before.

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During my sojourn here, I have had frequent opportunities of witnessing the Indian mode of swimming. To speak within bounds, there must be some sixty boys at Crow-Wing, who enjoy a swim about every hour. When not in the water, they are hard *at work* playing ball, and all in the sweltering sunshine, with their ragged looking heads entirely uncovered, and their bodies almost naked. Just as soon as the child is loosened from its prison cradle, it is looked upon as a fit candidate for any number of duckings, which are about its only inheritance. These children are just as much at home in the water as a full-fledged duck. They swim with great rapidity, always extending one arm forward, like a bowsprit, and holding the other closely at the side. They are so expert in diving that when a number are pursuing a particular individual, and that one happens to dive, the whole of them will follow after, and finally all come up a hundred yards off. To bring up a pebble from a hole twenty feet deep is looked upon as a very common feat. This art seems to be inherent in their nature, and is the gift of a wise Providence;—for all their journeys are performed on the water, and their canoes are as frail as frailty itself. It is very seldom that we hear of an Indian being drowned.

The only Indian ceremony I have witnessed at this place, is called the Begging Dance. A large party of *brave* warriors had

come to pay their white father (Mr. Morrison) a *disinterested* visit, but as they were nearly starved, they said not a word, but immediately prepared themselves for the dance, that is universally practised throughout the nation. It was night, and all the people of Crow-Wing were stationed in a large circle before Morrison's door; while one swarthy form held aloft a birchen torch, which completed such a picture as was never equalled upon canvass. The everlasting drum, and rattling of "dry bones," commenced their monotonous music; when the most ridiculously dressed man that I ever beheld, stepped out from the crowd and commenced dancing, keeping time with a guttural hum. Upon his head was a peaked woollen hat, and his flowing hair was filled and entangled with burs. On his back he wore the remnant of an ancient military coat, and on one leg the half of a pair of breeches, while his other propelling member was besmeared with mud. In one hand he held the empty skin of a skunk, and in the other the gaunt body of a dead crane.

Immediately after this rare specimen, appeared in regular succession about twenty more dressed in the same manner, and when all out, their dancing capers were even more uncouth and laughable than their personal appearance. The object of all this was to exhibit their abject poverty, and create an atmosphere of good nature; and it was their method of asking Mr. Morrison for food. Soon as he had supplied them with flour and pork, they ceased dancing, seized the booty, and departed for their wigwams to enjoy a feast. On the following day, this band of gentlemen made their appearance, painted, and decked out in most splendid style, with the feathers, ribbons, scarlet leggins, and other ornaments which they had kept hidden until after the dance and feast were ended.

I have as yet accomplished but little in the way of hunting; that

is, but little for this region. On one occasion I killed seven fine *looking* ducks, which turned out, however, to be unfit to eat, as they were of the dipper species, and a little too fishy even for my taste; at one time I killed twenty-five pigeons; at another about a dozen grouse; and last of all a couple of young coons. This latter game, I would remark, afforded me one of the most delectable of feasts.

But in the way of fishing, the waters about Crow-Wing have treated me to some of the rarest of sport. The Mississippi at this point contains a great variety of fish of the mullet and sucker genus, but the only two desirable kinds are the muskanounge and a very large pike. I tried some of these with a fine hook hidden in the breast of a frog, (the disciples of Byron will please not take the hint, and accuse me of inhuman cruelty,) but I could not tempt them in that way. The *fashionable* mode for taking them is with a spear, by torchlight, and during half the hours of one night I performed the part of a devotee to fashion. My pilot was an Indian, and we went in a birchen canoe, using birch-bark for a torch. There were quite a number of canoes out that night, and the gliding about of the various torches, the wild shores, the ever-varying bed of the river, and my own occasional struggle with an immense fish,—conspired to throw me into a nervous state of excitement which has not entirely left me at the present moment. I did think of mentioning the number of prizes that were taken on that memorable night, but my modesty forbids; I will only say that I saw extended on the shore a muskanounge that weighed fifty-seven pounds, and a pike that almost weighed twenty-four.

Two miles east of Morrison's house is a little lake, some four miles in circumference, which is said to contain no other fish

than black bass. My own experience tells me that this report is true. I angled along its sandy shores a number of times, and could take nothing but bass. They were small, weighing about a pound, of a dark green color on the back, sides a brilliant yellow, and belly perfectly white. I took them with a fly, and to the palate found them perfectly delicious.

## CHAPTER XII.

CROW-WING, July, 1846.

The Indian trader belongs to the aristocracy of the wilderness. His business is to barter with the Indians for their furs, as the agent of some established fur company. He is generally a Frenchman, whose ancestors were traders before him, and of course a native of the wild region he inhabits. Such are the facts with regard to the individual I am about to portray, and I purpose, by this specimen, to give my reader a faithful idea of the class to which he belongs.

The residence of my friend is on the Saint Peter's, near the brow of a picturesque point formed by a bend of the river, and his nearest white neighbor is *only* two hundred miles off. The dwelling that he lives in is built of logs, and contains one large room and a garret. Adjoining this cabin is another of the same character, where he keeps his merchandise; which consists chiefly of pork, flour, blankets, blue and scarlet cloths, and various kinds of trinkets. His household is composed of an Indian wife and a full assortment of half-breed children, who are generally possessed of a good deal of natural shrewdness, but of course utterly ignorant of books and the ways of the civilized world. Adjoining the trader's residence is about one acre of ploughed ground, where he cultivates a few common vegetables; and he keeps a solitary cow, which yields him the only luxury that he enjoys. His live stock is very extensive, but not of that character which is profitable,—it is peculiar to the wilderness, and in our section of country would be called a menagerie. The following is a correct list of my

friend's treasures in this particular, viz.:—one grisly bear, two black bears, two fawns, one fox, one coon, one eagle, one crow, one cormorant, a flock of wild geese, two swans, and one owl. In addition to these I ought to mention a herd of Indian dogs, and a brotherhood of Indians, who are nearly always encamped in the vicinity of the trader's dwelling.

Now, as to the manner of the trader's life. Though I did not intend to make a hero of my friend, I must say that the life he leads is heroic to an uncommon degree. His resting time is during the summer months, when his principal business is to obtain his merchandise and attend the various Indian payments that may happen to be made. But during the winter, which is long and very severe in this region, he visits, with one or two companions, the hunting-grounds of the Indians,—leaving his home heavily loaded with goods and provisions, and returning, still more heavily laden with packs of furs and peltries. The hardships and privations that he then endures, would, in a single month, utterly destroy a common constitution; but they are treated by him as matters of very little consequence, for his constitution seems to be of an iron nature. Several days does he sometimes spend without a particle of food;—now, snowbound in the pathless woods, and now surrounded, perhaps, by a band of hostile Indians, who may succeed in robbing him of his furs. Now it is his fortune to struggle for life with some half-famished beast; and now he has to endure the frightful dangers of fording angry and partly frozen rivers. Cold, fatigue, and hunger are at the foundation of almost every scene that he passes through during the cheerless winter months of every year, in the Indian Territory of the northwest.

The intellectual and moral character of our Indian trader

is what would be expected from a man in his condition. He knows not how to read or write, and is consequently dependent upon a clerk for the prosecution of his epistolary business and the keeping of his memorandum books. In politics he is nothing, as he has not, from his location, the privilege of voting; but his sympathies are invariably with those officers of the Government who project and carry out measures nominally for the benefit of the poor Indians, but more particularly for his own. In religion, he is a blind adherent to the Pope of Rome. The glittering dollar seems to be the star of his ambition. Having been for many years an agent for the famous but most outrageous American Fur Company, he has become hardened, and, like his *teacher* in the science of oppressive monopoly, seldom hesitates at any course of conduct that will prove lucrative. He avows himself the best and only friend of the Indian, and yet his every act of kindness is accompanied by a moral stab. He buys a pack of furs and allows the hunter the current price, but then he pays him in flour at *fifty* dollars per barrel, and blankets at ten dollars apiece;—but far worse, he sells to the benighted savage the baneful fire water, which makes him a perfect devil.

But the trader has some redeeming qualities, and I know not that I am disposed to write him down as more ignorant or wicked than his *civilized* fellow-men in the same sphere of life. At the same time that he imposes upon the poor Indian, in more ways than one, it is also true that he is his friend when cold and hungry. The Indian is such a thoughtless and improvident creature, that it is absolutely necessary he should have some one to watch over him and keep him from starving. And often is the trader's duty, in this particular, faithfully performed; with all his faults he would sooner die than see an Indian suffer. Take the trader away from the cares of business, as you sometimes

may employ him as your guide in a hunting expedition, and you will find him a most interesting companion. Strange as it will seem, he is a devoted lover of nature, and being superstitious, he has a legend in his head for every picturesque nook of the woods and prairies, and for every beast or bird which may happen to cross your path. He is well acquainted with the geography of the northwest, and makes an occasional rude map upon birch bark, which are of great value to those who execute them on a large scale for our Government. That portion of Nicolet's map, representing the extreme head of the Mississippi, was made upon bark, by Francis Brunet, who is to be my guide for hundreds of miles. He is also well acquainted with the traditional history of the Indian tribes, and knows well the character of every chief and remarkable personage now living. He has a kindly nature, and his whole conduct is agreeably softened by an innate politeness. He is, to sum up all, a most romantic, but very useful and influential character, and in intellect the aristocrat of the wilderness.

I may append with propriety to this sketch, a few words about the fur trade generally, as it now exists beyond the Mississippi. A division took place in the American Fur Company a few years ago, and while one party was headed by Piere Choteau, and traded on the Missouri, the other remained under the guiding hand of Ramsey Crook, and confined its operations to the region of the Great Lakes. The principal men in this fur trade, before and since the family division, succeeded in accumulating large fortunes, but both of the companies, which retain the original name, are supposed to be, at any rate, no better off than they should be. For my part I am not surprised at this result, when I know the overbearing and monopolizing character of these companies, and when I believe in the theory that iniquity has its

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reward even in this world. Many of the deeds that have been, and are still, sanctioned by the so-called American Fur Company, are of such a character as to be worthy of the severest condemnation; out of its many iniquities I will mention only one. This company has located its agents in every eligible corner of the wilderness, for the ultimate purpose of accumulating gold; and when the poor missionary of the cross has crept along through untold hardships to plant the banner of a pure religion, for the benefit of the red man, he has been insulted and driven away. But I like not this theme, and will let it pass into forgetfulness. When I am told that the beaver and the otter and other valuable animals are rapidly becoming extinct, and that the glory of the American Fur Company is for ever departed, I cannot but believe that there is a wise and just Providence, who holdeth the world in the hollow of his hands.

# CHAPTER XIII.

SPIRIT LAKE, July, 1846.

This Lake, which the French have named Mill Lac, and certain ignorant Yankees, Rum Lake, was originally called by the Chippeways, Minsisagaigoming, which signifies the dwelling place of the Mysterious Spirit. In form it is almost round, and about twenty miles across in the widest part. The shores are rather low, but covered with a luxuriant growth of oak, hard maple, and tamarack. It is shallow, but clear and cold; has a sandy bottom, and yields a variety of fish; and contains only three islands, which are small and rocky.

The Mysterious Spirit alluded to above has acquired a great notoriety on account of his frequently taking away into the spirit land certain people whom he loved. Sometimes he would take them for a few days, and sometimes he would not return with them at all. The following stories were given to me as facts, and I know were actually believed. An Indian, with his family, had encamped upon the lake for one night, and just as he was about to depart on the following morning, he could not find his only child, a little girl. At one moment she was seen picking up some pebbles near her father's canoe, and the very next was gone. For six days did they seek the child, but in vain. On the seventh day, however, as they were about to depart once more, (having given up all hope of recovering the lost one), they looked, and behold! she was again picking up pebbles beside the canoe, as unconcerned as if nothing had happened. When questioned, she answered that she had only been taken away by a beautiful lady to a beautiful land, where she had been

happy in seeing many beautiful things.

Once when there was a party of Indians encamped here, a favorite young girl was discovered to be missing, and her friends, supposing that she had been drowned, were mourning bitterly at her departure; one day she made her appearance in her father's lodge, as if nothing had happened, and was accompanied by two dogs. Her story was, that an old woman had taken her to an island, presented her with the animals, and bade her prepare for a long journey. She was absent for three weeks, but on the day of her return was numbered with the dead.

A little boy was also once lost on the margin of this lake. The only trace of him that ever could be discovered, was one of his arrows found lodged in a tree. And the Indians believe too that the aged mother of Hole-in-the-day (the great chief) was also carried away by this Mysterious Spirit. One thing is certain, say they, she disappeared in the twinkling of an eye from the party with whom she was travelling many years ago. These are indeed idle legends, but give us an insight into the Indian mind.

The following is an historical fact, which only proves the obstinacy of their principal actor. Many years ago, a chief named White Fisher, with his family and a party of braves, were encamped in one large lodge on the north side of Spirit Lake. A friendly Indian entered the cabin at sunset, and told the chief that he had seen a war-party of three Sioux on his trail. The chief scorned to believe the story, because his dreams had told him nothing about an enemy. In a short time his eldest son returned from his evening hunt, and said that he had also seen three Sioux in the woods about a mile off;—but the father continued to disbelieve. Finally the chief's own brother told him a similar

story, which was also treated with contempt. It was now morning, and the chief made his appearance outside of his lodge, and was about to go upon a hunt;—but in the twinkling of an eye three balls passed through his body, and he died. Every single member of his household was killed, excepting his youngest son, who was taken prisoner, lived in the Sioux country for twenty years, but finally returned to his own people, and he was the identical individual from whose lips I obtained the above facts. He is now a chief, and universally known by his father's name, Wabogike, or White Fisher.

On the west bank of Spirit River, where it leaves the lake, is the rude grave of Kitcheoseyin, or Elder Brother, who was one of the most famous orators of his nation. He was a noted chief, and on one occasion had given up into the hands of the white men a certain Chippeway murderer. His people were very angry at him, and it was currently reported that he was about to be assassinated. He heard of this interesting movement, and immediately summoned a council. The warriors were all assembled, and when the pipe had been passed entirely round, the chief stepped forward and addressed the council in the following words, which were repeated to me by one who heard them.

“Friends, relatives, and brothers. My object in calling you together in council is this. I hear that you desire to take away my life because I have given up to the white men a Chippeway Indian, who had murdered one of their people. I have done so, brave men, and I think I have done right. That man who committed the murder was a *bad dog*,—he was not a true Chippeway Indian, and for his wicked deed he deserves to die. Had we been at war with the white nation, it would have been

well,—but we are at peace.

“But, brothers, I understand that you accuse me of siding with the pale faces, and that you think such conduct wrong. I do love the white men, and I do not think my conduct wrong. Who  
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is it, I would ask you, that supplies us with food when game is scarce, and who gives the warm blanket to protect us from the winter cold? Who is it that gives us the guns that we so much need, and the tobacco that we so much love? You know that it is the white man, and you know too that you act like fools to blame me for my conduct, and seek to kill me because I would be an honest Chippeway.

“I tell you, warriors, that I do love the white man, and I am ready to die for his sake. You cannot compel me to change my opinion. Make a hole in the lake yonder, take me by force and place me under it until I am almost dead, then pull me up and ask me, ‘Will you side with the white man now?’ and I will answer, ‘Yes.’ Do it again, and again, and again, and I will always answer, ‘Yes,’ and also that ‘the white man is the best friend we have.’ Friends, I command you to go home, and ever hereafter mind your own business.”

Strange as it may seem this speech had the desired effect, and entirely quelled the rising storm. The chief was not killed, but died many years afterward with the lockjaw, from a cut that he accidentally received on his foot.

The ruling chief of Spirit Lake, at the present time, is Naguanabic, or Outside Feather. He is said to be the most worthy, intelligent and influential of all the Chippeway chiefs. I spent many agreeable and instructive hours in his lodge, and

among my Indian curiosities there is nothing that I value more highly than the presents I received from him. It does my heart good to remember the old man, and the beautiful lake which is his home.

A son of this old Indian, while hunting, once pursued a deer to a very great distance, which he finally captured. Out of revenge for the *improper* conduct of the animal, the cruel Indian tortured it in a variety of ways, and came home boasting of what he had done. At the feast usually given on such occasions, this old chief addressed his son in the following words: "We are thankful to the Great Spirit for furnishing us with food. But my son has acted very wrong in torturing that animal, and if the laws of the Great Spirit are not changed from what they were in times past, that boy shall not be privileged to kill another deer during the whole winter." And I was told that he did not, and that no cruel hearted man ever can, under similar circumstances.

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It was from the lips of this aged Indian that I obtained the following legend.

A thousand winters ago, the Great Spirit caused the sun to be fastened in the heavens, for the purpose of destroying the world on account of an enormous sin which had been committed. The men of that time assembled together in council, but could devise no means to avert the calamity. The animals of the earth also held a council, and they were about to give up all hopes of a release, when a small animal stept forth and avowed its intention of gnawing off the string that held the sun. He entered the earth, and after travelling a long time, finally reached the desired planet and accomplished his purpose. The heat of the sun, however, was so great, that the sight of the heroic little

animal was impaired, and it returned to the earth—a poor blind mole.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN MY CANOE, July, 1846.

Winnipeg is the first lake of importance which the traveller *passes through* on his way up the Mississippi from Crow-Wing, and it is a namesake of the great northern lake. The banks of the river throughout this long distance do not average more than about ten feet in height, and are all the way covered with a stunted growth of trees, where the birch, the elm, the pine, and the spruce mostly predominate. It is so exceedingly winding here, that by making a portage of fifteen rods, you may often save some three or four miles of canoe travel. The stream varies from an eighth to half a mile in width; sometimes shallow and rapidly running over a rocky bed, sometimes widening into a shallow lake, and sometimes deep, and running sluggishly through a soil of clay or sand, and almost blocked up with snags.

The meaning of Winibigoshish, or Winnipeg, is, the grand reservoir, or dépôt of water. The lake is fifteen miles in length and perhaps ten in width. It is nearly round, has no islands, but a gravelly and sandy bottom, and is surrounded by a handsome beach; the water is clear and shallow, and it contains no fish but those that I have elsewhere mentioned as peculiar to this section of the Mississippi. The surrounding country is a dead level, composed of continuous woods, which are every where interspersed with lakes and rice swamps, where unnumbered waterfowl have lived and multiplied for centuries.

The only inhabitants that we found on the shores of

Winnipeg, were three bands of Chippeways, numbering in all about one thousand souls. We pitched our tent in the midst of their encampment, or village, and managed, so far as I was concerned, to spend a day and night among them quite pleasantly. Immediately on my arrival there, I heard something about a contemplated bear hunt. It happened to be the month when this animal performs its annual journey to the south, whence it returns in October. A number of them had already been killed, and there was a crossing place on the Mississippi, where a good marksman might take one almost at any time. I found that there were but two men going on the hunt, and, as a present of tobacco soon initiated me into their good graces, the party of course was increased to three. We started at sunset and descended to the crossing place in a canoe, where we ambushed ourselves in one of the wildest recesses in the forest, seated on a mossy rock that commanded an opening between the trees, while our canoe was hidden by a willow that bent gracefully over the stream. It was a clear, still night, but quite dark, as there was no moon. Here we spent a number of hours, without uttering a word; but listening meanwhile to the dismal shriek of an owl, or the silvery dropping of the dew on the gently flowing river. Finally, however, one of the Indians tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed to a large black object, which I saw was a bear just wading into the water, directly on the opposite side from where we were seated. I had been told not to fire until the signal was given, and so the following five minutes seemed longer than an ordinary hour, to my impatient mind. The bear took it quite leisurely, not dreaming that an enemy was so near. But just as his feet touched the bottom on our side of the stream, the Indians gave me a nod, and raising our several guns, we all three fired at the poor animal, who dropped into the water quite dead, creating around him a crimson pool. We

shipped the animal on board the canoe, paddled to the village, and hanging it on the high limb of a tree, retired to our several wigwams and slept until morning.

On making my appearance among the Indians after breakfast, I found that I was to witness the ceremony which invariably follows the capture of a bear. I ought to remark in this place, that the animal in question was supposed by Morrison to weigh three hundred pounds. The Indian who had first *touched* the bear with his hand, (according to a universal custom among the Chippeways,) was the one who claimed it as his own. When he had taken off the skin, he presented it to a brother hunter, who from that moment considered himself under obligations to return the compliment at the earliest moment after his next successful hunt. The animal was then dressed, and the four quarters hung up in our hunter's wigwam, that being the only portion allotted to him by custom; while the head, back-bone, and ribs, the feet, the heart, liver, and fat, were all served up for a feast. A red feather was then sent to all the principal men in the village as an invitation, which they understood to be to a bear feast, while the *common* class of men were verbally invited, women and children being denied the privilege of participating. At the appointed hour the guests made their appearance, in a neighboring grove, each one carrying in his hand a wooden bowl or dish. After they were comfortably seated in a large circle, a bag of ka-nick-a-nick and tobacco was circulated, and a cloud of fragrant smoke ascended to the sky,—for the Indians invariably commence their ceremonies by smoking. The next step was to place upon a fire in their midst a large kettle containing the remnants of the bear, which were to be boiled to a kind of soup, without the least particle of seasoning. While this was cooking, one of the orators of the day delivered a

speech, wherein he thanked the Great Spirit for telling his red children where to find the bear, and concluding with some remarks upon the characteristics of the animal. When the bear chowder was done, it was equally distributed among the assembled crowd, and each one required to eat the whole that was placed before him, and this too without a ladle or lifting his dish, but on his hands and knees in the common attitude of a bear. The bones were then all replaced in the kettle and deposited in some safe place; to neglect this part of the ceremony would be to anger the Great Spirit, who would not allow the giver of the feast to kill another bear.

Among the stories which I heard at Lake Winnipeg, was the following,—given to me by an aged chief as a fact, but which I cannot consider in another light than as a legend. It illustrates, however, the influence of dreams upon the savage mind. An Indian named Otneagance (Little Shoulder), while hunting after deer, on a cold winter day, came to the margin of this lake, where he built a fire and spent the night. He had a dream, and thought that he was crawling under ground, for the purpose of rescuing a human being from death. On opening his eyes in the morning, he was greatly surprised to see a woman on the ice a short distance off. She was standing near an air-hole, and wailing on account of her child, a little boy, who had fallen through and must inevitably perish. Soon as the hunter heard the woman's story, he dove into the hole, saw the child a great distance off, holding out its hands, swam to it, and in a few minutes placed it in its mother's arms—alive. "And yonder," said the chief, pointing to a little mound, "is the resting place of that good mother, and before you stands that boy—changed to a trembling reed. As to my saviour, Otneagance, he has, for many moons, been a resident in the Hunting Grounds of the Blessed."

Speaking of the dead reminds me of the Winnipeg grave-yard. The Chippeway mode of treating their dead, is to envelop the body of their friend in a bark box, which they expose upon a scaffolding, supported by four poles, and surmounted with a piece of skin or cloth as a flag. After the body has remained there until all decomposition is at an end, they then bury the bones, placing at the head of the grave a portion of the best food at that time in their possession. They afterwards cover the hillock with bark, somewhat after the manner of a roof, leaving at one end a little window or door, for the departed spirit to enter, when it comes to take away its bones, on a certain mysterious day, to which the living all look forward with reverence. When a friend dies, for one whole year thereafter they place food and tobacco periodically upon his grave; and all the articles that he left behind are venerated and cherished, as if endowed with life. Their manner of mourning for the dead ordinarily is, to paint their faces black, but when their friend is taken away by violence, they wail and mutilate their bodies. It is a part of their religion to protect from sacrilege and exposure the remains of their departed friends, and the survivors are constantly repairing every ruin that accident or time may bring upon the graves of their kindred. The grave-city that attracted my attention at Winnipeg, consisted of seventy-six bark houses like those that I have described. In fifty-two of them reposed the ashes of fourteen families who were butchered, at midnight, by a Sioux war party. In five of them were buried a mother and four daughters, who lost their lives while fishing on the lake, in frail canoes, that were swamped by a sudden storm. In seventeen of them lay the remains of as many warriors who were attacked by a Sioux party of two hundred,—they fought in a single trench, for one whole day, but were finally overcome and destroyed.

The melancholy impression which these brief facts left upon my mind, as I stood in that wilderness grave-yard, I could not easily dissipate. What a strange contrast in every particular did it present to the grave-yards of the civilized world! Not one of all this multitude had died in peace, or with a knowledge of the true God. Here were no sculptured monuments, no names, no epitaphs;—nothing but solitude and utter desolation.

# CHAPTER XV.

IN MY CANOE, July, 1846.

Red Cedar Lake is the sheet of water Mr. Schoolcraft has attempted to name after a distinguished friend; I say *attempted*, because the Indians and traders of the northwest do not recognize his change. I agree with them in the opinion that it *is not right* for travellers to glorify themselves or friends by attempting to supplant with their own, the original and appropriate names that belong to the rivers and lakes of our land. If the ambitious can discover *nameless* wonders, they will then be privileged to use *them* in extending their reputations.

Red Cedar Lake takes its Indian name from the tree that mostly abounds upon its shores. It appears to contain but little more water than Winnipeg, but it has near its centre a large island, which causes it to appear much larger on the map. It has a great many bays and several islands; has a sandy bottom and fine beach; is shallow, clear, and yields a small white fish, a few trout, and the plebeian varieties hereafter mentioned as native to the Mississippi. The shores of this lake are gently undulating, and must have been originally quite beautiful; but when I was there it was almost without inhabitants, and the places where once stood large clusters of wigwams, were covered with bare poles and ashes, and presented a most desolate appearance. The only family that I saw, was composed of a widow and her children, whose father had died two winters ago, while crossing the lake on his return from a hunting expedition. He perished from cold and hunger, while in full view of the cabin which sheltered his wife and children. And here, more

than a thousand miles from a really comfortable dwelling, lived this unfortunate widow—ignorant, destitute, and without friends. The story which she told me, and the wretched picture that her condition presented, kept me from inquiring into the legendary lore of this lake, so that I spent my only evening there, listening to the desultory conversation of my friend Morrison. The *facts* which I then gathered are now subjoined.

The entire region watered by the unnumbered lakes of the Upper Mississippi, including Superior and Michigan, is now inhabited by the Chippeway nation. The most of it they have acquired by right of conquest, and principally from the Sioux nation, which is the principal cause that has so often deluged this territory with blood. Their idea of the creation is as follows. Originally, when the globe (as they suppose) was an entire mass of water, the only living creature that existed was an immense bird, from whose eyes glanced the lightning, and whose voice was thunder. It so happened that this creature was oppressed with solitude, and having touched the water with its wings, the continents immediately appeared; and from the beams of the stars were born the first race of men, and from the winds all the animals of the earth. The Chippeways universally acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, whom they call Kitchi-Manitou, which signifies Great Spirit, and they reverence this Being as one from whom nothing but good can proceed. They also believe in an Evil Spirit, called Matcho-Manitou, who is a hater of all men, and the source of every misery. They also believe in a great number of spirits of more limited power than the above; and they have one of these for the sun and moon, for every lake, river, and mountain, of any note; and for every season of the year, as well as for every beast, bird, fish, reptile, and insect, that may have acquired a reputation among them.

To all of these are they in the habit of making offerings, which are as various as the spirits themselves. Death, with them, is always looked upon as a matter of course, and a blessing. When a good man dies they suppose that he is taken across a certain river into a land of perpetual sunshine, of beautiful woods, streams, and prairies, where every variety of game is always at hand, and fruit upon every tree; where they will have nothing to do but love each other, and live in the enjoyment of perfect peace. When a bad man dies, he is compelled to attempt to cross another river on a bridge of reeds, through which he inevitably falls into the angry waters, which are sure to transport him to a distant country, which is barren, always covered with snow, and very cold. He is to live there in a state of perpetual hunger, eternally shivering under the influence of biting winds.

Their manner of winning the title of a Brave, when there is no chance of distinguishing themselves in war, as at the present time, is to retire into a lonely nook in the woods, where they remain for six days without a particle of food. While there, they commemorate each day by making a notch on a stick, and when they finally make their appearance in the village, with a stick of six notches, they are welcomed as accomplished warriors. They are trained, almost from the hour of their birth, to endure every possible hardship, which ever makes them superior to a sense of suffering or fear of death. And the two great objects which prompt them to all this, are, that they may be able always to protect their relatives and friends from harm, and to shield their country from every aggression. It is a part of their religion to revenge every wrong, and when their terrible passions are roused, nothing but blood can stop them in their march of cruelty. This trait is inherent in their nature, even as the taste of blood will whet the appetite of the leopard and lion,—and

I know not that the Divine Will, in its wisdom, would have this state of things altered. If otherwise, it were reasonable to expect that the hand of God would fall heavily upon the white man, for placing the yoke of a most bitter oppression upon the unhappy Indian tribes. Many of the vices which were once almost hidden in their simple natures, have been ripened into full maturity by the example and allurements of their civilized brethren. They deeded to us their beautiful domains, and we have recompensed them with a cup of poison, and the deadly principles of infidelity. And yet we (as a people) think it just and charitable to speak of the poor Indian with a curse upon our lips.

The following is an outline of the Indian's manner of life. In November he enters his hunting grounds. After remaining in one place until he can find no more game, he removes to another a few miles off, and so continues until the whole region is explored and the winter months are gone. Early in March he settles his family in the maple forests, and while his wife and children are left to make sugar, he enters alone upon his spring hunt. Returning in May, he takes his family and pitches his tent in the vicinity of the various military establishments and trading houses of the wilderness, where he spends the summer months, feasting, gaming, and idling away his time. In September he plucks his corn and gathers his wild rice, and in October prepares himself for the approaching winter hunt. In the winter they rove about in companies of about five families, but in summer they congregate in villages.

A few words as to their ideas of marriage. Each man is allowed to have as many wives as he can support, and it is a singular fact that they invariably live together in the greatest harmony. Those

that are young and have no children are compelled to act (and they do it willingly) as servants to those who are mothers.

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It is also true that some of them are allowed to retain their virginity until death. Though the Chippeways are permitted by their customs to have a number of wives, they are generally so poor that the majority of them have only one. When a young man fancies himself in love, he invites two or three of his companions to go with him, and they pay a visit to the loved one's lodge. During this visit not one word is uttered by the guests, and when they depart the Indian lady is left in doubt as to the particular one who thus commences his loving attack. On the succeeding evening, the lover performs his visit alone. When he enters, if the lady speaks to him, he is accepted; if not, he is rejected. If the father offers him a lighted pipe, it is a sign that his consent is granted; if he does not, and keeps silent, it is understood that the young man must not persevere. When accepted, the lover makes some rich presents to the father and mother, and the lovers are considered husband and wife. Until the bride becomes a mother, she resides in her father's lodge, and all the game that the young hunter kills, is given to his wife's parents, but the furs to his wife. After this, the young woman packs up her apparel, which is usually her whole fortune, and takes up her residence with her husband in a new lodge. Divorces among the Chippeways are hardly ever known, and adultery is considered a heinous crime, and always punished with the greatest severity.

Travelling among the Chippeways may be considered a good deal safer than it is among the *half savage* inhabitants of the frontier. The most dangerous to deal with, are the young men, who, in civilized society, would be called "snobs." They are idle, haughty, and revengeful, and the only right way to treat

them is with the utmost coldness. Allow them to be familiar, and they will soon be impudent and overbearing. Unlike civilized barbarians, those of the wilderness know not what it is to use profane language. When they have reason to despise a man, they call him a bad dog; and when they have chastised such an one, they wear a skunk skin at one of their heels as a memento of the mean man's disgrace.

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The hospitality of the Chippeways is proverbial. When a stranger enters their cabin, he is invited to a seat on their best mat, and always treated with the very best that they possess in the way of food. Visit a chief at an untimely hour, at midnight for example, and he will arise, stir up his fire, and give you a pipe with all the air and politeness of a polished gentleman. Call upon him, when you know that he has reason to consider you his enemy, and he will not tell you to leave his wigwam, but it may be that in an unguarded moment, when in your own lodge, he will cleave your skull with a tomahawk. They are also exceedingly affectionate, and do every thing in their power to make their children happy. When a party of them are in a state of starvation, and one individual happens to have a bear or deer, he will distribute it equally at a *feast*. They treat their infirm people with tender care; and never refuse to present to a brother Indian any pipe, weapon, or ornament that may have been solicited. They extend the same civility to all white men whom they esteem. As the Chippeway country is mostly covered with a dense forest, this people are unacquainted with the use of the horse. Their mode of hunting the buffalo has always been to drive them over bluffs, or to shoot them while disguised in the skin of a wolf or buffalo. Their only vehicle is the birchen canoe, so famous for its beautiful model, its frailty and feathery lightness. The bark of the birch, out of which it is made, is found

in great abundance throughout their entire territory, and  
they use it, not only for canoes, but for their lodges, their  
grave-houses, their baskets, their mocucks, their dishes, and  
exquisitely worked boxes, which they dispose of as curiosities.

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# CHAPTER XVI.

IN MY CANOE, July, 1846.

Elk or Itasca Lake is the fountain head of the Mississippi. It is thought to be almost three thousand miles from the Gulf of Mexico and two thousand feet above the level of the Atlantic. It is a small sheet of water, about five miles long, one to two miles wide, and contains only one island, which lies directly in the centre. The first traveller who visited the lake was Henry R. Schoolcraft, after whom the island has been justly named. On the south side is a ridge of wood-crowned hills, which give birth to tiny streams, that eventually empty their waters into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The whole region on the north is woody, low and marshy. The water is clear, deep, and full of fish; the bottom gravelly; and the entire shore covered with reeds and rushes. The trees which abound here are the pine, oak, elm, maple, birch, and poplar; and the fish are principally the trout, pike, and black bass. The Mississippi when it leaves this lake is only about twenty feet wide, but after passing through a great number of lakes it spreads itself out to the width of one hundred and fifty feet, and empties into Red Cedar Lake. This portion of the Great River might well be likened to the infant Hercules, for it is the master of every thing around it, and rambles onward as if conscious of its dawning power. Upon the whole, however, it is through a cheerless wilderness.

The region of Elk Lake was once famous for the number of its animals, and derives its name from the following legend of a mammoth Elk. This creature is said to have measured the length of two large canoes, and with his horns had

power to split a pine tree. His lair was in a valley among the neighboring hills, where he reigned supreme; and it was customary for all the animals of the north, which were of giant size in those days, to make him an annual visit. As they were so numerous, they were compelled to occupy the country for many miles around, which accounts for its excessive flatness. The object of this "world's convention" was to consult the king of beasts as to the forests and plains they were to occupy during the following year; and to partake of the water of the small lake, which had power to protect them from every disease or accident, and such was the state of things, when an enemy made its appearance, and the reign of the Emperor Elk was ended.

Those were the days when giants inhabited the earth, and the region where most they congregated was in the far South. It so happened that a hunting party of these people wandered to the North, and finally pitched their tents in the vicinity of this lake. Among the animals they succeeded in killing was the Mammoth Elk, which they found asleep, and pierced with a poisoned arrow. The heavens were immediately filled with clouds, a heavy rain deluged the earth, and with their booty, in melancholy mood, the hunters started on their return. The rain was so abundant that the lake overflowed its banks, forming a little stream, which finally widened into a broad river, and emptied into an unknown sea; and on the bosom of this river did the hunters float in their newly made canoes, until they found themselves in their own country. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that from that year all the animals of the earth began to dwindle in size, and the men of that time were reduced in stature to the height of their younger children.

A more suggestive legend than the above I have seldom heard.

To my mind, it illustrates the poetical genius of the Indian, and throws much light upon the history of the Mound Builders. I obtained it from the lips of an old Indian hermit, as I sat in his solitary lodge, at the foot of one of the hills which look down upon Elk Lake.

On the summits of those hills I spent a number of days, pondering upon the strange wild scenery which surrounded me. At one time I revelled over a morning landscape. The sun had just risen above an ocean of forests, and the sky was echoing with a thousand strains of melody. Earth was awake, and clothed in her fresh green garment. The mists had left the long low valleys, and revealed to the open sky winding rivers and lakes of surpassing loveliness. Every thing was laughing with joy under the glorious influence of the summer sun.

The elk and the deer were cropping their morning repast, with the dew-showers trickling from their sides. Gracefully did the smoke curl upward from an Indian village. The hunters were preparing for the chase. I saw them enter their canoes, silently glide down a river, and finally lose themselves among the islands of a vast swamp. None were left in that village but women and children. While the former busied themselves in their rude occupations, the latter were sporting in the sunshine, some shooting at a target, some leaping, some swimming, and others dancing.

A rushing sound now fell upon my ear from a neighboring thicket. It was a wounded moose that had sought refuge from a hunter. The arrow had pierced his heart, and, like an exiled monarch, he had come here to die. He writhed and bounded in agony. One effort more, and all was still. The noisy raven was

now to feed upon those delicately formed limbs, and pluck from their sockets those eyes, which were of late so brilliant and full of fire. But after all, lovely, lovely indeed, was that morning landscape of the pathless wilderness.

At one time I gazed upon a noontide panorama. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the atmosphere was hot and sultry. The leaves and the green waves of the distant prairie were motionless. The birds were tired of singing, and had sought the shadowy recesses of the wood. The deer was quenching his thirst in some nameless stream, or panting with heat in some secluded dell. On an old dry tree, whose giant arms stretched upward as if to grasp the clouds, a solitary bald eagle had perched himself. It was too hot even for him to enjoy a bath in the upper air; but presently, as if smitten with a new thought, he spread out his broad pinions, and slowly ascended to the zenith,—whence I fancied that the glance of his keen eyes could rest upon the Atlantic and Pacific. The butterfly and wild bee were resting on the full-blown flowers; and perfect silence was in the Indian village. The children, exhausted with heat and play, had gone to lie down, some in their cabins, and some in the cool shadow of the trees. Earth and air were so tranquil, that it seemed as if nature was offering up a prayer. Winding far away to the south was the Mississippi, fading away to the bending sky.

In a few moments a little cloud had obscured the sky. The wind was rising, and was followed by a roaring sound,—and now the storm was spending its fury upon forest and prairie. The dreadful thunder echoed through the chambers of the firmament, and the fiercest lightnings flashed forth their fire. The forests were bending as if every tree would break. An old oak, which stood in its grandeur upon the plain, now lay prostrate,—even

as God will sometimes dash to the earth some proud and insolent man. The parched soil was deluged with rain. But finally the storm had spent its fury, and the clouds, like a routed army, were passing away in dire confusion. A rainbow then arched the heavens, and a fresh but gentle breeze was fanning my cheek, and thrilling my whole being with rapture.

I also looked upon this wilderness landscape at the evening hour. As the sun descended, the clouds came out to meet him, decked in their most gorgeous robes, while the evening star smiled at his approach. He had left the valleys in twilight, and I knew that his last beams were gilding with gold the Rocky Mountains. The moon ascended to her throne; and the whippoorwill had commenced her evening hymn. On heavy wings a swan flew past me; she was going perhaps to her home on the margin of Hudson's Bay. A stir was in the Indian village, for they had returned with their canoes loaded with game. The customary festival had commenced, and most strangely did their wild music sound, as it broke on the surrounding solitude. The doe had gone to her grassy couch, the feathered multitudes were sleeping, and the mantle of perfect silence had fallen upon the world.

It was now midnight, and I stood in the centre of an apparently boundless wilderness of forests and prairies;—while far away to the northwest reposed a range of hills, which seemed to me like a vast caravan of the antediluvian Mound Builders. The moon had compassed the heavens, and was near her setting. A thousand stars were by her side. She flooded with her silver beams the leaves, the waves, and distant hills. Every voice within the Indian village was hushed. The warrior, asleep upon

his mat, was dreaming of a new victory lost or won; the youth was dreaming of the dark-eyed maiden whom he loved; and the child was dreaming of the toys of yesterday. The pale face had not yet trespassed upon their rights; and as they were at peace with the Great Spirit, they were contented and happy. Holy and impressive was the hour. The wind was up, and wailed an awful anthem as it swept through the dark pines. It came to my ear like the death-wailings of a world. The owl was noiselessly flying from tree to tree, and the beautiful whippoorwill was sleeping. The splash of a leaping trout, or the howl of a wolf, were the only sounds which fell upon my ear. I looked, and looked,—wondering, wondering. And when I retraced my journey from the summit of the Elk Hills and the margin of Elk Lake, few and brief were the words that escaped my lips, for my heart was oppressed with the majesty of God.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

IN MY CANOE, July, 1846.

Leech Lake lies in the midst of a forest, mostly composed of pine, maple, oak, elm, and tamarack. It is supposed to be about forty miles in length, and perhaps twenty to twenty-five in width. Its shores are very irregular, it contains a number of large islands, and a trading post of some antiquity. It derives its name (Casagasque) from the story, that the first man who discovered it, saw in it a leech, that was wider across the back than an ordinary Indian mat. It is deep and clear, has a sandy bottom and shores, and is far-famed for its white fish, though possessing almost every other variety in great abundance. Three of its most prominent islands are known by the names of the Goose, the Pelican, and the Bear. The first has a desolate appearance, and is inhabited only by immense numbers of water-fowl; the second is noted for its fishing grounds, and a certain species of the pelican said to be found only on its shores; and the third has a good soil, is thickly wooded, and somewhat cultivated by a tribe of Indians, who own the lake, and inhabit the surrounding country.

This tribe of people glory in the name of *Pillagers*, and are fully deserving of the name. If they happen to meet a stranger Indian or Trader, *each* one will unceremoniously help himself to an article that he likes, politely remarking that for *his* part he desires nothing more, after which they feed the unfortunate man well, but let him depart with nothing but a blanket or jacket. The Pillagers are a brave, proud, and warlike people, but on account of their thieving peculiarity, are

universally hated and feared. But they are good hunters, and pay more attention to agriculture than any other tribe in the nation.

During my stay at Leech Lake I had an opportunity of witnessing a Medicine Dance, and of obtaining some information with regard to the Medicine Society. It is a religious rite, and practised on a great variety of occasions. At this time the dance was given by a man who had lost a relative. The ceremony commenced at twelve o'clock at night, and lasted until the evening of the following day; and such a perfect mixture of ridiculous dancing, horrible yelling, and uncouth dressing, I never before witnessed, and never wish to witness again. It positively seemed as if all the more unearthly creations of Dante had been let loose upon the earth, and had sought the heart of the wilderness, to rejoice at their freedom, and portray the miseries of hell. I would, but cannot, adequately describe the scene, and I can only expect my more imaginative readers to obtain the faintest idea of its strange, strange appearance.

White men and Indians who have never been initiated into the mysteries of the Grand Medicine, are not allowed to be present during the first part of the celebration. From what I have seen and heard about it, I am convinced that it is nothing in the world but an Indian and *savage* species of Free-Masonry. A Medicine man would sooner die, than divulge the secrets of his order. The ceremony on the occasion above mentioned, was performed in the immediate vicinity of the deceased; while a conversation was carried on with the dead, and food placed by its side, as if it had been a living and hungry individual. Then it was that their medicine bags were taken out, and as each Indian has a certain medicine, or preparation which he supposes his skin to possess, he attempts to manifest its virtues on this

occasion. By breathing into the nostrils of the skin, he imparts to it a particular charm, by which he can cure the sick or destroy his enemies. Hence the great fear that these conjurers inspire in all others. Medicine men support each other in every thing they may happen individually to require, even to the murder of an unfortunate child. When a man has passed the highest degree, he can command the services of his brethren for any purpose. The price of admission is six pieces for each grade, and there are eight grades. By one piece they mean a blanket, a pair of leggins, a knife, a gun, or any other useful article. The man who gives the most expensive pieces is highly honored, and can make the largest demands upon the Society, so that the older members obtain quite a revenue for their former expenditures. When they wish to inform a distant lodge of the faithlessness of a member, they despatch a piece of tobacco; the guilty man is always known and never admitted, but when they prove true, their membership is inherited. The missionaries of the west are inclined to believe that this Medicine institution is the grand obstacle to the promulgation of the Christian Religion among the Indians.

I also witnessed while at Leech Lake the *conclusion* of a ceremony that was commenced some weeks before. There had been a Virgin Dance, the prominent features of which are as follows. All the virgins of the village assemble together and seat themselves in a large circle. In the midst of this company are collected all the young men of the village, who dance for the amusement of the ladies. But if it so happens that one of the men stops suddenly and points his finger at a particular girl, she is at once looked upon as having lost her virginity; if the charge is substantiated the girl is disgraced, but if not, the young man must die. The *conclusion* that I alluded to was, the execution, in cold

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blood, of a fine looking young man who had attempted,107  
without cause, to ruin the reputation of a girl by whom he  
had been rejected. In an unguarded moment he had been stabbed,  
and when I saw him, he was weltering in his blood. It was a  
most terrible exhibition of justice and cruelty, and made me  
partly admire and then utterly despise the character of the whole  
Indian race.

While I was at this lake a couple of trappers made their appearance from the Red River wilderness, where they had been hunting during the past winter, but owing to an accident had been detained from returning until the present time. They were Half-Breeds, and as wild a pair of beings as I ever beheld. Their furs, at the usual prices, would probably bring them some fifteen hundred dollars. Their place of destination was St. Louis, where each one had a wife and children. Their intention was to remain with their friends until November, when they would dive into the wilderness again.

I only heard three legends at Leech Lake. One gives the origin of a certain miniature whirlpool, which may be seen on the south side of the lake. A couple of Chippeway women, while crossing in a canoe, were pursued by Sioux Indians, but the Lake Spirit, out of compassion for their misfortune, struck the water with his wings and opened an easy pathway to the Spirit Land. The second story is about Pelican Island. It is said that no Indian ever visited it without being caught in a storm; and that it has for centuries been inhabited by strange people. They were never visible excepting from the main shore, for when the island was searched no tracks or wigwam-poles could be seen, nothing but rocks, grass, and reeds. At the present time, none but the bravest dare land upon its shore with their canoes.

The third legend that I heard on the borders of this lake was about a famous battle once fought, between the gods of the white man and the red man. A great many summers ago, a race of white people made their appearance on the shores of this country, and, as they were a strange people, the red men of the wilderness were disposed to love them. As the former were very poor, the latter presented them with a few acres of land to cultivate. As the white men increased in numbers, they craved more land, but the red men would not yield to their extravagant solicitations. In the mean time the strange people were becoming powerful. In process of time the Big Manito became displeased with them, and was determined that this usurpation should cease. He visited the white man's god, and told him that he must take back his ambitious children. The white man's god replied that he would do no such thing, but was determined to protect his own. Manito then told him that the question must be decided by battle. A famous battle was fought, and the white man's god triumphed. He took Manito prisoner, and tied him to an oak with hickory saplings, but he finally made his escape, and with his children took up his home in the more remote wilderness.

The region of Leech Lake is somewhat famous for the quantity and good quality of the original maize or Indian corn. When I was there it was not sufficiently advanced to be eaten, even in a green state, but I obtained a fact with regard to corn planting, which may be new to my readers. All the labor connected with the raising of corn is performed by the women, who take it upon themselves as an offset to the hardships endured by the men in hunting. It is customary for them after they have planted the seed, to perform, in a state of nudity, a nocturnal walk through the field, which ceremony is supposed to protect the grain from the

destroying insect or worm.

During my stay at this lake I received from my friend Morrison, the following facts with regard to the game now inhabiting this region. The black bear, the black and gray wolf, the elk, the moose, and the deer, the otter, the mink, porcupine, white fisher, fox, the coon, the martin, the rabbit and a variety of squirrels are as abundant as ever; the grisly bear and buffalo are found only occasionally; and the beaver is entirely extinct. Among the birds that I saw were eagles, fish-hawks, night-hawks, owls, loons, the swan, the crane, a great variety of ducks, the pigeon, the woodpecker, blue-jay, black and blue-bird, red-bird, and the king-bird; and among the fish that may be found in Leech Lake, are the white-fish, the trout, the pike, the pickerel, the bass, the sucker, and the mullet. It is said the white-fish of this lake, originated from the brains of a woman; and I am also told that its shores have in times past yielded more wealth in the way of furs than any other place of the same extent in the northwest. But enough. It is time that I should close this desultory paper, else my reader will accuse me of practising the most prominent peculiarity of the *animal Leech*.

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# CHAPTER XVIII.

IN MY CANOE, July, 1846.

This is to be my last letter from the Mississippi valley, and my passion for the gentle art of angling, will not allow me to leave the great river without recounting a few fishing paragraphs, as mementoes of my journey thus far.

The largest and unquestionably the most abundant variety of fish found in the Lower Mississippi is the cat-fish, and here I believe they are found in the greatest perfection. They vary from one to six feet in length, and in weight from three to one hundred and fifty pounds. As an article of food they do not amount to much, and yet I have met with many people who considered them a great delicacy. They are invariably taken with the hook, and to those who admire muddy water, and love to handle the ugliest of creatures, capturing them must be a fascinating amusement. They are caught and eaten at all seasons of the year.

Another fish which abounds in the turbid portion of the Mississippi is called by the western people a perch, but is in fact only a sheep's-head. They are most abundant in the spring. They vary from one to eight pounds in weight, and as an article of food are about on a par with cat-fish. The above mentioned fish are the principal varieties which may be said to flourish in the Lower Mississippi; it is true, however, that specimens of almost every species of fresh water fish are occasionally taken. The baits used for the cat-fish and sheep's-head are pieces of fresh meat. Almost every steamboat on the river is well supplied with cotton lines and common hooks, and the

principal anglers for this fish are steamboat hands and raftmen.

But I must confess that I made a number of attempts to capture one of these monsters. The adventure took place after the following manner. Our boat had stopped at Alton in the evening, and was to remain there until about midnight. The river was without a ripple, and the marvellous beauty of the surrounding landscape threw me into a romantic mood; and tipping the wink to one of my companions to accompany me, we took an assortment of tackle with about two pounds of beef, and jumped into a skiff for an hour's sport. We pulled for the opposite side of the river, and having moored our shallop at the mouth of a bayou, baited our hooks, and threw them in. We had sat in silence just long enough to watch the shooting into darkness of a star, when my line was suddenly made taught, and I knew that I had a prize. I gave the fellow about one hundred feet of line, and he made use of his "largest liberty" by swimming around a certain snag, which of course made me a little angry, but greatly increased my excitement. I managed, however, to disentangle my victim after a while, and in due time had him safely ensconced in the bottom of the boat. His length was nearly four feet, and his weight must have been upwards of sixty pounds. While we were recrossing the river to reach our steamboat, a savage little steamer from Keokuck came rushing down, ahead of another with which it was racing, and passed so very near our shallop that we were swamped, and while my companion and myself were swimming to the shore for dear life, the monster we had captured was probably scooting away towards the Torrid Zone, not much injured, but a good deal frightened. About two hours after that adventure, I was the victim of a most painful nightmare, for I dreamed that I was dying from strangulation.

Before taking my leave of the cat-fish I must transcribe a description of him as recorded by Father Marquette:—"We saw also a very hideous sea monster; his head was like that of a tiger, but his nose was somewhat sharper, and like a wild-cat; his beard was long, his ears stood upright, the color of his head being gray and neck black. He looked upon us for some time; but as we came near him, our oars frightened him away." This is about as near the truth as Marquette ever arrived, but every one acquainted with the cat-fish of the Mississippi will readily perceive the resemblance of the description to the original.

I would now descant upon the fish of the Upper Mississippi. The largest is the sturgeon, of which there are two varieties, the common and the long-billed sturgeon. They constitute a staple article of food with the Indians, who take them with gill-nets and the spear. Their manner of preserving them is by drying and smoking. In size they vary from three to eight feet in length, weighing from thirty to one hundred and thirty pounds. Like all the larger fish of the Mississippi, their flavor is far from being delicate. With the sturgeon, which is a plebeian fish, I am disposed to class the mullet, sucker, rock-bass, sun-fish, bill-fish, bull-head, and chub, and can affirm from personal knowledge that all these fish are abundant in the Mississippi.

They are in their prime in the spring, but very few of them are fit to eat in the summer. With the Indians, however, they are eaten at all seasons, and I have never yet seen a fish in their country which they did not use as an article of food. Pickerel and perch also abound in all the waters of this region, but I do not consider them equal to the same varieties in New England. All the larger lakes which help to swell the Upper Mississippi are well supplied with white-fish, the best of which are found in

Leech Lake. As an article of food they excel all the fish of the northwest, but as they are of the shad genus, the angler can only praise them in the abstract.

The Indians employ a great variety of modes for taking all these fish, but the gill-net, the spear, and the bow and arrow are the more successful ones.

But the regular game fish of the Upper Mississippi, are the muskalounge, pike, black bass, and trout; and of these it always affords me unfeigned pleasure to discourse. The two former varieties are so nearly alike in appearance and habits that I am disposed to speak of them as one and the same thing. Formerly I entertained the opinion that a muskalounge was only an overgrown pike, but within the past year I have compared them together, and am convinced that they are materially different. Their habits, however, are precisely alike. They are exceedingly abundant in the sluggish waters of the Mississippi, and vary from five to fifty pounds in weight. They are in season about nine months of the year, but in the spring, at which time they ascend the river to spawn, are in their prime. It is well known that these fish are bold biters; but the pike is unquestionably the most active and cunning of the two, and consequently the most valuable to the angler. The muskalounge is somewhat of a sluggard, and owing to his size and hyena-like character, the very fish of all others for spearing by torchlight. The handsomest pike I ever had the pleasure of capturing was a resident of Lake Pepin. I was sauntering along the base of one of the rocky bluffs of this beautiful sheet of water, and had spent most of the day without success, trying to take a trout with a mammoth fly. I had thrown out my line for the last time, when, as I was carelessly winding it up, I was astonished by a sudden

leap within twenty feet of me, and in a moment more it was whizzing through the water in fine style. I humored the gentleman for about ten minutes, leading him meanwhile towards a sand-bar, where I secured and placed him in my canoe. He weighed upwards of twenty-one pounds, was very fat, had a black back and silvery belly.

My best muskalounge fishing occurred at a bend in the Mississippi, about one hundred and fifty miles above the Falls of Saint Anthony. I took them with a spear and by torch-light, standing in the bow of a canoe which was propelled by an Indian. Noiselessly did our birchen torch glide into a thousand nooks of the stream, like a will-o'-the-wisp, with a couple of deluded followers. I took no note of time on that memorable occasion, and the only thing which prevented me from fishing until morning, was the fog which covered the river about midnight. We landed, however, with a sufficient quantity of fish to supply the whole encampment of Indians for at least three days, and among them were seven specimens of the muskalounge,—the remainder being composed of small fry in general. On opening one of my prizes, an immense black-snake was found in his bowels, from which time I date my antipathy to this fishy genus as an article of food.

The best, and one of the most universal fish of the Mississippi, is the black bass. They vary from one to seven pounds in weight, are taken with the fly, the minnow and the frog, and in my opinion, as a game fish, are only second to the trout. They are found in great abundance at all the rapids in the river, but afforded me the finest sport at the Falls of Saint Anthony. When I was there the water was uncommonly low, so that pool fishing was in its prime, and I enjoyed it to perfection. If I thought that

my word would not be doubted, I should be pleased to mention the fact, that on one occasion I captured no less than thirty-five superb bass in the space of two hours, and that too, without once moving the anchor of my boat. I took them with a hand-line, baiting with a minnow, and the majority of them weighed over three pounds apiece.

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The only respectable trout region of the Mississippi extends from Prairie Du Chien to Lake St. Croix. An expert angler may here capture an occasional pounder, out of the river itself; but the rarest of sport is afforded by all the neighboring brooks, which run through a hilly country, and are rapid, rocky, and clear. The trout of these streams average about eight ounces in weight. As I sailed up the Alpine portion of the river in a steamboat, my opportunities for wetting the line were not frequent or particularly successful, as the following illustration will testify.

I had just arisen from the breakfast table, when the pilot of the boat informed me that he was about to be delayed for two hours, and that there was a fine trout stream a little farther on, which I might investigate. I immediately hailed a couple of my travelling companions, and with our rods in prime order, we all started for the unknown stream. Owing to a huge rock that lay on the margin of the river, we were compelled to make an extensive circuit over a number of brier-covered hills, and we found the bed of our pilot's trout brook without a particle of water. What aggravated our miserable condition was the intense heat of the sun, which shot its fiery arrows into our very brains. In about an hour, however, we succeeded in reaching the Mississippi once more, and there, comfortably seated in the shadow of a bluff, we threw out our lines and awaited the arrival of the boat. We

happened to be in the vicinity of a deep hole, out of which we brought five black bass, weighing three and four pounds apiece. We did not actually capture a single trout, but the sight of one immense fellow that I *lost* almost brought upon me a fit of sickness. Something very heavy had seized my hook, and after playing it for some minutes I was about to land it, when I saw that it was a trout, (it must have weighed some three pounds,) but making a sudden leap, it snapped my line, and was, like a great many objects in this world, entirely out of my reach; and then I was the victim of a loud and long laugh. The only thing that kept me from falling into a settled melancholy was the incident which immediately followed. When the boat came along, a Frenchman who was a passenger, and happened to have a canoe floating at the stern, volunteered his services to take us on board the steamer. Knowing that my friends had never been in a canoe before, I would not embark with them, and in about two minutes I had the *pleasure* of seeing them capsized, and after they had become completely soaked, of seeing them rescued from all danger, minus the three fine bass which they had taken. This feat was performed in the presence of quite a number of ladies, and to the tune of as satisfactory a laugh as I ever enjoyed.

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# CHAPTER XIX.

ST. LOUIS RIVER, July, 1846.

I now write you from the margin of a stream which empties into Lake Superior, towards which I am impatiently pursuing my way. Sandy Lake, where ended my voyaging on the Mississippi, is one of the most famous lakes of the northwest. It lies only about three miles east of the great river, and almost directly west from Lake Superior. Over the intervening route which connects the two water wonders of our country, more furs and Indian goods have been transported, than over any other trail in the wilderness. The lake received its name from the French, on account of its sandy shores, which are remarkably beautiful, abounding in agates and cornelians. There is a trading post here, which is said to have been established ninety years ago; and in a certain log cabin which was pointed out to me, I was told furs had been stored, to the value of fifty millions of dollars.

The shores of this lake are hilly, and being full of beautiful islands, it presents a most interesting appearance. The water is clear and abounds in fish, of which the black bass, the pike and white-fish are the most abundant.

The voyager in pursuing this route always finds it necessary to make a number of portages. The original manner in which I performed one of these I will briefly describe.

When the company to which I belonged had landed on the eastern shore of Sandy Lake, I immediately inquired for the trail, seized my gun and started on ahead, hoping that I

might succeed in killing a few pigeons for supper. The path was well beaten, the scenery interesting, and I went on with a light heart and a head full of fantastic images born of the wild forest. The only creature in the way of game that I saw was a large red deer, which suddenly startled me by a shrill snort, and bounded away as if in scorn of my locomotive powers. Soon as my *hair* was fairly settled to its natural smoothness on my head, (how very uncomfortable it is to be frightened!) the deer made a dignified pause, and I attempted to draw near by dodging along behind the trees.

Soon as I was through dodging, I looked up and found that my game was missing, and I therefore wheeled about to resume my journey. My intention was reasonable and lawful, but then arose the thought, what direction shall I pursue? The more I pondered the more my wonder grew, and after a series of ineffectual rambles I finally concluded that I had lost my way, and must spend the night, literally speaking, "in the wilderness alone." I now record my tale without a particle of emotion, but I can tell you that my feelings and reflections on that occasion were uncomfortable in the extreme.

After wandering about the woods until my feet were blistered, I concluded to pitch my tent for the night, although the only things I had with me to make me comfortable in my solitude, were an unloaded gun, a horn half full of powder, and my shot-bag, empty of shot and balls. I happened to be in a deep valley, which was entirely covered with pine trees. One of them had two large branches that shot out together about a dozen feet from the ground, and as I had no sure way of keeping off an enemy, I managed to climb up to them, and there spent the night, without once budging from my interesting roost.

I was not visited by any goblins on that memorable night, but the actual miseries which ministered to me during the dark hours were quite numerous. In the first place, I had to watch the deepening shadows of the evening, tormented by hunger and thirst. Instead of having an opportunity to satisfy my own appetite, it seemed as if all the musketees of the wilderness had assembled together for the purpose of having a feast on my own flesh and blood. But nature granted me a brief respite from this torment, by causing a heavy shower to fall, which had a tendency to cool my feverish lips and brow, and allowed me a lucid interval of sleep.

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But this blessedness was soon ended, for in a fit of the nightmare I had a very narrow escape from falling to the ground. After I had fairly recovered myself, and again drank in the horrors of a musketo dirge, I almost made up my mind to drop at any rate, and thereby end my life and the enjoyment of my infernal enemies.

But there was soon another change in the character of my miseries. An immense owl had the impudence to perch himself on a limb above my head, whence he poured forth a flood of the most horrible screaming that mortal ever heard. Soon as the echoes thus awakened had melted into silence, a crackling sound fell upon my ear, and I beheld an old bear, straggling along, as if he was sure of enjoying a feast of fresh meat.

He halted and snuffed around the base of a tree, which stood only a few yards distant from the one I occupied, and then continued on his way. He seemed to know that human feet had lately trodden the valley, but rationally concluding that no sensible man would remain in that particular region any longer

than he could possibly help it, he did not trouble himself about the scent he had discovered. I felt grateful towards the old savage for his unintentional politeness, but if my gun had been loaded with only one ball, I should have favored him with an unexpected salute.

The hours which followed this event, and preceded the dawn, were the longest that I ever experienced. My wretchedness was indescribable; I was cold and hungry, and in a perfect fever, from want of sleep, and the insect poison infused into my whole body; but morning came at last, and with it the warm bright sunshine and the silence of the Sabbath; only a loud clear chorus of sweetest melody echoed through the pine forest valley, from the throats of a thousand feathered minstrels.

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On descending from my elevated position, I ascended a high hill, from whose summit I could look down upon a beautiful lake, where I saw my fellow travellers all quietly afloat in their canoes. I loaded my gun with powder and fired a signal, which was answered by a deafening shout, that was far sweeter to my ears at that particular moment than even the song of birds. When the Indians who had been hunting after me had returned, and when I resumed my seat in the canoe, and had a slice of cold pork between my fingers, I was perfectly happy, in spite of the many jokes cracked at my expense.

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## CHAPTER XX.

MOUTH OF THE SAINT LOUIS, August, 1846.

By looking on the map you will observe that this river enters Lake Superior on the extreme west. I had not the means of ascertaining its precise length, but was told that above the Savannah, where I struck it, it is an inconsiderable stream. From that point to the lake it is quite a majestic river, and I should suppose the distance to be nearly one hundred and fifty miles. It has more the appearance of a wild New England river than any other that I have seen in the western country. It is exceedingly rocky, and so full of sunken boulders and dangerous rapids, that it never could be made navigable further up than Fon du Lac, which is twenty miles from Lake Superior. The water is perfectly clear, but of a rich snuff color, owing probably to the swamps out of which it runs. It is said to rise and fall very suddenly. Its entire shores are without a solitary habitation (excepting at the trading post already mentioned), and the scenery is picturesque, wild and romantic. But I hear the roar of its glorious cataracts, and must attempt a description of them.

There is a place on this river called the Knife Portage, from the fact that the rocks here are exceedingly sharp and pointed, where the stream forms a large bend, and where the voyager has to make a portage of twelve miles. The length of this bend may be sixteen miles, and in that distance the water has a fall of about three hundred and twenty feet. The width of the river may be from three to four hundred yards. At this point (just above Fon du Lac) are three nameless waterfalls, whose dimensions are indeed stupendous: they are said to be the

largest in the northwest. The water of the first tumbles over a pile of pointed rocks, and after twisting itself into every possible variety of schutes and foaming streams, finally murmurs itself to sleep in a pool eighty feet below the summit whence it takes its first leap.

The second fall, or rather cataract, is about one hundred and forty feet high, nearly perpendicular, and the water rushes over almost in a solid and unbroken body.

The walls of slate on either side are lofty, and “crowned with a peculiar diadem of trees;” and as the roaring of the fall is perfectly deafening, its effect upon me was allied to that of Niagara. The pools at the bottom appeared to be black and fathomless, but the spray was whiter than snow, and the rainbows beautiful beyond comparison. When I gazed upon the features of this superb water-wonder, united as they were in one complete picture; when I listened to the scream of an hundred eagles mingling with its roar, and thought of the uninhabited wilderness in every direction around me, I was most deeply impressed with the power of the Omnipotent.

I visited this cataract accompanied by a party of Indians, and owing to the length of time it took us to reach it, we were compelled to spend the night in its immediate vicinity. And then it was that the effect of this cataract upon my mind was so impressive as actually, at times, to be exceedingly painful. We built our watch-fire on the southern shore, in a sheltering bay, about one hundred yards from the fall, and on a spot where we could command a complete view of the superb picture.

Our supper on that occasion was composed exclusively of

venison, as one of the party had succeeded in killing a deer in one of his morning excursions; and though I had not eaten for nine or ten hours, I seemed to have lost my appetite, and took my food merely as a matter of necessity;—the fact was, I thought myself the inhabitant of a “fantastic realm,” and could hardly feel that I was a mere mortal, the creature of an hour. After our repast was ended, two of the Indians lighted their birchen torches and jumped into a canoe for the purpose of spearing fish. I watched them with peculiar interest, and saw them perform one feat which was truly wonderful. They had wounded an immense pike on a shoal, very near a column of the falling element, when the stricken creature floundered away into the foaming water, and the canoe darted on in quick pursuit, as if its inmates were determined to capture or die. One moment it seemed as if the torrent of water must be pouring into the canoe, and the torches be extinguished, and then again, I could only see a halo of light, looking like the sun rising at midnight, as the fishermen glided behind a sheet of water or a cloud of spray. They were successful in their sport, and finally returned and presented their prize at my feet. The party then enjoyed a pipe for about twenty minutes, when the younger Indians commenced playing their favorite moccason game, and I spent the remainder of the evening conversing with the chief and patriarch of the band, from whom I gathered the following tradition respecting the cataract.

“More moons ago than I can count,” said the old man, “the country lying between the big lake (Superior) and the place where the sun goes down, was owned by the Sioux nation, which was then immensely powerful. They were very cruel in their warfare, and did every thing in their power to annihilate the Chippeway nation. The Great Spirit was not their friend, but

ours, and once, when a multitude of their warriors were pursuing some of our hunters down the river, the Great Spirit suddenly *kicked out the bottom* in this place, and the principal enemies of our nation were all destroyed. Since that time we have been the possessors of this vast country, and the children of our ancient enemies catch the buffalo in a far distant prairie land."

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With this legend deeply impressed on my brain (the telling of which occupied my companion for nearly two hours) I ordered more wood to be placed on the fire, and leaving the others to take care of themselves, rolled myself up in my blanket, and was soon asleep. I was awakened only once during the night, and that was by the distant howl of a wolf, mingling with the solemn anthem of the cataract. I sat up for a moment to look upon the scene, but the sky was covered with clouds, and it was exceedingly dark. Even the embers of our watch-fire had ceased blazing. Around me lay my companions in a deep sleep. Once more did I listen to that dreadful howl, and that Godlike voice of many waters, until, like a frightened child, I hastily covered my head, and wept myself to sleep. On the following morning we resumed our journey in the midst of a rain storm, the memory of that night and that cataract, however, haunting me like a dream.

The next perpendicular fall within the bend I have mentioned, is some two miles down the stream, and is only about fifty feet in height, but its grandeur is somewhat enhanced by the rapids which succeed it, and have a fall of some forty or fifty feet more. An old trader tells me that I am the first traveller from the states who has ever taken the trouble actually to visit these cataracts. If this is a fact, and as the Indians, so far as I can

learn, have never christened them, I claim the privilege of giving them a name. Let them, then, be known hereafter as the Chippeway Falls. It is a singular circumstance that a pine tree might be cut in this interior wilderness, and if launched in one of the tributaries of the Mississippi, or in the Saint Louis River, and propelled by favorable winds alone, could, in process of time, be planted in the hull of a ship at any sea-port on the globe.

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The navigable portion of the Saint Louis, as before remarked, extends only about twenty miles from the Lake, at which point is the place legitimately called Fon du Lac. It is an ancient trading post, and contains about half a dozen white inhabitants, viz., a worthy missionary and his interesting family. The agent of the Fur Company and his assistants are half-breeds, and a most godless set of people they are. It is a general rendezvous for several Indian tribes, and when I was there was quite crowded with the barbarians.

Fon du Lac, so far as the scenery is concerned, is one of the most truly delightful places that I ever met with in my life. The first white man who traded here was my friend Morrison, after whom the highest hill in the vicinity was named. Upon this eminence I spent a pleasant afternoon revelling over a landscape of surpassing loveliness. Far below me lay an extensive natural meadow, on the left of which was a pretty lake, and on the right a little hamlet composed of log cabins and bark wigwams. The broad valley of the Saint Louis faded away to the east, studded with islands, and protected on either side by a range of high wood-crowned hills, beyond which reposed in its conscious pride the mighty lake-wonder of the world. The atmosphere which rested upon the whole scene seemed to halo

every feature, and with the occasional tinkling of a solitary cow-bell, combined to fill my heart with an indescribable joy.

Most of my rambles about this place were performed in company with the missionary already mentioned. He informed me that the surrounding country abounded in rich copper ore, in agates and cornelians of the first water, and that all the smaller streams of the country afforded rare trout fishing. If this end of Lake Superior should become, as I doubt not it will, famous for its mines, Fon du Lac would be a most agreeable place to reside in, as it is easily reached by vessels. I was hospitably entertained by this gentleman, and could not but contrast the appearance of his dwelling with that of his neighbor the French trader. In the one you might see a small library, a large family Bible, the floor covered with matting, &c., a neat, tidy, and intelligent wife and children; in the other, a pack of cards, a barrel of whisky, a stack of guns, and a family whose filthiness was only equalled by the total ignorance of its various members. And this contrast only inadequately portrays the difference between Christianity and heathenism.

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I left Fon du Lac about day-break, and with a retinue of some twenty canoes, which were freighted with Indians bound to a payment at La Pointe. It was one of those misty summer mornings when every object in nature wears a bewitching aspect, and her still small voice seems to whisper to the heart that it is not the “whole of life to live, nor the whole of death to die,” and when we feel that God is omnipotent and the mind immortal. But the scenery of this portion of the river is beautiful —beautiful beyond any thing I had imagined to exist in any country on the globe. The entire distance from Fon du Lac to this place, as before mentioned, is not far from twenty miles. The

river is very broad and deep and completely filled with wooded islands, while on either side extends a range of mountains which are as wild and solitary, as when brought into existence.

Every member of the voyaging party seemed to be perfectly happy, and we travelled at our ease, for the purpose of prolonging the enjoyment of the voyage. At one time we landed at the base of a cliff, and while I made a drawing or ransacked the shore for agates and cornelians, and the young Indians clambered up a hillside for roots or berries, the more venerable personages of the party would sit in their canoes, quietly puffing away at their pipes as they watched the movements of their younger companions. Ever and anon might be heard the report of a gun, or the whiz of an arrow, as we happened to pass the feeding place of a flock of ducks, the nest of an eagle or raven, or the marshy haunt of a muskrat or otter. Now we surprised a couple of deer swimming across the river, one of which the Indians succeeded in capturing; and now we hauled up our canoes on a sandy island, to have a talk with some lonely Indian family, the smoke of whose wigwam had attracted our attention, rising from between the trees. Our sail down the river occupied us until about ten o'clock, when we reached the mouth of the river, and disembarked for the purpose of preparing and eating our breakfast. We landed on the river side of a long sandy point, and while the Indians were cooking a venison steak and a large trout, I rambled over the sand hills, and as the sun came out of a cloud and dissipated every vestige of the morning mist, obtained my first view of Lake Superior, where, above the apparently boundless plain I could only discover an occasional gull wheeling to and fro as if sporting with the sunbeams.



# CHAPTER XXI.

SAULT ST. MARIE, August, 1846.

I have finished my pilgrimage around the shores of Lake Superior, given away my birchen canoe, and parted with my Indian guides and fellow-voyagers. It now remains for me to mould into an intelligible form the notes which I have recorded from time to time, while seated in my canoe or lounging beside the watch-fires of my barbarous companions.

Lake Superior, known to be the largest body of fresh water on the globe, is not far from four hundred miles long from east to west, and one hundred and thirty wide. It is the grand reservoir whence proceed the waters of Michigan, Huron, and Erie; it gives birth to Niagara, the wonder of the world, fills the basin of Ontario, and rolls a mighty flood down the valley of the Saint Lawrence to the Atlantic. It lies in the bosom of a mountainous land, where the red man yet reigns in his native freedom. Excepting an occasional picketed fort or trading house, it is yet a perfect wilderness. The entire country is rocky and covered with a stunted growth of vegetation, where the silver fur, the pine, hemlock, the cedar and the birch are most abundant. The soil is principally composed of a reddish clay, which becomes almost as hard as brick on being exposed to the action of the air and sun. In some of the valleys, however, the soil is rich and suitable for purposes of agriculture.

The waters of this magnificent lake are marvellously clear, and even at midsummer are exceedingly cold. In passing along its rocky shores in my frail canoe, I have often

been alarmed at the sight of a sunken boulder, which I fancied must be near the top, and on further investigation have found myself to be upwards of twenty feet from the danger of a concussion; and I have frequently lowered a white rag to the depth of one hundred feet, and been able to discern its every fold or stain. The color of the water near the shore is a deep green, but off soundings it has all the dark blue appearance of the ocean. The sandy shores are more abrupt than those of any body of water I have ever seen; and within a few feet of many of its innumerable bluffs, it would be impossible for a ship to anchor. It is a singular fact that the waters of this lake are much heavier than those of Huron, which are also heavier than those of Erie and Michigan. I am informed on the best authority that a loaded canoe will draw at least two inches more water in Huron than in Superior.

The natural harbors of this lake are not numerous, but on account of its extent and depth it affords an abundance of sea room, and is consequently one of the safest of the great lakes to navigate. The only trouble is that it is subject to severe storms, which arise very suddenly. Often have I floated on its sleeping bosom in my canoe at noonday, and watched the butterfly sporting in the sunbeams; and at the sunset hour of the same day, have stood in perfect terror upon the rocky shore, gazing upon the mighty billows careering onward as if mad with a wild delight, while a wailing song, mingled with the "trampling surf," would ascend to the gloomy sky. The shipping of the lake at the present time is composed of one steamboat, one propeller, and several small schooners, which are chiefly supported by the fur and copper business.

And now a word or two about the climate of this region. The

winters are very long, averaging about seven months, while spring, summer and autumn are compelled to fulfill their duties in the remaining five. During the former season the snow frequently covers the whole country to the depth of three, four and five feet, but the cold is regular and consequently healthful. The few white people who spend their winters in this remote region are almost as isolated as the inhabitants of Greenland. The only news which they then obtain from the civilized world, is brought them once a month. The mail-carriers are half-breeds or Indians, who travel through the pathless wilderness in a rude sledge drawn by dogs. But the climate of Lake Superior at midsummer is delightful beyond compare; the air is soft and bracing at the same time. A healthier region does not exist on the earth, I verily believe, and this assertion is corroborated by the well known fact that the inhabitants usually live to an advanced age, in spite of their many hardships. The common diseases of mankind are here comparatively unknown, and I have never seen an individual whose breast did not swell with a new emotion of delight as he inhaled the air of this northern wilderness.

Before concluding this general description of the region I have recently explored, I ought to speak of the game which is found here. Of the larger animals the two principal species are the black bear and elk, but they are far from being abundant; of the smaller varieties, almost every northern animal may be found, excepting the beaver, which has become extinct. Waterfowl, as many people suppose, are not abundant, for the reason that the rocky bottom of the lake yields no plants to supply them with food; but westward of Superior, about the head waters of the Saint Louis and Mississippi, they are found in incredible numbers. As to snakes, you might travel a thousand miles

through the woods and not see a single specimen. They are not "native and to the manor born." The traveller through this region finds but little use for his guns and rifles; if, however, he  
is not too devoted a worshipper of mammon, he may bring with him any quantity of fishing tackle, and his brightest anticipations with regard to angling will be fully realized. But I must be more particular in my descriptions, and will therefore make the American and Canadian shores of Lake Superior the theme of my two next chapters.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

SAULT SAINT MARIE, August, 1846.

It is computed that the American coast of Lake Superior extends to about twice the length of that which belongs to Canada. Our portion of the northern shore is skirted by a range of mountains which seem to be from two to three thousand feet in height; and it is said they extend in an unbroken chain from the river Saint Louis to the gulf of Saint Lawrence. Though they abound in cliffs, caverns, and waterfalls, when seen from the water, “distance lends enchantment” to these mountains, and they fade away, swell beyond swell, like the rolling billows of the ocean, while an occasional cloud will rest upon them, as if to remind the beholder of a ship, and thus complete the illusion. On the southern shore of the lake is a range called the Porcupine Mountains, which appear to be about as extensive (but not so lofty) as the Catskills; their varying outlines, seen as you sail along the coast, are very beautiful indeed. Point Keweenaw is also covered with hills, but less lofty and picturesque than those already mentioned. That portion of the coast lying between this point and the river Saint Mary, is low, and with the exception of the Pictured Rocks, uninteresting. Though our shores are not, generally speaking, what we should call rocky, yet they are distinguished for a variety of remarkable bluffs. Those alluded to above, are found on the east of Point Keweenaw, and extend along the coast some nine miles. They have been striped with various colors by mineral alluviations, and are about one hundred and fifty feet high. The most conspicuous of them is perhaps three hundred feet high, but its most superb feature was demolished by a storm in the year 1816. That feature,

according to a drawing in my possession, was an arch or doorway, fifteen feet broad and one hundred high, through which the Indians were accustomed to pass with their canoes. In those days, too, from the crevices in these solid walls of whitish sandstone leaped forth beautiful cascades, and mingled their waters with those of the lake. Beautiful caverns meet the eye in every direction, and the water at their base is of a deep green, and in some places almost fathomless.

A cluster of rocks similar to the above is found westward of the Apostle Islands. These, however, are composed of a deep red sandstone, and are only about one hundred feet high, extending along the shore for about two miles. The arches here are almost numberless, and exceedingly picturesque and singular, and you may wind your way among them in a canoe without the least danger, provided you have a steady hand and sufficient nerve. And the caverns, too, in these bluffs are also very numerous, and some of them are so deep and dark that the eye cannot measure their depths,—and from these gloomy recesses, “even in a season of calm weather,” always issues a sound like thunder, which must be perfectly terrific when a storm is raging. All these bluffs are covered with a stunted growth of Alpine and other trees.

The largest island in Lake Superior belongs to the American government, and is called Isle Royal. It is forty miles long, and varies from six to ten miles in width. Its hills have an altitude of four hundred feet, it is covered with forest, and has a bold shore. During the winter it is entirely uninhabited, but for the two last summers has been thoroughly explored by the copper speculators. The northern side is bold and rocky, but the southern shore has a number of fine bays and natural

harbors. The soil is barren, but distinguished for its fishing grounds. According to the Indians, it is the home of all the spirits of their mythology, or rather what we should call fairy-land.

Near the western extremity of this lake are the Apostle Islands, which are evidently detachments of a peninsula, running out in the same direction with Keweenaw, which is known as La Point. The group consists of three islands, and they stud the water most charmingly. There is a dreamy summer beauty about them, which made me almost sigh to dwell along their peaceful and solitary shores for ever. They are covered with dense forests, and ascend from the water's edge to a conspicuous height.

On the extreme point of the largest island is situated a trading post known as La Point. When I was there, it contained about a dozen inhabited log cabins, and the wigwams of about three thousand Chippeway Indians. They were assembled there to receive their annual instalment in money and goods from the general government, as a return for the untold acres, which they had deeded to their "Great Father and Protector," the President. The sum allotted to each was four dollars in money, and in goods one blanket and a sufficient amount of cloth to make a pair of leggins. This was all, and yet many of these poor wretches had paddled their canoes more than a thousand miles, to obtain this meager present. The great majority had reached the Point in a state of starvation, and were therefore immediately compelled to transfer their money into the open hands of the American Fur Company, for pork at *fifty* dollars per barrel and flour at *fifteen* dollars per hundred. It was understood, however, that when the red barbarians should start

for their distant homes, the white barbarians would furnish them with sufficient provisions to take them out of sight. This unhappy state of things took such firm hold upon my feelings that my reflections upon the fate of the Indian tribes actually 135 threw me into a thoughtful mood, and prevented me from enjoying my visit on the island. There is a Protestant missionary establishment at this place, but the missionaries are compelled to prosecute their labors as if with tied hands and closed lips, on account of the superior power of the Romish church. From time immemorial La Point has been the Mecca of the fur traders and the poor Indians. After exploring the immense wilderness on the west and north, enduring the severest hardships, they look forward to their visit at this place as the prominent event of the year. It is also the recruiting or starting place for all expeditions to the Mississippi river, there being only two routes,—that by the Brûlé and Saint Croix rivers, and another by the Saint Louis.

The rivers running into Lake Superior from the south are quite numerous, but none of them are very large. They are all remarkably clear, and abound in waterfalls. They invariably enter the lake in some sandy bay, and it is a singular fact, that shortly after a severe storm many of them cannot be entered even by a canoe, owing to their being blocked with sand, which event is of course followed by an overflow, for the time, of the surrounding country. When the storm has subsided, however, they break through the sandy barriers, and rush with great velocity into the lake.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

SAULT SAINT MARIE, August, 1846.

The entire Canadian shore of Lake Superior might be denominated as bold and rocky, but there may occasionally be seen a line of the smoothest beach, as if for the very purpose of affording protection to the voyaging Indians when exposed to the dangers of sudden storms. The bluffs are generally of a green sandstone, and frequently rise to the height of five hundred feet above the water, like massive bulwarks, which seem to have battled with the elements for many ages. The mountains which skirt the northern shore of Superior, form the dividing ridge between the streams which run into the Lake and those which take a northerly direction into Hudson's Bay. After passing the first and most lofty range, the country for about fifty miles is mainly made up of low granite hills, when it settles into a level wilderness, extending, as is supposed, to the Arctic Sea, and where tamarack swamps may be seen in their greatest perfection. This entire region produces but little for purposes of agriculture.

The two most prominent peninsulas on this shore are called Thunder Cape and Cariboo Point. The former is about fourteen hundred feet high, and frowns upon the waste of waters, like a crouching lion, which animal it closely resembles in the form of its outline. When passing near its base, it looms against the sky in awful grandeur, the seeming lord and master of the boundless wilderness world around. Cariboo Point is less lofty, but far-famed on account of the hieroglyphics which have been painted upon its brow in other years, by an Indian race

now supposed to be extinct. In the vicinity of these bluffs, are found the largest and most beautiful agates in the world.

The Canadian shore of this lake abounds in rocky islands, but of all those which I visited there is only one deserving of a particular notice. It lies in the northeastern part of the lake, and is unquestionably the greatest natural curiosity in this wilderness,—not even excepting the Chippeway Falls, the Saint Louis River, or the Pictured Cliffs on the southern shore of Superior. I visited it with a party of Indians and miners, and the former informed us, that we were the first white men who had ever ventured to explore its interior. It is found about twenty miles from the main coast, and is supposed to be about a dozen miles in circumference. The shores are of sandstone, and for the most part rise abruptly from the water to the height of four or five hundred feet. But the wonder is, that in the centre of this island lies embosomed one of the most beautiful lakes imaginable. It is about a mile long, and the perpendicular cliffs which look down upon it, are not far from seven hundred feet in height. It has an outlet, which is impassable for a canoe, on account of the rocks and trees that have blocked up the narrow chasm; and at the opening of this outlet stands a column of solid rock, which we estimated to be eight hundred feet high. The base is probably one hundred feet in diameter, and it gradually tapers off to about twenty feet in thickness, while the summit of this singular needle is surmounted by one solitary pine tree. The waters of this inner lake are clear, but have a blackish appearance, and are very deep. It is so completely hidden from the surrounding world, that the passing breeze scarcely ever ruffles its tranquil bosom, and the silence which reigns there, even at noonday, is intense and almost frightful. In some places the walls which surrounded the lake appear to

have been recently rent asunder, and partly demolished, as there were immense piles of broken rocks lying at their base; while in other places the upper points and edges are overgrown with moss, and from their brows occasionally depends a cluster of fantastic vines, drooping perpendicularly to the tranquil water, which reproduces the beautiful pictures in its translucent bosom. The lake, so far as we could ascertain, is destitute of fish, and the island of animals; but when we were there gulls of every variety, and in immense numbers, were filling the air with their wild screams. The entire island seems to be composed of rocky materials, but is every where covered with a stunted growth of vegetation. I spent one day rambling over this singular spot, and one night slumbering by our watch-fire in the shadowy cove at the mouth of the ravine; and at dawn, on the following morning, we boarded our feathery canoes and were joyfully skimming "over the deep waters of the dark blue sea."

Of the countless Indian legends, which create a kind of classical interest in the scenery of Lake Superior, the most singular and universal have reference to a noted personage whose name was Menaboujou; and as it is a *traditionary* fact, that he was, owing to his passion for water, buried in the liquid centre of the island I have described, it is meet, I ween, that I should devote a portion of this chapter to a record of his history. He was the Noah as well as the Jonah of this portion of the heathen world, and is said to have been created by Manito for the especial purpose of acting as the ruler of all men, and guardian of Lake Superior in particular; while some affirm that he was Manito himself. The Indians describe him as a being of immense size—who could stride across the widest rivers and grasp the lightning in his hands, and whose voice was like the roar of Superior in a storm. They also affirm that he excelled in all the

arts of war and of the chase, that the Chippeway nation are his legitimate descendants, and that he died at the advanced age of one thousand winters. At the mention of his name in the Indian lodges, the children hush their prattle, and listen with wonder to the tales which are sure to follow. It is alleged that he was gifted with the strange powers of the necromancer, could transform himself into any animal or inanimate object in nature, at a moment's warning, and was wont to hold converse with every living creature at his will. There is not a headland on Lake Superior, or a river emptying into it, which is not hallowed in Indian story by his wonderful exploits. The revolving seasons were at his command. He covered the earth with snow, and fettered the streams in ice. At his mandate the mountains were covered with verdure, and northern flowers bloomed in surpassing beauty. He commanded, and the terrible storm-winds broke from their prison caves, and lashed the mighty plain of waters into pure white foam; and the zephyr, which scarcely caused a leaf to tremble, or a ripple on the sleeping waves, was also attributed to his power. In fine, the qualifications of this noted individual were as numerous as they seem to us incongruous and heathenish. To the philosopher, however, these glimpses into the mythology of the aborigines are not without their value, and this conviction is my only apology for recording them.

The death of Menaboujou was an important era in the history of the Chippeway nation. During his life the calamities of war and intemperance were unknown, but the Evil One having challenged him to mortal combat, a desperate battle was fought between the mighty potentates, which resulted in the triumph of evil, and the extinction of all good, in the person of its chief author. The battle occurred in the midst of a thunder-storm and

on the summit of Thunder Cape, the only weapons used being clubs of immense size, made of the pine and spruce; and when the result was known, a mournful lamentation was heard throughout all the land. The entire Chippeway nation attended the funeral of the departed, and when they were bearing his huge corse to the lake within the nameless island, a rock was seen to rise out of the water, as a monument planted there by the Great Spirit, to perpetuate the memory of the beloved Menaboujou. The rock herein alluded to, rises to the height of about thirty feet, and bears an astonishing resemblance to a human head. I took a drawing of this rock, and look upon it as one of my rarest curiosities.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

SAULT SAINT MARIE, August, 1846.

Generally speaking, the voyager of the northwest is the shipping merchant of the wilderness; for his principal business is to transport furs from the interior county to the frontier settlements, or merchandise from the settlements into the interior. By birth he is half French, and half Indian, but in habits, manners, and education, a full-blooded Indian. Like the Indian, his home is where he may happen to pitch his tent. His usual possessions consist of a good supply of bark canoes, and he ever holds himself in readiness, either to transport goods, or act as a guide and companion to the traveller who may require his services. His dress is something less than half civilized, and his knowledge of the world equal to that of his savage brethren;—amiable even to a fault, but intemperate and without a religion.

It was in a company of some fifty men, composed of voyagers and Indians, and commanded by Allen Morrison, that I performed my pilgrimage to the head waters of the Mississippi, and around the shores of Lake Superior. There were ten canoes in our *fleet*; the largest (about forty feet long) was occupied by Morrison, myself, and five picked men. He was on his annual visit to the north, to attend the Indian payments, and the great majority of the Indians travelled under his flag, partly for the fun of it, but principally for the purpose of drawing upon him for food, which he always dealt out to them with a liberal hand.

Our time of starting was at day-break, and having paddled three pipes, (about eighteen miles,) we generally

landed upon a pleasant sand-bar, or in some leafy nook, and spent an hour or more in cooking and eating our breakfast. A “pipe,” I should here remark, is what a sporting gentleman might call a *heat* of six miles, at the end of which our oarsmen would rest themselves, while enjoying a smoke of ten minutes. Our principal food consisted of pork and dough, which were invariably boiled in a tin kettle. Whenever we happened to have any game, or fish, this rarity was also placed in the same kettle with the pork and dough, all of which we disposed of with the assistance of our fingers and a large knife. As Mr. Morrison and myself were acknowledged to belong to the “first class” of people, we were privileged to use (without giving offence) a small quantity of tea and maple sugar, which we had brought with us. Simple as was our food, it was as wholesome, and at that time as palatable to my taste, as any that I could have obtained from Delmonico’s. I was in the habit of devouring, and digesting too, long strings of heavy dough, which would, under ordinary circumstances, have actually destroyed me. Our meals, however, were always looked forward to with unalloyed pleasure, and were considered a luxury to be enjoyed only twice during the day,—breakfasting, as we did, at ten, and supping soon after pitching our tents in the evening. Fifty miles per day, when there were no portages or rapids to pass, were generally considered a good run. The two or three hours before bedtime I generally spent in conversation with Morrison, the voyagers, or Indians,—and usually retired with my head as full of wilderness images, as a bee-hive at swarming time. The only trouble with my ideas was, that they created a great excitement, but would not swarm according to my will. My couch (a part of which was appropriated to Morrison) consisted of a *soft spot of ground*, while my gun and pouch answered for a pillow, and my only covering was a large green blanket. When

the weather was clear we did not pitch our tent, but slept under a tree, or used the star-studded sky for a canopy. After such a night, I have awakened, and found my blanket actually white with frozen dew.

The pleasures of this mode of travelling are manifold. The scenery that you pass through is of the wildest character, the people you meet with “are so queer,” and there is a charm in the very mystery and sense of danger which attend the windings of a wilderness stream, or the promontories and bays of a lonely lake. The only *apparent* miseries which befall the voyager, are protracted rain storms and musketoes. On one occasion, while coasting Lake Superior, we were overtaken by a sudden storm, but succeeded in reaching the shore (about a mile off) without being swamped. It was about sundown, and owing to the wind and rain we were unable to make a fire, and consequently went supperless to bed. For my part, I looked upon our condition as perfectly wretched, and cared little what became of me. We had landed on a fine beach, where we managed to pitch our tents, and there threw ourselves down for the purpose of sleeping; and though wet to the skin, I never slept more sweetly in my life,—for the roaring of Lake Superior in a storm is a most glorious lullaby. On the following morning, I was awakened by *the surf washing against my feet.*

As to musketoes, had I not taken with me a quantity of bar netting, I positively believe the creatures would have eaten me. But with this covering fastened to four sticks, I could defy the wretches, and I was generally lulled to sleep by their annoying hum, which sometimes seemed to me like the howls of infernal spirits.

The only animals which ever had the daring to annoy us, were a species of gray wolf, which sometimes succeeded in robbing us of our food. On one occasion, I remember we had a short allowance of pork, and for the purpose of protecting it with greater care than usual, Mr. Morrison had placed it in a bag under his head, when he went to sleep.

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“At midnight, in his un-guarded tent,” his head was suddenly thumped against the ground, and by the time he was fairly awoken, he had the peculiar satisfaction of seeing *a wolf, on the keen run, with the bag of pork.*

The more prominent incidents connected with canoe voyaging, which relieve the monotony of a long voyage, are the making of portages, the passing of rapids, and the singing of songs.

Portages are made for the purpose of getting below or above those falls which could not be passed in any other manner, also for the purpose of going from one stream to another, and sometimes they are made to shorten the distance to be travelled, by crossing points or peninsulas. It was invariably the habit of our voyagers to run a race, when they came in sight of a portage, and they did not consider it ended until their canoes were launched in the water at the farther end of the portage. The consequence of this singular custom is, that making a portage is exceedingly exciting business. Two men will take the largest canoe upon their shoulders, and cross the portage on a regular trot, stopping, however, to rest themselves and enjoy a pipe at the end of every thousand paces. At landing the canoe is not allowed to touch the bottom, but you must get out into the water and unload it while yet afloat. The loads of furs or merchandise which these men sometimes carry are enormous. I have seen a

man convey three hundred and fifty pounds, up a steep hill, two hundred feet high, and that too without once stopping to rest; and I *heard* the story, that there were three voyagers in the northern wilderness, who have been known, unitedly, to carry *twenty-one hundred pounds* over a portage of eight miles. In making portages it is occasionally necessary to traverse

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tamarack swamps, and the most horrible one in the northwest lies midway between Sandy Lake and the Saint Louis River. It is about nine miles in length, and a thousand fold more difficult to pass than the Slough of Despond, created by the mind of Bunyan. In crossing it, you sometimes have to wade in pure mud up to your middle; and on this route I counted the wrecks of no less than seven canoes, which had been abandoned by the over-fatigued voyagers; and I also noticed the grave of an unknown foreigner, who had died in this horrible place, from the effect of a poisonous root which he had eaten. Here, in this gloomy solitude had he breathed his last, with none to cool his feverish brow but a poor ignorant Indian;—alone and more than a thousand leagues from his kindred and home.

But the excitement of passing the rapids of a large river like the Mississippi, exceeds that of any other operation connected with voyaging. The strength, dexterity, and courage required and employed for passing them, are truly astonishing. I have been in a canoe, and on account of a stone or floating tree have seen it held for some minutes perfectly still, when midway up a foaming rapid, merely by two men with long poles, standing at each end of the canoe. If, at such a time, one of the poles should slip, or one of the men make a wrong move, the canoe would be taken by the water and dashed to pieces either on the surrounding rocks, or the still more rocky shore. It is, however, much more dangerous to descend than to ascend a rapid; for it is

then almost impossible to stop a canoe, when under full headway, and if you happen to strike a rock, you will find your *wafery* canoe no better than a sieve. To pass down the falls of Saint Mary, with an experienced voyager, is one of the most interesting, yet thrilling and fearful feats that can be performed. There are rapids and falls, however, which cannot at any time be passed with safety, and my escape from one of these was as follows:

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In making the Grand Portage in the Saint Louis, owing to the rugged character of the country, it is necessary to land your canoes only a few yards above a succession of falls that descend into a pool thirty feet below. Owing to the thoughtlessness of our pilot, our canoe was suffered to go nearer than was customary, when Morrison uttered a most fearful shout, and said that we were within the charmed circle, and unless we strained every nerve to the utmost, we must surely perish. By that time we were on the very verge of the cataract, but we sprang to the paddles with all our might, and "the boldest held his breath." The agony that we suffered cannot be expressed;—it lasted, however, only for a moment; we soon succeeded in reaching the shore, but our brows were heavily beaded, and we threw ourselves upon the green-sward, actually trembling with excessive feebleness. As may be supposed, the remainder of that day was solemnly spent, for our minds were continually haunted by the grim visage of death.

One of the more prominent traits of the voyager's character is his cheerfulness. Gay and mirthful by nature and habit—patient and enduring at labor—seeking neither ease nor wealth—and, though fond of his family, it is his custom to let the morrow take care of itself, while he will endeavor to improve the present

hour as he thinks proper. He belongs to a race which is entirely distinct from all others on the globe. It is a singular fact, that when most troubled, or when enduring the severest hardships, they will joke, laugh, and sing their uncouth songs—the majority of which are extemporaneous, appropriate to the occasion, and generally of a rude and licentious character. They are invariably sung in Canadian French, and the following literal translations may be looked upon as favorable specimens, which I

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first heard on the Mississippi.

### *The Starting.*

Home, we are leaving thee!  
River, on thy bosom to sail!  
Cheerful let our hearts be,  
Supported by hope.

Away, then, away! Away, then, away!

Scenes of beauty will we pass;  
Scenes that make us love our life;  
Game of the wilderness our food,  
And our slumbers guarded by the stars.

Away, then, away! Away, then, away!

Home, we are leaving thee!  
River, on thy bosom to sail!  
Cheerful let our hearts be,  
Supported by hope.

Away, then, away! Away, then, away!

### *The Way.*

The river that we sail  
Is the pride of our country;  
The women that we love  
Are the fairest upon earth.  
Row, then, row! Row, then, row!

Toilsome is our way,  
Dangerous is our way;  
But what matter?  
Our trust is in Providence.  
Row, then, row! Row, then, row.

The river that we sail  
Is the pride of our country;  
The women that we love  
Are the fairest upon earth.  
Row, then, row! Row, then, row!

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### *The Return.*

Joy, joy, our home is not far;  
Love-smiles are waiting us;  
And we shall be happy!  
Happy, happy, happy.  
Bend to your oars! Bend to your oars!

Loud, loud, let our voices be,  
Echoing our gratitude;  
Many leagues have we voyaged,  
But soon shall we be at rest.  
Bend to your oars, brothers! Bend to your oars!

Joy, joy, our home is in sight;

Love-smiles are waiting us,  
And we shall be happy!  
Happy, happy, happy!  
Home! Bend to your oars! Bend to your oars!

The same canoe in which I explored the upper thousand miles of the Mississippi, also bore me in safety around the shores of Lake Superior: first, eastward, along the northern shore, then back again to Fon du Lac, and afterwards along the southern shore to the Apostle Islands. Delighted as I was with my canoe wanderings on the head waters of the Mighty River, I am constrained to yield the palm to Superior. For weeks did I explore its picturesque bays and extended sweeps of shore, following the promptings of my wayward will, and storing my mind with its unnumbered legends, gathered from the lips [149] of my Indian companions. I seldom took a paddle in hand, unless it were for exercise, but usually employed my time, when the weather was calm, by reading or sketching; and often, when the sunshine made me sleepy, have been lulled into a dreamy repose, by the measured music of the oars, mingled with the wild chanting of the voyagers. It was the custom with my companions, whenever they caught me in those lucid intervals of joy, to startle me, by a piercing whoop, which invariably announced a race upon the watery plain. And then, indeed, was it a most exciting spectacle to witness the canoes gliding to the destined goal, almost as swift as "an arrow from a shivering bow." Whenever I expressed such a desire, the party came to a halt upon the shore, and then it was that I mounted the headlands to gather berries, or obtain a bird's-eye prospect of the Lake. At times, the roar of a distant waterfall would fall upon the ear, and I was wont to beg an hour's furlough for the purpose of catching a dozen or two of trout in the waters of a nameless stream. But

my chief employment, whenever we landed, was to gather agates and pebbles of loveliest hue. In many places the gravelly shores were completely covered with them; and often, when attracted by one of a particular color or an unusual size, and when deceived by the marvellous transparency of the water, have I found myself far beyond my depth in the sleeping waves, which event was about the only one that could bring me to my senses. Many a time and oft, like a very child, have I rambled along the beach for miles, returning to my canoe completely loaded down with my treasures, which I sometimes carried with me on my journey for a hundred miles, and then threw away to make room for others which I thought still more beautiful.

Delightful, indeed, were those summer days on the bosom of that lonely lake. They are associated with my treasured dreams, and I cannot but sigh when I remember that I may never be privileged to enjoy the like again. My reason would not stop the tide of civilization which is sweeping to the remote north and the far Pacific, but if the wishes of my heart were realized, none but the true worshippers of nature should ever be permitted to mar the solitude of the wilderness with the song of Mammon.

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But, if that were possible, the nights that I spent upon the shores of the great northern lake have made a deeper impression on my heart than those summer days. Never before had the ocean of the sky and the starry world appeared so supremely brilliant.

Seldom would my restless spirit allow me an unbroken slumber from nightfall until dawn, and I was often in a wakeful mood, even after the camp fires were entirely out, and my rude companions were in the embrace of slumber. One of those wonderful nights I never can forget. I had risen from my couch upon the sand, and after walking nearly half a mile along the

beach, I passed a certain point, and found myself in full view of the following scene, of which I was the solitary spectator. Black, and death-like in its repose, was the apparently illimitable plain of water; above its outline, on the left, were the strangely beautiful northern lights, shooting their rays to the very zenith; on the right was a clear full moon, making a silvery pathway from my feet to the horizon; and before, around, and above me, floating in the deep cerulean, were the unnumbered and mysterious stars—the jewels of the Most High. The only sound that fell upon my ear was the occasional splash of a tiny wave, as it melted upon the shore. Long and intently did I gaze upon the scene, until, in a kind of blissful frenzy, or bewilderment, I staggered a few paces, fell upon the earth, almost insensible, and was soon in a deep sleep. The first gleam of sunshine roused me from slumber, and I returned to our encampment perfectly well in body, but in a thoughtful and unhappy mood. In fact, it seemed to me that I had visited the spiritual world, and I wished to return hence once more. My friends had not wondered at my absence, when they awoke, for they supposed that I had gone merely to take my accustomed bath. But enough, enough. The voyager's life is indeed a romantic one, but it will not do for me to talk about it for ever, and I therefore bring my description to a close.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

SAULT SAINT MARIE, August, 1846.

I am the owner of a few shares of copper stock, but exceedingly anxious to dispose of my interest, at the earliest possible moment, and on the most reasonable terms. This remark defines my position with regard to copper in general, and may be looked upon as the text from which I shall proceed to make a few, a very few, general observations on the copper region of Lake Superior. I am curious to find out how it will seem, for the public at large to read something which is not a purchased puff. Those, therefore, who are unaccustomed to simple matters of fact, will please pass on to another chapter of my little book, or lay it down as the most insipid volume that was ever published.

It is undoubtedly true, that all the hills and mountains surrounding this immense lake, abound in valuable minerals, of which the copper, in every variety of form, is the most abundant. The lamented Douglas Houghton has published the opinion, that this region contains the most extensive copper mines in the known world. The discoveries which have been made during the last three years would lead one to suppose this opinion to be founded in truth.

Not to mention the ship loads of rich ore that I have seen at different times, I would, merely to give my reader an idea of what is doing here, give the weight of a few distinguished discoveries that I have actually seen.

The native copper boulder, discovered by the traveller Henry, in

the bed of the Ontonagon river, and now in Washington, originally weighed thirty-eight hundred pounds; a copper mass of the same material was lately found near Copper Harbor, weighing twelve hundred pounds; at Copper Falls the miners are now at work upon a vein of solid ore, which already measures twenty feet in length, nine in depth, and seven and a half inches in thickness, which must weigh a number of tons; and at Eagle River another boulder has lately been brought to light, weighing seventeen hundred pounds.

As to native silver, the Eagle River valley has yielded the largest specimen yet found about this lake, the weight of which was six pounds and ten ounces. These are mineral statistics from which may be drawn as great a variety of conclusions as there are minds.

The number of mining companies which purport to be in operation on the American shore of Lake Superior and on our islands, is said to be one hundred; and the number of stock shares is not far from three hundred thousand. But notwithstanding all the fuss that has been, and is still made, about the mining operations here, a smelting furnace has not yet been erected, and only three companies, up to the present time, have made any shipments of ore. The oldest of these is the Lake Superior Company; the most successful, the Pittsburg and Boston Company; and the other is the Copper Falls Company, all of which are confined in their operations to Point Keweenaw.

This point is at present the centre of attraction to those who are worshipping the copper Mammon of the age. It is a mountainous district, covered with a comparatively useless pine forest,

exceedingly rocky and not distinguished for its beautiful scenery. As to the great majority of the mining companies alluded to, they will undoubtedly sink a good deal more money than they can possibly make; and for the reason, that they are not possessed of sufficient capital to carry on the mining business properly, and are managed by inexperienced and visionary men—a goodly number of whom have failed in every business in which they ever figured, and who are generally adventurers, determined to live by speculation instead of honest labor. The two principal log cabin cities of Point Keweenaw are Copper Harbor and Eagle River. The former is quite a good harbor, and supports a vacated garrison, a newspaper, a very good boarding-house, and several intemperance establishments. The latter has a fine beach for a harbor, a boarding-house, a saw-mill, and a store, where drinking is the principal business transacted. The number of resident inhabitants in the two towns I was unable to learn, but the sum total I suppose would amount to fifty souls.

Altogether perhaps five hundred miners and clerks may be engaged on the whole Point, while about as many more, during the summer, are hanging about the general stopping places on the shore, or the working places in the interior. This brotherhood is principally composed of upstart geologists, explorers, and location speculators. From all that I can learn, about the same state of things exists on the Canada side of the lake. Twenty companies are already organized for that section of country, the most promising of which is the Montreal Mining Company; but not a pound of ore has yet been smelted or taken to market, so that the “subject theme,” for the present, is as barren of real interest there, as in our own territory. Rationally speaking, the conclusion of the whole matter is just this: the Lake Superior

region undoubtedly abounds in valuable minerals, but as yet a sufficient length of time has not elapsed to develop its resources; three quarters of the people (the remaining quarter are among the most worthy of the land) now engaged in mining operations, are what might be termed dishonest speculators and inexperienced adventurers: but there is no doubt that if a new order of things should be brought into existence here, all those who are prudent and industrious would accumulate fortunes.

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I ought not to leave this brazen theme, without alluding to the science of geology as patronized in the mineral region. Not only does the nabob stockholder write pamphlets about the mines of the *Ural* mountains, and other *neighboring* regions, but even the broken down New-York merchant, who now sells whisky to the poor miner, strokes his huge whiskers and descants upon the black oxyd, the native ore, and the peculiar formation of every hillside in the country. Without exception, I believe, all the men, women and children residing in the copper cities, have been crystalized into finished geologists. It matters not how limited their knowledge of the English language may be, for they look only to the surface of things; it matters not how empty of common sense their brain-chambers may be, they are wholly absorbed in sheeting their minds and hearts with the bright red copper, and are all loudly eloquent on their favorite theme.

But the grand lever which they use to advance their interests, is the word “conglomerate,” which answers as a general description of the surrounding country. You stand upon a commanding hill-top, and while lost in the enjoyment of a fine landscape, a Copper Harbor “bear” or “bull,” recently from Wall-street, will slap you on the shoulder and startle the

surrounding air with the following yell: "That whole region, sir, is *conglomerate*, and exceedingly rich in copper and silver." You ask your landlady for a drop of milk to flavor your coffee, and she will tell you "that her husband has exchanged the old red cow for a conglomerate location somewhere in the interior," thereby proving that a comfortable living is a secondary consideration in this life. You happen to see a little girl arranging some rocky specimens in her baby-house, and on your asking her name, she will probably answer — "Conglomerate the man! my name, sir, is Jane." But enough. It will not do for me to continue in this strain, for fear that my readers will, like my mining friends, be made crazy by a remarkable conglomerate literary specimen from the mineral region.

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# CHAPTER XXVI.

SAULT SAINT MARIE, August, 1846.

One more letter from this place, and I shall take my leave of Lake Superior. Saint Mary was formerly a trading post of renown: it is now a village of considerable business; and as the resources of the mineral region are developed, will undoubtedly become a town of importance in a commercial point of view; and the contemplated ship canal through this place (which would allow a boat from Buffalo to discharge her freight or passengers at Fon Du Lac) ought not to be delayed a single year. There is a garrison at this point; the society is good, bad, and indifferent, and in the summer season it is one of the busiest little places in the country. But I intend this to be a piscatorial letter, and must therefore change my tune.

The river Saint Mary, opposite this village, is about two miles wide, and having found its way out of a deep bay of the ocean lake, it here rushes over a ledge of rocks in great fury, and presents, for the distance of nearly a mile, a perfect sheet of foam, and this spot is called the Sault, signifying falls. The entire height of the fall is about thirty feet, and after the waters have expressed in a murmuring roar, their unwillingness to leave the bosom of Superior, they finally hush themselves to sleep, and glide onward, as if in a dream, along the picturesque shores of a lonely country, until they mingle with the waters of Lake Huron.

The principal fish of this region are trout and white-fish, which are among the finest varieties in the world, and are

here found in their greatest perfection. Of the trout, the largest species in Lake Superior is called the lake trout, and they vary from ten to sixty pounds in weight. Their flesh is precisely similar to that of the salmon in appearance, and they are full as delicious as an article of food. The Indians take them in immense quantities with the gill-net during the spring and summer, where the water is one hundred feet deep; but in the autumn, when the fish hover about the shores for the purpose of spawning, the Indians catch them with the spear by torch-light. They also have a mode of taking them in the winter through the ice. After reaching the fishing ground, they cut a hole in the ice, over which they erect a kind of wigwam, and in which they seat themselves for action. They attach a piece of meat to a cord as bait, which they lower and pull up for the purpose of attracting the trout, thereby alluring the unsuspecting creature to the top of the hole, when they pick it out with a spear. An Indian has been known to catch a thousand weight in one day, in this novel manner. But as the ice on Lake Superior is seldom suffered to become very thick on account of the frequent storms, it is often that these solitary fishermen are borne away from the shore and perish in the bosom of the deep.

My mode of fishing for lake trout, however, was with the hook. In coasting along the lake in my canoe I sometimes threw out about two hundred feet of line, to which was attached a stout hook and a piece of pork, and I seldom tried this experiment for an hour without capturing a fifteen or twenty pounder. At other times, when the lake was still, and I was in the mood, I have paddled to where the water was fifty feet in depth, and with a drop-line have taken, in twenty minutes, more trout than I could eat in a fortnight, which I generally distributed among my Indian companions.

A fish called ciscovet, is unquestionably of the trout genus, but much more delicious and seldom found to weigh more than a dozen pounds. They are a very beautiful fish, and at the present time are decidedly the fattest I have ever seen. Their habits are similar to those of the trout, and they are taken in the same manner.

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But *the* fish of this region, and of the world, is the common trout. The five rivers which empty into Lake Superior on the north, and the thirty streams which run from the south, all abound in this superb fish, which vary from ten to forty ounces in weight. But the finest place for this universal favorite, in the known world, is, without any doubt, the Falls of Saint Mary. At this place they are in season throughout the year, from which circumstance I am inclined to believe that there must be several varieties, which closely resemble each other. At one time you may fish all day and not capture a single specimen that will weigh over a pound, and at another time you may take a boat-load of them which will average from three to four pounds in weight. You may accuse me of telling a large story when I speak of boat-loads of *trout*, but I do assure you that such sights are of frequent occurrence at the Sault. My favorite mode of troutting at this place has been to enter a canoe and cast anchor at the foot of the rapids, where the water was ten or fifteen feet deep, but owing to its marvellous clearness appeared to be about three, and where the bed of the river or strait is completely covered with snow-white rocks. I usually fished with a fly or artificial minnow, and was never disappointed in catching a fine assortment whenever I went out. My favorite spot was about midway between the American and Canadian shores, and there have I spent whole days enjoying the rarest of sport; now looking with wonder at the wall of foam between me and the

mighty lake; now gazing upon the dreamy-looking scenery on either side and far below me; and anon peering into the clear water to watch the movements of the trout as they darted from the shady side of one rock to another, or leaped completely out of their native element to seize the hovering fly. During all this time my spirit would be lulled into a delightful peacefulness, by the solemn roar of the Sault. I have taken trout in more than one half of the United States, but have never seen a spot where they were so abundant as in this region, but I must acknowledge that there are streams in New England and New-York where I have thrown the fly with more intellectual enjoyment than in the river Saint Mary.

But I must devote a paragraph to the white-fish of Lake Superior. They are of the shad genus, and with regard to flavor are second only to their salt water brethren. They are taken at all seasons of the year with gill-nets and the seine in the deep waters of the lake; at this point, however, the Indians catch them with a scoop-net, and in the following manner. Two Indians jump into a canoe above the rapids, and while one navigates it among the rocks and through the foaming waters, the other stands on the look-out, and with the speed of lightning picks out the innocent creatures while working their way up the stream unconscious of all danger. This is a mode of fishing which requires great courage, immense strength, and a steady nerve. A very slight mistake on the part of the steersman, or a false movement of the net-man, will cause the canoe to be swamped, when the inmates have to struggle with the foam awhile until they reach the still water, when they strike for the shore, there to be laughed at by their rude brethren of the wilderness, while the passing stranger will wonder that any men should attempt such dangerous sport. But accidents of this kind seldom happen, and

when they do the Indians anticipate no danger, from the fact that they are all such expert swimmers. It took me three days to muster sufficient courage to go down these rapids in a canoe with an Indian, and though I performed the feat without being harmed, I was so prodigiously frightened that I did not capture a single fish, though I must have seen, within my reach, upwards of a thousand. The white-fish, ciscovet, and lake trout have already become an article of export from this region, and I believe the time is not far distant, when the fisheries of Lake Superior will be considered as among the most lucrative in the world.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

MACKINAW, August, 1846.

I now write from Mackinaw, the beautiful, which studs the waters of the north, as does the northern star its own cerulean home. But what can I say about this island that will be new, since “every body” now pays it a brief visit while journeying in the West? It is indeed one of the most unique and delightful places in the world. Its shores are laved by the waters of Superior, Michigan, and Huron, and rising abruptly as its does to a conspicuous height, it seems as if planted there by nature as a fortress, for the express purpose of protecting the lakes from which it sprung. I first approached it from the north, on a mild and hazy afternoon, and as it loomed before me, enveloped in a purple atmosphere, I looked upon it in perfect silence, fearing that even the beating of my heart would dispel what I thought to be a mere illusion. As our vessel approached, however, it gradually changed into a dreamy reality, and I could distinguish its prominent characteristics. First, was a perpendicular bluff, crowned with a diadem of foliage, at the foot of which was an extensive beach, occupied by an Indian encampment, where the rude barbarians were sunning themselves like turtles, playing fantastic games, repairing their canoes, making mats, or cooking their evening meal, as fancy or necessity impelled. One sudden turn, and our vessel was gliding gently into a crescent bay, which was skirted with a cluster of trading houses and ancient looking dwellings, above which, on a bluff, was a snow-white fortress, with soldiers marching to and fro upon the battlements.

The circumference of this island is about nine miles, and its shores are bold and rocky. The scenery is romantic in the extreme, and it has four natural curiosities, either one of which would give a reputation to any ordinary island. Arched Rock faces the north, and rises from the water to the height of nearly two hundred feet, presenting from your canoe a superb piece of wave-formed architecture; and appearing, as you look through it from the summit, like the gateway to a new world. Robinson's Folly is also on the north shore, and is a picturesque bluff, which obtained its name after the following manner. Many years ago an Englishman, named Robinson, spent a summer on the island, and while here, erected for his own especial benefit, a summer-house on the summit of the bluff in question. He was laughed at for his pains, and was warned by the cautious traders and Indians not to spend too much of his time on the cliff, and especially not to visit it when the wind was blowing. He scorned the advice which was given him in kindness, and to show his independence, he frequently spent the night in his eyrie. On one occasion, however, in the darkness of midnight, a thunder-storm passed over the island, and at sunrise on the following morning, the "cabin of the cliff" and its unfortunate inmate were buried in the deep. Hence the name of Robinson's Folly. Another interesting spot on this island is called the Cave of Skulls. It lies on the western shore, and is mainly distinguished for its historical associations. More than a hundred years ago, according to one tradition, a party of Sioux Indians, while pursued by the Ottowas, secreted themselves in this cave; and when they were discovered, which happened soon to be the case, the Ottowas built a fire before the entrance to the cave, which they kept up for several days, and when they finally entered the gloomy chamber, their enemies were all dead. The truth of this story is corroborated by an

incident recorded by Henry. After the massacre of Michilimackinack, this traveller, whose life had been threatened, was secreted in this cave by a friendly Indian. He was shown into it in the evening, scrambled over what he thought a very singular floor, slept soundly during the night, and on awaking in the morning, found himself reclining on a bed of human bones. Another Mackinaw curiosity is called the Needle, and is a lighthouse-looking rock, which overlooks the entire island, and throws its shadow upon the ruins of Fort Holmes, which are now almost level with the ground, and overgrown with weeds.

During my stay at Mackinaw the weather continued extremely pleasant, and as I fancied myself midway between the wilderness and the crowded city,—escaped from the dangers of one, and not yet entered upon the troubles of the latter,—I threw away all care, and wandered hither and thither, the victim of an idle will. At one time I took my sketch-book for the purpose of portraying some interesting point upon the island, and if a party of ladies happened to discover me in my shady haunt, I answered their smiles with a remark, and the interview generally terminated in my presenting each one of them with a sketch, when they would pass on, and I would dive deeper into the green woodland. At another time I sought the brow of some overhanging cliff, and gazed into the translucent waters, now letting my fancy revel among the snow-white caverns far below, and now watching the cautious movements of a solitary lake-trout, as he left the deeper waters for an exploring expedition in the vicinity of the shore. But I never witnessed such a sight without being affected, somewhat like the war-horse when listening to the trumpet's bray, and in an hour afterwards, I was usually in a boat, about a mile from shore, trying my luck with

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an artificial minnow and fifty yards of line. Now, I strolled along the beach where the Indians were encamped, and after gathering a lot of romantic legends from the old men, or after spending an hour talking with some of the virgin squaws, while making their beautiful matting, I would coax a lot of Indian boys to accompany me, when we enjoyed a swim, mostly for our mutual recreation, and partly for my own instruction in the manly art, which with the red man is a part of his nature. Sometimes I strolled into the Fort to converse with the commanding officers, or wasted a little powder in firing at a target with the soldiers.

Mackinaw, during the season of navigation, is one of the busiest little places in the world. All the Detroit and Chicago steamers stop here in passing to and fro, and usually tarry a sufficient length of time to let their passengers take a hasty ride over the island, and to replenish their larders with trout and white-fish, which are commonly taken on board in cart-loads. From time immemorial the Indians have been annually summoned to this island, for the purpose of receiving their regular instalments from the Government, in the shape of merchandise and money, and on these occasions it is not uncommon to see an assembly of three thousand fantastically dressed savages. But in the winter this place is entirely ice-bound, and of course completely isolated. Then it is that the inhabitants are favored with a monthly mail, which is brought from Saginaw by Indians or Half-Breeds, on sledges drawn by dogs; and fishing, skating, and story-telling are about the only things which tend to relieve the monotony of a winter spent upon the island.

Like too many of the beautiful places on our western frontier, Mackinaw is now in a transition state. Heretofore it has been the

Indian's congregating place, but its aboriginal glory is rapidly departing, and it will soon be the fashionable resort of summer travellers. Its peculiar location, picturesque scenery, and the tonic character of its climate, are destined to make it one of the most attractive watering places in the country. But enough. One of the Chicago steamers is in sight, and I must prepare my luggage, previous to taking passage for the home of my childhood, in Southern Michigan, where I shall remain a few days, and then hasten to my city home on the Atlantic.

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# CHAPTER XXVIII.<sup>[1]</sup>

ON THE RIVER RAISIN, August, 1846.

Michisawgyegan is the Indian name for the state of Michigan, and the meaning of it is the Lake Country. It is my native state, and as I have recently visited it after an absence of more than a dozen years, and as it is not yet entirely redeemed from its original state of nature, it is meet, I ween, that I should, while within its borders, wind up my echoes of the wilderness. This is the country where I spent the morning of my days;—the theatre where my future character in the drama of life was formed and first acted out. Remote from the glitter and noise of the great human world, I used to wander alone through its dark forests, and bathe in its pure streams, without a care or thought to mar the peacefulness of life. A thousand words, now full of meaning, and familiar to my ear, were then but unmeaning sounds. Those were the days when I sported on the lap of nature, feeling it to be a luxury to breathe. Will they ever return? Ask that evening breeze whether it will ever again cool the fevered brow of that dying man? But very dear to me are my recollections of Michigan, and I would not part with them for the treasures of the world.

The character of its scenery and people is as original as its situation. Almost surrounded by water, it possesses all the advantages of an island, while at the same time it is but a small portion of a vast whole. Its streams are numerous and clear, but generally sluggish. A portion of the extreme north is uninhabited by human beings, owing to its barrenness. Huge granite mountains here loom upward in eternal solitude;

sometimes presenting the appearance of having been severed asunder, and scattered around by some mighty convulsion of nature. On the borders of the cold and desolate lakes thus formed, the crane and bittern rear their young. Occasionally, on the brow of some jutting crag, may be discovered the meager hut of some poor Indian. Perhaps a barbarous anchorite, to whom the voice of his fellow man is a grating sound, and to whom existence is but a mist, a dream; or it may be some disgraced warrior, who has been banished from friends and home, to dwell in this dreary solitude, with no companions but a half-starved dog, rugged pines, and frowning rocks. But this section is said to contain the richest copper mine in the known world.

The surface of the western half is destitute of rocks, and undulating; and it is here that the loveliest of lakes and streams and prairies are to be found. Lake Michigan, the second in the world, is its western boundary. The eastern portion is entirely original in its appearance, possessing many beauties peculiarly its own. It is so level and low that a stranger approaching it from Lake Erie is often surprised to find himself in port, while in the act of looking out for land. This shore is watered by the Huron, St. Clair, and Erie.

No one, who has never witnessed them, can form any idea of the exquisite beauty of the thousand lakes which gem the western part of Michigan. They are the brightest and purest mirrors the virgin sky has ever used to adorn herself. Their banks are frequently dotted by human dwellings, the humble though comfortable abodes of a sturdy yeomanry. That one which takes its name from an Indian called Baubeeese, and which is the outlet of the St. Joseph river, I will match against any other of its size in the world.

Notwithstanding what has been so often said by the artificial inhabitants of cities, concerning the hardships and ignorance of the backwoodsman's life, there is many a stout heart, exalted mind, and noble soul, whose dwelling-place has been for years on the borders of these very lakes. I know this to be true, for I have slept beneath their roofs, and often partaken of their johnny-cake and fat quails. No,—no. I love these men as brothers, and shall always frown upon that cit or dandy who sets down aught against them,—in malice or in ignorance.

Some of these little lakes smile in perpetual solitude. One of them is before me now. It is summer. The sun is above its centre. Deep and dark and still are the shadows of the surrounding trees and bushes. On the broad leaf of a water-lily a green snake is curled up, with his head elevated, and his tongue gleaming in the sunlight. He is the enemy of all flying insects and little birds, and if you watch him a little longer you will see one of them decoyed to death by the power of his charm. Hush! there is a stir among the dry leaves. It is but a lonely doe coming to quench her thirst. Is she not the Queen of Beauty? There she stands, knee-deep in the water, looking downwards, admiring the brightness of her eyes and the gracefulness of her neck. How Leigh Hunt would enjoy a ramble here! His favorite flowers,—the rose, the violet, the lily, and the sweet-brier, would each sing him a song more sweet and delicate than their first. What bright hue is that in the middle of the lake? It is but the reflection of

“——a vapor in the sky,  
Thin, white, and very high.”

A great proportion of Michigan is covered with white-

oak openings. Standing on a gentle hill, the eye wanders away for miles over an undulating surface, obstructed only by the trunks of lofty trees,—above you a green canopy, and beneath, a carpet of velvet grass, sprinkled with flowers of every hue and form.

The prairies are another interesting feature of Michigan scenery. They meet the traveller at every point, and of many sizes, seeming often like so many lakes, being often studded with wooded islands, and surrounded by shores of forests. Their soil is a deep black sand. Grass is their natural production, although corn, oats, and potatoes flourish upon them. Never can I forget the first time I entered White Pigeon Prairie. Sleeping beneath the shadows of sunset, as it was, the effect upon me was like that which is felt on first beholding the ocean,—overpowering awe. All that the poet has said about these gardens of the desert, is true.

Burr Oak Plains. The only difference between these and the oak openings, is the character of the trees and the evenness of their surface. The soil is a mixture of sand and black loam. They have the appearance of cultivated orchards, or English parks; and, on places where the foot of the white man has never trod, a carriage and four could easily pass through. They produce both wheat and corn.

The wet prairies have the appearance of submerged land. In them the grass is often six or seven feet high. They are the resort of water-fowl, muskrats, and otter.

But the best and most fertile soil in Michigan is that designated by the title of timbered land. It costs more to prepare it for the

plough, but when once the soil is sown it yields a thousand-fold. And with regard to their beauty and magnificence, the innumerable forests of this state are not surpassed by any in the world, whether we consider the variety or grandeur of their productions.

A friend of mine, now residing in western Michigan, and  
who once spent several years in Europe, thus writes  
respecting this region:

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“O, such trees as we have here! Magnificent, tall, large-leaved, umbrageous. Vallombrosa, the far-famed Vallombrosa of Tuscany, is nothing to the thousand Vallombrosas here! A fig for your Italian scenery! This is the country where nature reigns in her virgin beauty; where trees grow, where corn grows; where men grow better than they do any where else in the world. This is the land to study nature in all her luxuriant charms, under glorious green branches, among singing birds and laughing streams; this is the land to hear the cooing of the turtle-dove, in far, deep, cool, sylvan bowers; to feel your soul expand under the mighty influences of nature in her primitive beauty and strength.”

The principal inland rivers of Michigan are, the Grand River, the Kalamazoo, the St. Joseph, the Saginaw, and the Raisin. The first three empty into Lake Michigan, and are about seventy miles apart. Their average length is about two hundred and fifty miles, and they are about thirty or forty rods in width. At present, they are navigable about half their length for small steamboats and bateaux. Their bed is of limestone, covered with pebbles. I was a passenger on board the Matilda Barney, on her first trip,—the first steamer that ever ascended the St. Joseph,

which I consider the most perfectly beautiful stream that I ever have seen. I remember well the many flocks of wild turkeys and herds of deer, that the “iron horse” frightened in his winding career. The Indian canoe is now giving way to the more costly but less beautiful row-boat, and those rivers are becoming deeper and deeper every day. Instead of the howl of the wolf, the songs of husbandmen now echo through their vales, where may be found many comfortable dwellings.

The Saginaw runs toward the north and empties into Lake Huron,—that same Huron which has been celebrated in song by the young poet, Louis L. Noble. This river is navigable for sixty miles. The river Raisin is a winding stream, emptying into Lake Erie, called so from the quantity of grapes that cluster on its banks. Its Indian name is Numma-sepee, signifying River of Sturgeons. Sweet river! whose murmurs have so often been my lullaby, mayest thou continue in thy beauty for ever. Are there not streams like thee flowing through the paradise of God?

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Notwithstanding the comparative newness of Michigan, its general aspect is ancient. The ruin of many an old fort may be discovered on its borders, reminding the beholder of wrong and outrage, blood and strife. This was once the home of noble but oppressed nations. Here lived and loved the Algonquin and Shawnese Indians; the names of whose warrior chiefs,—Pontiac the proud, and Tecumseh the brave,—will long be treasured in history. I have stood upon their graves, which are marked only by a blighted tree and an unhewn stone, and have sighed deeply as I remembered their deeds. But they have gone,—gone like the lightning of a summer day!

It is a traditionary land. For we are told that the Indian hunters

of old saw fairies and genii floating over its lakes and streams, and dancing through its lonely forests. In these did they believe, and to please them was their religion.

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The historian of this state thus writes, in alluding to the olden times: "The streams rolled their liquid silver to the lake, broken only by the fish that flashed in their current, or the swan that floated upon their surface. Vegetation flourished alone. Roses bloomed and died, only to be trampled by the deer or savage; and strawberries studded the ground like rubies, where the green and sunny hillsides reposed amid the silence, like sleeping infants in the lap of the forest. The rattlesnake glided undisturbed through its prairies; and the fog which hung in clouds over its stagnant marshes spread no pestilence. The panther, the fox, the deer, the wolf, and bear, roamed fearless through the more remote parts of the domain, for there were none to dispute with them their inheritance. But clouds thickened. In the darkness of midnight, and silence of the wilderness, the tomahawk and scalping knife were forged for their work of death. Speeches were made by the savages under the voiceless stars, which were heard by none save God and their allies; and the war-song echoed from the banks of lakes where had never been heard the footsteps of civilized man."

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Then followed the horrors of war; then and there were enacted the triumphs of revenge. But those sounds have died away; traced only on the page of history, those deeds. The voice of rural labor, the clink of the hammer, and the sound of Sabbath-bells now echo in those forests and vales. The plough is making deep furrows in its soil, and the sound of the anvil is in every part. A well-endowed University, and seminaries of learning are

there. Railroads and canals, like veins of health, are gliding to its noble heart. The red man, in his original grandeur and state of nature, has passed away from its more fertile borders; and his bitterest enemy, the pale face, is master of his possessions.

The French were the first who settled in Michigan, and at as early a date as 1620, and for many years, they and the Indians, were the sole inhabitants. Here it was that the far famed Jesuit missionaries first pitched their tents in (what is now) the United States. Now, people out of every civilized nation dwell within its borders. Detroit, on the superb river of that name, and Frenchtown, on the river Raisin, were both founded by the French. The former of these is a city, a flourishing city, of fifteen thousand inhabitants, where are to be found all the elegances and luxury of the most polite society. Its principal street would be an ornament in any city; its elevation is some fifty feet above the water, and from its docks, the eye wanders over a scene not unlike that visible from the North River side of the Empire city. Like most cities, it appears to the best advantage in winter. Then it is that you may often witness the beautiful Detroit River frozen like marble, and on its surface hundreds of sleighs and skaters gliding in every direction; while a chorus of bells comes faintly and sweetly to your ear. Monroe, is the modern name for Frenchtown. It is situated about two miles from Lake Erie, and is also a flourishing town, containing some four thousand inhabitants, a goodly portion of whom are the descendants of the early settlers. Detroit and Monroe, are two of the best wheat markets in the western country. Ann-Arbor on the Huron is the New Haven of Michigan, and possesses many attractions in the way of intelligent people, picturesque scenery, and handsome buildings. Niles, on the St. Joseph, is a most difficult place to pass *through*, for the traveller always

feels an irresistible impulse to remain there for ever,—it is so charmingly situated, on such a charming stream, and inhabited by such charming people. But I might sing this song under the head of Kalamazoo, Ypsilanti, Tecumseh, Adrian, Pontiac, Grand Rapids, Jackson, Battle Creek, and twenty other thriving villages, which are all surrounded by a fine agricultural country. I cannot now dwell upon such themes. Numma-sepee is ringing in my ear, and my thoughts are with my body, on the river, and in the village, where I was born. Here, I am, after an absence of many years, a visitor, and to half the people a stranger, on the very soil where I spent my wild and happy boyhood. I will not touch upon the improvements that meet me at every turn, nor upon the troops of friends that surround me; my heart is with the village of other days, not with the business city of the present time; and as to my friends, I thank them for their kindness, but they are not of my kindred; they are changed, and I can only look upon them as strangers. Reader, as you love to remember the sunny days of your own life, I invite you to listen to my words, as I attempt to summon from the past an array of my most dearly cherished recollections.

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Judging from the many accounts I have heard, the spot now occupied by Monroe must have been, before the last war, one of the most delightful nooks in the wide world. Its original name, as before stated, was Frenchtown, and its only inhabitants were French, who had emigrated thither from France by the way of Canada. The families did not number more than about fifty, and the names of the most conspicuous were Navarre, Duval, Beaubien, Bourdeaux, Couture, Nadeau, Bannac, Cicot, Campau, Jobien, Godfroy, Lasselle, Corsenau, Labadee, Durocher, Robert, Lacroix, Dausette, Loranger, Sancomb, and Fourniet. They inhabited what might be called an oasis in the

wilderness. Their farms all lay directly upon either side of the river, and though principally devoted to agricultural pursuits, they were content with but a few acres of cleared land, and beyond these, on either hand, stood the mighty forests in their original solitude and luxuriance. Along their doors glided the ever-murmuring Raisin, whose fountain-head was then among the things unknown, and its waters mingled with those of Erie, without being disturbed by the keel of any steamboat or white-winged vessel. Comfort and beauty characterized their dwellings, and around them grew in great abundance domestic trees, that yielded the most delicious fruits. In their midst stood a little chapel, overgrown with ivy and surmounted by a cross, where the Jesuit missionaries or Catholic priests performed their religious duties. The soft-toned bell that summoned them to worship, was not without its echoes, but they dwelt far away upon the sleeping lake or in the bosom of the surrounding wilderness. Here the tumult of the great human world was never heard, and money and fame were not the chief desire of the secluded husbandman, for he was at ease in his possessions. Indians, the smoke of whose wigwams ascended to heaven on every side, were the only people with whom the early settlers had intercourse; from them they obtained valuable furs, by barter, which they sent to Montreal, receiving in exchange the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life. They maintained the habits which were brought from the provinces whence they emigrated. The gentleman preserved the garb of the age of Louis XIV., while the peasant wore a long surtout, sash, red cap, and deer-skin moccasons. Their knowledge of agriculture was very limited, and the policy of the fur trade was calculated to keep down the spirit of improvement in that respect. Of corn and wheat they were anxious only to raise enough to last them during the year. A surplus of any thing but furs they did not desire, and

never possessed. Their grain was ground in windmills, whose picturesque features added to the poetry of their scenery. Their amusements were confined to the sound of the violin, at their unaffected assemblies.

The forest afforded them an abundance of game, which constantly led them to the hunt, and their beautiful stream abounded in fish, which they captured with the net, the hook, and the spear. A dreamy summer atmosphere seems to rest upon this region, when viewed in the light of the olden times. There was poetry in every thing which met the eye: in the priest, with cowl and satin vestments, kneeling before a wooden cross, on his way to the place of prayer; in the peasant, as he performed his rural labors, attended by his wife and playful children; in the rude Indians, with fantastic costumes, who were wont to play their uncouth games on the green-sward, or perform their dexterous feats in the bark canoe; in the sky, which smiled perpetually upon the virgin wilderness; and in that wilderness, whose peculiar features verily blossomed as the unplucked rose. And there was poetry in all that fell upon the ear: in the lowing of the cattle and the tinkling of their bells; in the gentle flowing waters, and the sound of the summer wind, as it sported with the forest trees, and wandered away, laden with the perfume of nameless flowers; in the singing of unnumbered birds, which ascended to the skies in a perpetual anthem; and in the loud clear laugh of French and Indian children, as they mingled together in their simple games. But those patriarchal days are for ever departed! In another part of the country Tecumseh and Pontiac were beginning to figure in successive battles against the United States, and their hostile spirit soon manifested itself upon our frontier. The Indians upon this river became the enemies of the settlers, which turned out to be the

prelude to a storm of war that scattered death and desolation along its path. But many years have fled since then, and the blessings of peace and prosperity are resting upon our country.

The poor Indians have almost withered from the land, and those French inhabitants, like all things earthly, are on their way to the land of forgetfulness. Another race of men succeeded here, and can be numbered by thousands; and where once extended the dominion of the wilderness, a business city now looks down upon the river, which river has become an adopted servant of commerce.

I cannot refrain from here quoting the following passage from Charlevoix, descriptive of the scenery as it existed when he passed through this region in seventeen hundred and twenty-one:

“The first of June, being the day of Pentecost, after having sailed up a beautiful river (the Raisin) for the space of an hour, which has its rise, as they say, at a great distance, and runs betwixt two fine meadows, we passed over a carrying place of about sixty paces in breadth, in order to avoid turning round a point which is called Long Point. It is a very sandy spot of ground, and naturally bears a great quantity of vines. The following days I saw nothing remarkable, but coasted along a charming country, hid at times by disagreeable prospects, which, however, are of no great extent. Wherever I went ashore, I was enchanted by the beauty and variety of a landscape, terminated by the noblest forests in the whole world. Add to this, that every part of it swarms with waterfowl. I cannot say whether the woods afford game in equal profusion. Were we all to sail, as I there did, with a serene sky, in a most charming climate, and in water as clear as that of the purest

fountain; were we sure of finding every where as secure and agreeable places to pass the night in; where we might enjoy the pleasures of hunting at a small expense, breathe at our ease of the purest air, and enjoy the prospect of the finest of countries; we might be tempted to travel to the end of our days. How many oaks represented to me that of Mamre! How many fountains put me in mind of that of Jacob! Each day a new situation, chosen at pleasure, a neat and commodious house built and furnished with all necessaries in less than a quarter of an hour, and floored with a pavement of flowers, continually springing up on a carpet of the most beautiful green;—on all sides simple and natural beauties, unadulterated and inimitable by art.”

In this region I spent my wild and wayward boyhood. In the prime of summer I have watched for pigeons on the margin of the forest springs; in the strangely beautiful autumn and Indian summer I have captured the squirrel and partridge; and in the winter the turkey and the deer. Reader! have you ever, while roaming in the woods bordering a prairie, startled from his heathery couch a noble buck, and seen him dart from you, “swift as an arrow from a shivering bow!” Was it not a sight worthy of a purer world than ours? Did you not hail him “king of the beautiful and fleet”?

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There is one hunting incident which I met with when about fourteen years of age, that I can never forget. I had entered upon a cow-path, and as it led through so many and such beautiful places, I forgot myself and wandered on until the shadows of evening warned me of my situation. Great oaks and hickories, and walnut trees were with me wherever I went. They cast a spell upon me like that which is wrought by the old of other days. The black night came at last, and there I was, alone, and

lost in that silent wilderness. Onward still did I continue, and even in my great fear was at times startled by the flapping of an owlet's wing or the howl of a wolf. The stars were above, shining in their brightness, but invisible to me, so closely woven were the tops of the trees. Faintly glimmering in the distance, I saw a firelight, and on coming near, found a party of Indians encamped. My breast panted with excessive fear, and yet I could not speak—could hardly breathe, and still my mind was free and active. I stood and listened to the faint sound of a distant waterfall. Would that I had power to express the emotions that came like a flood pouring into my soul. Covered by a blanket, and pillow'd by a mocuck of sugar, each Indian was asleep upon his rush-mat. Parents, children, and friends, promiscuously disposed, though all of them with their feet turned towards the expiring embers. The dogs too, looking ferocious and cunning as wolves, were all sound asleep. I stole softly into the midst of the wild company, and covering myself with an odd blanket, strange to say, I slumbered. When morning was come, and the Indians discovered a pale-faced boy among them, their astonishment can be more easily conceived than described. I at length informed them by signs that I was lost, and that my home was in the village of Monroe. I partook with them of a hearty breakfast, composed of venison, hommony, and water, and ere the sun had mounted high, was on my way homeward, with an Indian for my guide. As we parted on the outskirts of the village, I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he declined receiving any thing. I turned around, and the thick forest shielded him from my sight. Of course my friends were much concerned at my absence, and the majority of them insisted upon my having been drowned. For one whole week after this adventure, I was compelled to stay at home; but after that, it was forgotten, and I was in the forests again.

But my heart-song of other days is just beginning, and I cannot yet drop my pen. My father's residence was upon one of the old French farms, that were once so famous for their Arcadian beauty. The hand of improvement has despoiled them of their original glory, and the strange, gaudy scenes that I now behold, only tend to oppress my spirit with gloom. The city dwellings around me I cannot see, for my mind is upon the village of my birth. The farm alluded to above, was about half a mile in width, and extended back to the distance of nearly two miles. Leaving the river and going back, you first pass through an orchard containing four or five hundred trees. Here a row of splendid pear-trees, and there a regiment of old black apple-trees, staggering under their weight of fruit. Entering a little enclosure behind a barn, you might see fifty small light-green trees, with an innumerable number of rosy-cheeked peaches under their leaves. And now we pass the great cider-press, where I was wont to imbibe the rich American wine through an oaten straw. A little further on, we come to a green pasture, where there are cows, oxen, sheep and horses grazing; onward still, and a wheat-field, yellow as gold, bowing before the breeze. Then our path lies across a pleasant meadow, watered by a sparkling stream; and after a brief walk we find ourselves in the forest, dark and gloomy. And such was the spot where I spent the morning of my days. Is it strange, then, that a deep and holy love for nature should be rooted in my heart?

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That description reminds me of another hunting expedition, of which I would merely give an outline. It is early morning, and the latter part of spring. Breakfast is ended. My cap and buckskin shirt are on, the latter gathered round my waist by a scarlet worsted belt. My powder-horn and shot-pouch are filled with the nicest kind of ammunition, and in my hand is my valued

little gun, (bought expressly for myself,) polished bright as a sunbeam. I have kissed the baby, and am now on my winding way. At the mouth of the river, I borrow a canoe of some old Frenchman who resides there. If I were to offer him pay he would not accept it; for the interesting reason that he “knows my father.”—All the day long have I been hunting, and revelling in a dream-land of my own. The sun is in the west, and I am hungry. I have paddled around many a green and lovely island, and explored many a bayou and marsh, and outlets of creeks; frightening from her lonely nest many a wild-duck and her brood. My shot-pouch is now empty, although the bottom of my canoe is covered with game. There are five canvass-backs, three teals, three plovers, two snipes, one wood-duck, and other kinds of waterfowl. The canoe is drawn up on shore, and with my thanks I have given old Robert a couple of ducks. My game is now slung upon my back, and I am homeward bound, proud as a young king. While passing through the village, (for I have to do so,) I hear a voice exclaiming, Lally! Lally! I [182] approach, and find my father and several other gentlemen seated at the post-office door talking politics. Each one in turn gives me a word of praise, calling me ‘quite a hunter.’ I pay them for their kindness on the spot, by the donation of a canvass-back, and pass on.

That evening my supper is a rare enjoyment, for some of the ducks have been cooked under the especial charge of my mother. A little longer, and I am in the land of dreams. Many, very many such days have I enjoyed, but now they are far from me. Oh! that I were an innocent, laughing, happy boy once more! Come back! Come back! joys of my youth!

Fishing is another art in which I was considered an adept. When

the first warm days lured the sturgeon and muskalounge from their deep home in the bosom of the lake, to ascend the Raisin, I was always among the first on the large platform below a certain milldam, (now all washed away,) with spear in hand and heart to conquer. Many a noble sturgeon, six and seven feet long, have I seen extended on the shore. As for *me*, I never *aimed* only at the smaller ones. Once, however, my spear entered the back of a “*whapper*,” and my determination to keep hold was nearly the cause of my being drowned. It must have been a thrilling, yet a ridiculous sight, to see me a-straddle of the fellow, and passing down the river like lightning. I think if Mr. William Shakspeare had been present, he would have exclaimed,—“Lo, a mer-*man* on a *sturgeon*’s back!” If I could enjoy such sport now with the feelings of my boyhood, I would willingly risk such a ducking every day. But I am now a struggler amid the waves of life. O, how many long and never-to-be-forgotten Saturday afternoons, have I mused away on the margin of my native stream. How many perch, and bass, sun-fish, and pike, and pickerel, have I brought from their pure element to place upon my father’s table! But those days are for ever departed, all and for ever—gone into their graves, bearing with them all my dreams, all my hopes and fond anticipations. Desolate indeed does it make my heart, to look upon the changes that have taken place in the home of my boyhood. Kind words do indeed fall upon my ear, but I *feel* myself to be a stranger or as one forgotten. O, I *am*

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“A homeless wanderer through my early home;  
Gone childhood’s joys, and not a joy to come!”

*Dana.*

But let me, while I may, recall a few more bright visions from

the past.

Aye, even now into the chambers of my soul are entering an array of winter pictures, associated with the times of the days of old.

True as memory itself, by every thing that meets the eye of my fancy, I perceive that winter has asserted his empire over my native village. Once more am I a bounding and happy boy, and planning a thousand excursions to enjoy the merry season. The years, between the present and that happy time, are vanished into forgetfulness, and it seemeth to me that I am even now panting with the excitement of a recent battle in the snow.

Last night, so my fancy tells me, there was a heavy fall of the white element. This morning, while walking along one of the streets of the village, a snow-ball hit me on the back, whereupon I jumped into an attitude of defiance. Partly hidden by a neighboring fence, I discover a group of roguish boys, whom I immediately favor with an answer to their salute. Eight is the number of my temporary enemies, and as they leap the fence and come into full view, my heart begins to quail, and I feel a scampering sensation in my *heels*. Just in the “nick of time,” however, half a dozen of my friends who happen along, come to my relief, when a couple of shouts ascend to heaven, and the battle commences. Round, hard, swiftly thrown, and well-aimed are the balls that fly. Already, from many a window, fair and smiling spectators are looking upon us, and each one of us fancies himself to be another Ivanhoe. The combat deepens. One fellow receives a ball directly in the ear, and away he reels “with a short uneasy motion,” and another has received one in his belly, probably making still flatter the

pancakes that are there. And then, as a stream of blood issues from the smeller of one, and the eyes of another are made to see stars, a maddening frenzy seizes upon the whole gang—the parties clinch,—and the “rubbing” scene is in its prime, with its struggles and sounds of suffering. One poor fellow is pitched into a snow-drift, heels over head, while his enemy almost smothers him with hands-full of soft snow, causing his writhing countenance to glisten with a crimson hue; another, who had been yelling at a tremendous rate over a temporary triumph, is suddenly attacked by a couple of our party, who pelt him furiously, until he cries out most lustily—“I beg, I beg,” when he is permitted to retire with his laurels. One chap receives a stinger of a blow between his peepers, accompanied by an oath, whereupon we know that there is too much passion in the fray, and while the victims enter upon a regular fisticuff, we find it necessary to run to their rescue and separate them. Thus the general battle ceases. After coming together, declaring ourselves good friends, and talking over the struggle, we collect our scattered caps, mittens, and tippets, and quietly retire to our respective homes.

Time flies on,—we have had a protracted rain, the streets have been muddy, the people dull,—but now fair weather cometh out of the north, and the beautiful River Raisin is again sheeted in its icy mail. For a week past great preparations have been made by some two dozen boys for a skating excursion to a certain light-house on Lake Erie, situated about ten miles from Monroe. We have seen that our skates are in first-rate order, and Tom Brown (an ancient negro who was the “guide, counsellor, and friend” of every Monroe boy) has promised to awaken us all, and usher in the eventful morning by a blast from his old tin horn; so that when bedtime comes, we have nothing to

do but say our prayers and enjoy a refreshing sleep. Strange, that I should remember these trifling events so distinctly! But there they are, deeply and for ever engraven on the tablet of my memory, together with thousands of others of a kindred character. Their exalted mission is to cheer my heart amid the perplexities of the world.

It is the break of day, and bitter cold. The appointed signal hath been given;—the various dreams of many a happy youth are departed; each one hath partaken of a hearty breakfast, and the whole party are now assembled upon the ice “below the bridge.” Then follows the bustle of preparation. While some are tardy in buckling on their skates, others slap their hands together to keep them warm, while some of the smartest and most impatient *rogues* are cutting their names, or certain fantastic figures, as a prelude to what we may expect from them in the way of fine skating. Presently we are drawn up in a line to listen to the parting words of “Snowball Tom.” At the conclusion of his speech, a long and loud blast issues from the old tin horn, which we answer by a laugh and a louder shout, and like a band of unbroken colts, we spring to the race upon the icy plain. Away, away, away. Long and regular are the sweeps we take, and how dolefully does the poor river groan as the ice cracks from shore to shore, as we flee over its surface “like a rushing mighty wind!” Keen, and piercingly cold is the morning breeze, but what matter? Is not the blood of health and happy boyhood coursing through our veins? Now we glide along the shore, frightening a lot of cattle driven to the river by a boy, or the horses of some farmer who is giving them their morning drink; now we pass the picturesque abodes of the Canadian peasantry, partly hidden by venerable trees, though now stripped of their leafy honors; now we give chase to a

surprised dog returning from the midnight assassination of some helpless sheep; now we pass the last vestige of humanity upon the river, which is the log cabin of an old French fisherman and hunter; and now we pass a group of little islands with a thick coating of snow upon their bosoms, and their ten thousand beautiful bushes and trees *whispering* to the air of the surrounding silence. Already have we more than measured the distance of two leagues outside of Pleasant Bay, and our course is now on the broad bosom of Lake Erie, with an unbroken field of solid ice before us far as the eye can reach. The frozen pavement along which our skates are ringing is black as the element beneath, and so transparent, that where the water is not more than ten or twenty feet in depth, we can distinctly see sunken logs, clusters of slimy rocks and herds of various kinds of fish, balancing themselves in sleep or darting about their domain in sport. But these delicious pictures are for some other time,—we are speeding with the breeze and cannot tarry. Away, —away,—away!

But what means that sudden wheel of our leader, as with his voice and upraised hands he summons us to halt? Half a mile on our lee, and about the same distance from the shore he has just discovered an assembly of men, with their horses and sleighs at a stand, as if preparing for a race. Without a moment's hesitation we decide to be "on hand," and in a few minutes are cutting up our capers in the midst of a hundred Canadians who are about to enjoy what we predicted. Beautiful and fantastic carrioles are here, drawn by sleek and saucy-looking Canadian pacers, and occupied by hard-fisted men enveloped in their buffalo-187 robes, whom we recognize as friends. Here we notice one Beaubien with his pony of glossy black, which has never yet been beaten, and are told that the race is to be between him and

an entire stranger who has accepted a recently made challenge. To the stranger we turn, and find his horse to be a beautiful bay, and of a more delicate build than the Canadian champion. The race is to be two miles in length and the amount of the bet five hundred dollars. All things being ready, the competitors move slowly to the starting place with their witnesses, while the concourse of people await in breathless anxiety the result of the race. Hark! hear you not the clattering of hoofs, resounding far over the plain, as if in search of an echo? Aye, and with wondrous speed they are coming! How exciting is the scene! In three minutes more the contest will be ended. See!—Beaubien is ahead, and the victory undoubtedly his! But now the stranger tosses up his cap, and as it falls, the flying pacer understands the signal—he increases his already almost matchless speed, he passes the Frenchman with a look of triumph in his eye,—one minute more,—and the unknown is triumphant. Most unexpected is the result. The people are bewildered and perplexed, but when Beaubien delivers up the lost money, not a word escapes him, and he seems to be broken-hearted. His darling steed has been eclipsed, the *swiftest* pacer in all the country does not belong to him, and he is miserable. The sport ended, and not caring for the jabbering of a band of excited Frenchmen, we come together again, and continue on our course.

Another hour do we while away along the lake shore, now pausing to get a little breath, and now gazing with curious eyes into the gloomy forest (which comes to the very water's edge) as we glide along. At twelve o'clock we have reached the desired haven, our feet are gladly released, and we are the welcome guests of mine host of the light-house. By some the peculiar features of the lonely place are examined, while others, who have an eye for the grand in nature, ascend to

the top of the light-house for a view of the frozen lake—reposing in unbroken solitude. The curiosity of all being satisfied, we assemble in the comfortable parlor of our entertainer, Mr. Whipple, and await the dinner-hour. A jolly time then follows;—many a joke is cracked, and many a twice-told legend of the wilderness related; a sumptuous dinner is enjoyed; the evening hours approaching, we begin to think of home, and by the time the heavens are flooded with the light of the moon and stars, we have taken our departure, and are upon our skates once more. Without meeting with a single accident, elated by many a gay song on our way, and with our thoughts mostly bent upon the “spacious firmament on high,” we glide over the frozen wave, and at the usual hour are in our warm beds, anticipating a dream of those things, for which our several hearts are panting.

Hardly a week has elapsed before we have another heavy fall of snow, and the principal topic of conversation among the young people of the village is a sleigh-ride. The boys, about this time, are making themselves wonderfully useful in their fathers’ stables, taking good care of the horses, examining the sleighs, collecting the buffalo-robés and polishing the bells; while the girls are busily engaged upon their hoods, cloaks, muffs, and moccasons, and wondering by whom they will be invited. The long-wished-for day has arrived. Farewell’s Tavern, ten miles up the River Raisin, is our place of destination. The cheerful sun is only about an hour high, when there is heard a merry jingling of bells in the village streets. Our cavalcade numbers some half dozen well-filled sleighs, and one single-seated carriole occupied by Abby Somebody and the Chief Marshal of the expedition,—the writer of this rhapsody.

My black trotter was never in finer spirits, and it is as much as I can do to hold him in, as with his neck beautifully arched he bears upon the bit. He seems to know that his youthful master has but one dearer friend upon earth, who is the “bonnie lassie” at his side. Many and tender are the words then spoken, and the wide world before our youthful fancies is the home only of perpetual pleasures. Far, very far from our minds are all the stern realities of life. We hear the flail of the industrious farmer in his barn, but do not dream of the great truth that mankind are born to labor and grow old with trouble. We look upon a poverty-stricken and forsaken Indian, with his family trudging across the snowy landscape, and gratefully reflect upon the comforts of our own homes, and sigh for the miseries of the poor. Youth makes us forgetful of the *real* future, and the dawning of love opens our hearts to every tender influence, and we resolve, hereafter, to be very kind to the unfortunate. The shades of evening are descending upon the earth, and with thoughtfulness we gaze upon the quiet pictures of the road, the season, and the hour. We pass a wooden cross with its covering of snow, which was planted by Jesuit Missionaries a century ago, and think of Him whom we have been rightly taught to worship and adore. Farmers are foddering their cattle, boys are carrying in huge armsful of dry hickory for a roaring fire, and cheerful lights are gleaming from the windows of the farm-houses as we pass along. Finally the comfortable dwelling where we would be meets our gaze, seeming to smile upon us, with its various lighted windows, and clouds of smoke ascending heavenward, when, with a few flourishes of whips, and a terrible din of bells, the sleighing party comes to a halt before the tavern of friend Farewell.

The upper rooms of the dwelling are all ready for our reception,

and while the girls are ushered into them, the boys are attending to the comforts of their faithful horses. In due time, after we have arranged the preliminaries for a supper, we join the girls again, and in solid body make our appearance in the spacious ball-room. A musician is already there, in the person of an ancient negro, who tells us that his fiddle is in prime order. But *dancing* is an idea of which we had not dreamed, for we are utterly ignorant of the polite accomplishment. But music we are resolved to have, and doubt not but it will greatly add to our enjoyment of the various games which we purpose to play. Now have the happy voices of the party risen to a noisy height, as we take hold of hands and commence the game of Drop the Handkerchief, while many a race around the slippery floor is run, and many a sweet kiss is given and returned. Then succeeds the play of Button, wherein the forfeits are redeemed by making "wheelbarrows," "measuring tape and cutting it off," and by "bowing to the wittiest, kneeling to the prettiest, and kissing the one we love best." Then the stories of the Stage-Coach have their turn, which create a perfect tumult of laughter. After which we have Blindman's Buff, and one poor creature after another is made to grope about the room in Egyptian darkness. Such are the plays, with many more of like character, which we enjoy, while our sable friend is straining away at his old fiddle, as if determined to be heard above the surrounding clamor of talking, laughing, and singing voices.

The supper hour having arrived, a general adjournment takes place, when the unnumbered good things of the table are appropriated to their legitimate use. Half an hour is then allotted to the young ladies to get ready, and by nine o'clock the sleighs are at the door, and after a delightful ride of an hour in the clear moonlight, we are at our village homes, and the memory of our

sleigh-ride commencing its existence.

One, two, and perhaps three weeks have I been confined at school, when the notion pops into my head that I must go a-hunting, for my sporting friend, Francis Bannac (a Frenchman), has told me that game is now quite abundant. My father has granted me his permission, and Bannac tells me that I may be his companion on a tramp of nine miles to the head-waters of Plum Creek. A pack of wolves, of whose depredations we have heard, are the principal game we have in view. Having finished the usual preliminaries of a winter hunt, and arrayed ourselves accordingly, we seize our rifles, whistle to our greyhounds, and with the sun midway up the heavens start upon the tramp. A walk of twenty minutes brings us to the edge of the forest, where we strike an ancient Indian trail and proceed on our way. A gorgeous landscape-panorama is that through which we are passing, and ourselves, I ween, the most *appropriate* and *picturesque* figures that could be introduced. Foremost is the tall and sinewy person of Bannac, with a snugly-fitted buckskin garment tightened round his waist by a wampum belt, cowhide moccasons on his feet, coonskin cap on his black head, pouch and powder-horn, together with knife and tomahawk at his side, and in his right hand a heavy rifle. Next to him trotteth the deponent, who might be looked upon as a miniature Bannac, with variations,—while a little in our rear are the two hounds playing with each other, or standing still and looking among the trees for game. All around us is a multitudinous army of forest soldiers, from the youthful maple or ash, to the rugged and storm-scarred oak or bass-wood; and marvellously beautiful to my mind is the tracery of their numberless branches against the blue sky, though my friend would probably liken those very tree-tops to the head of some

“loafer” that had never made use of a comb. The earth is covered with a thick coating of dead leaves, with here and there a little island of snow. Now we perceive a beautiful elm lodged in the giant branches of an old walnut, like a child seeking consolation in the arms of its father; and now we come to a deformed beech-tree, prostrate upon the earth, with its uncouth roots wasting to decay, and the idea enters my mind that such will eventually be the destiny of all Falsehood. The woods in winter are indeed desolate. The green leaves are no longer here to infuse into our hearts a portion of their happiness, as they “clap their hands in glee,” and the joyous birds of summer are not here to make melody in their own hearts, as well as ours. True, that mosses of varied hue and texture are on every side, and in their love enveloping stumps, rocks, trunks, and branches, yet they remind us of the pall and shroud. What footsteps do we hear, and why do the hounds start so suddenly? We have frightened a noble buck; but a moment has elapsed and he is beyond our reach. The hounds, however, are close behind him already, and the three are bounding away in splendid style, illustrating to perfection the poetry of motion. We fancy that the race will be a short one, and therefore start in the pursuit, managing to keep in sight of our game. Heavens! what a leap that was over those fallen trees! but the hounds have done their duty, and the course is once more clear. A lot of ravens far up in the upper air seem to be watching our movements, as if hoping for a meal of venison,—and a gray eagle flies screaming across our path, as if to mock us for being without wings. Glossy black squirrels peep out of their holes in wonder at the commotion, and a flock of wild turkeys which we have alarmed, are running from us in great confusion, like a company of militia before a cavalcade of horsemen. But see! the buck has turned upon his pursuers, and while they are battling together we have time to

approach within gun-shot. Quicker than thought Bannac raises his rifle, a sharp report follows, a bullet has dropped the forest king, and he must die. We skin him, secure the two hams, and after examining our compass, and finding that we are near our place of destination, shoulder our plunder as best we may, and make a bee-line for the log cabin of our intended host, where we arrive in due time, and exchange friendly congratulations.

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Well, now that we are here, I must give a brief description of the man whose guests we are, and of the lonely place which he inhabits. Like my bachelor friend, Bannac, Antoine Campau is a Frenchman and a hunter, but a widower, and the father of two little girls, and a strapping boy of fifteen. A singular love of *freedom* first prompted him to leave the settlement where he once lived, and to locate himself in the woods, where, between a little farming and a good deal of hunting, he manages to support himself and family quite comfortably. His dwelling is a rusty-looking log house, situated on a pleasant little stream, in the centre of a dead clearing some three acres wide. The live stock of this embryo farm consists of a cow, one yoke of oxen, a pony, a few sheep, about three dozen hens, and a number of foxy-looking dogs. And now that the long winter evening has set in, and as the whole family is present, I will picture the interior of our cabin. The only room, excepting the garret, is an oblong square twenty feet by fifteen. The unboarded walls, by the smoke of years, have been changed into a rich mahogany brown. The only light in the room is that which proceeds from an immense fireplace, where nearly a common cart-load of wood is burning, and hissing, and crackling at its own free will, so that the remotest corners are made cheerful by the crimson glow. The principal articles of furniture are a bed, one large table

standing in the centre of the floor, and some half dozen rush-chairs, while in one corner stands a number of shot-guns and rifles, and a ladder leading to the loft, and from the rafters above are hanging pouches, powder-horns, leggins, a brace of wild ducks, one or two deer-hams, and a bundle of dressed skins. The dogs of the family, numbering only four, together with their dandy visitors, are scattered about the room,—one lying upon the hearth and watching the fire, one playing with his shadow, another walking thoughtfully across the floor, and the other sound asleep. A bountiful supper having been prepared by the daughters, the whole family, with their guests, are seated at the table, and all past sorrows and future anxieties are forgotten in the enjoyment of the passing hour. Bannac and Campau have all the talking to themselves, as they have to relate their manifold adventures and wonderful escapes, wherein they make use of no less than three languages—bad French, broken English, and genuine Potawattomee. The leisure hour following supper is devoted principally to the cleaning of our rifles, the moulding of bullets, and other matters preliminary to the capture of a few wolves.

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For the novel mode which we are to pursue on this occasion, we are indebted to our friend Campau, and he tells us it will positively prove successful. From his account it appears that only a few evenings ago his sheep were attacked by the wolves, and before he could run to their rescue, one of them was killed, but the thieves were compelled to part with it, or run the risk of losing their lives. To-day Campau has built a large pen, wherein he has placed the dead sheep as a kind of bait. His idea is that the wolves will of course revisit this spot to-night, and when they are in the act of climbing over into the pen, we, who are to be hidden within gun-shot, will give them the cold lead. Behold

us then at the midnight hour in our treacherous ambush.

Listen! Hear you not the dismal shriek of an owl? Our enemies must be coming, for their footsteps have disturbed the feathered hermit, as he sat upon a limb with a red squirrel in his claw. Yes, there they are, the prowling thieves, just without the shadow of the wood, dodging along between the blackened stumps of the clearing. There are five of them, and see! with what activity they leap into the fold! Now is our time to settle them. We rush forward with a shout, when the villains commence a retreat, and as they mount the high enclosure, we succeed in shooting three, while the other two escape unharmed. The dead culprits having been stripped of their hides, their carcasses are carried away and exposed for food to the vulture and eagle. We then return to our cabin and sleep until late in the morning, when we are surprised to find that a regular snow-storm has set in. Our sporting for to-day, which was to have been of a miscellaneous character, is given up, and Bannac thinks it better that he and I should turn our faces homeward in spite of the storm. Whereupon, after a good breakfast, we take leave of our hospitable friends, and through the falling snow, enter the forest on our return.

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Snow, snow, snow,—above us, around us, and under our feet, to the depth of some half dozen inches. In large feathery flakes it floats downward through the still air, and it also muffles our footsteps as we tramp through the pathless and desolate woods. Every thing that meets the eye is enveloped in a downy covering: not only the prostrate and decayed tree, but the “topmost twig that looks up at the sky.” Slowly and heavily, without game, or a single adventure, we are compelled to trudge along, and when we come in sight of the pleasant village, not a

penny care we for any thing else in this world, but a roaring fire and a warm supper,—both of which in my father's dwelling are we presently permitted to enjoy—and thus endeth another portion of my heart-song.

Among the peculiar characters which I remember, while thinking upon my early days, none do I dwell upon with more pleasurable feeling than an old Indian. My first acquaintance with him took place when I was about twelve years old. It was the pleasant summer-time. At an early hour of the day I had launched my little birch canoe from the sloping bank behind our orchard, and, accompanied by Rover, started on a duck hunt down the river Raisin. I would here remark, that the mouth of this beautiful river is studded with islands, and has been, from time immemorial, celebrated for its abundance of game. As I paddled along, I watched with an inward joy the progress of the morning. The farm-houses that had been long sleeping amid the silence of night, were now enlivened by their inmates, who had sallied forth to perform their allotted duties. At one moment my ears were saluted by a chorus of voices from some neighboring poultry-yard, mingled with the lowing of cows and the jingling of bells in the sheepfold. And then I heard the singing of larks in the open fields, the neighing of a horse, or the shout of some happy boy. The mists, frightened by the sunbeams, were rising from the river, and from the trees on either side the dew was falling. I looked upon the changing landscape, smiling in its freshness, and felt my heart swell within me, for I beheld the glory and goodness of God, and I "blessed him unaware."

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The ducks were very shy that day, and the few that I did shoot were taken on the wing. I was about making up my mind to

return home, when I beheld a single canvass-back rise from the water in the distance, and, seemingly unconscious of my presence, fly directly over my head. I fired at it, and the feathers flew. Slowly but surely the bird descended, and at last fell upon an island a quarter of a mile away. This was soon reached, and a long hour did I search for my game among the bushes and grass, but I sought in vain. This island was about two furlongs in length and one in width. At one end was a group of lofty sycamores, and at the other three black pines stood together, like robbers plotting the destruction of an enemy. Between and beneath these, the dark-green and luxuriant foliage of less ambitious trees formed to all appearance a solid mass. Here the light-green ivy encircled some youthful ash, from whose top it wandered among the limbs of other trees; and there, the clustering fruit hung in great abundance from the brown grape-vine. While rambling about this island, I discovered in its centre a little clearing or miniature prairie, on which stood a single wigwam. A wreath of smoke rose from its chimney between the trees, gracefully curling upward to the sky. I entered the hut, and beheld the form of an Indian, who was engaged in cooking his noonday meal. At first he was surprised at my presence, but when I told him I was merely on a hunting excursion, his countenance changed, and he manifested much pleasure. His kindness and my boyish familiarity conspired to make us soon acquainted. He was a tall, athletic, well-proportioned man, with dark eagle eyes. His long locks of hair were now whitening with age. I will not dwell upon the particulars of that interview. Let it suffice to know that I departed from that "green and lovely isle," feeling that I had a friend in the person of that old Indian.

Many a day, during that summer and the ensuing autumn, did I

spend in his society. Many a table luxury brought I to his lonely dwelling. Many a lesson has he taught me, in the arts of fishing and hunting. Long years have flown since then. But the wild and pure enjoyments which I then participated in with this old Indian, are deeply engraven on the tablet of my memory.

We used often to enter our respective canoes and explore the neighboring creeks and rivers, little islands of the bay, and others far out into the lake. We would bathe together, at one time wading out from the sandy and sloping shore, and again leaping and diving from some abrupt headland into the clear water, so clear and pure that the shells upon the bottom were distinctly seen at the depth of twenty feet or more. I never troubled myself about the origin of this old Indian. His name, to what nation he belonged, or his reasons for thus living alone, were things that I never desired to know. I was content to be with him, and during our various excursions, to listen to his wild legends, his narratives of strange adventures and exploits, which he would recount in broken English, though always with the eloquence of nature. Ofttimes I could not comprehend his meaning, more especially when he described the beauties of the Spirit Land, which he said existed far beyond the setting sun; and also when he told me of its valleys, and mountains, and forests, smiling under the influence of perpetual summer, where the singing of birds was always heard, and where the buffalo, the horse, the deer, the antelope, the bear, the wolf, the panther, the muskrat, and otter, flourished and fattened for its inhabitants.

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When we looked upon the lurid lightning, and listened to the sullen roar of the distant thunder, he would raise his hands to heaven, exclaiming, "the Great Spirit is angry," and kneeling down, would kiss the ground in fear and adoration. Pleasantly

indeed did the days of that summer, and the ensuing autumn, pass away. At last winter came, and the waters of the ever-murmuring Raisin were clasped in his icy chains. In a little time I lost sight of my old friend, for his island home was desolate,—he had departed,—no one knew where. Spring came, and I was sent to an eastern city to school. Five years were flown, and I returned to the village of my birth. At the twilight hour a few evenings after this, I was seated at an open window with my mother, inhaling the fragrance of blowing flowers, and at times listening to the mellow tones of the sweet whippoorwill. All the important incidents that had transpired during my absence, were affectionately and particularly related. Nothing, however, interested me so much as the following brief account of my old Indian friend, which I now write down in the words in which it was told me.

“The summer after you left us, an Indian made his appearance in our village, whose poverty and old age elicited the kind sympathies and good wishes of all who knew him. Nothing was known of his history, save that he belonged to a tribe of Potawattomees, a nation at this period almost extinct. Alas! for the poor aborigines of our country! To them the earth is a dreary place, and their only joy is in the hope that they will soon join their kindred in the land of spirits. One by one, like the lingering sands of an hourglass, they are passing beyond the grave.

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“As I heard you talk about an Indian, with whom you had become acquainted while hunting, I thought this new comer might be the identical one. While passing through the village one day, I happened to meet him, and invited him to come and sup with us that evening. He did so; and we were very glad to hear

that he was indeed your friend, whom you thought dead. We discovered this fact from the manner in which he spoke of a boy hunter, who used to visit him in his lonely home. From that day he became our particular friend, as he had been before the friend of the whole village.

“His dress was common, but in the true Indian style. He was ever a great favorite among the boys, in whose sports he often participated. It was his custom in summer to sit beneath the great elm-tree on the green, and, gathering the children around him, rehearse to them wild stories about the red men of the forest. Sometimes he would spend a whole day in whittling out bows and arrows for his youthful friends; and they in return would bestow on him various little presents, both curious and rare. He had no particular abiding place. There were a dozen houses where he was perfectly at home. He seldom alluded to his tribe, and never ventured beyond the limits of the county. This was indeed unaccountable; but as he seemed to possess so amiable a disposition, no one could believe he had ever been guilty of a crime. Rather than this, it was thought he had been banished from his nation on account of some failure in warlike exploits, or some similar cause.

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“Perhaps, again, he was an Indian philosopher or poet, who had unfortunately drawn upon himself the ill-will of his people, by expressing some unpopular opinion. At times he would enter the school-house, and listen attentively to the boys reciting their lessons. A printed book he looked upon as a treasure, and when one was given him, considered it a sacred gift, though its contents he could not read. He would often enter the church on the Sabbath, and in his seat near the pulpit, with his head resting upon both hands, would listen, with an anxious gaze, to the

preacher's words. He always left the house in a pensive mood. To his mind the heaven of the Christian was utterly incomprehensible. Of all the truths that were read to him from the Bible, the most interesting and wonderful was the history of our Saviour. When listening to this, he would often clasp his hands in an ecstasy of delight, exclaiming, 'How good man! how good man!'

"On all occasions of festivity he was a welcome guest. Christmas and New Year were always happy days with him. The little girls invited him to their pic-nic parties. The boys on Saturday afternoon had him to keep tally when they were playing ball. He was always the leader of the nutting-parties in autumn, and a participator in the sleigh-rides of winter. In fact, he was every where, and had a hand in almost every thing that transpired.

"About six weeks ago it was reported throughout the village that our old Indian friend was very sick, and at the point of death. The intelligence was no less unexpected than melancholy. He had so completely won the affection of every body, that it spread a universal gloom. In a few days he yielded up his spirit to his Father and his God. The next day was the Sabbath, and the one appointed for his burial. The sky was without a cloud, and the cool breeze, as it rustled among the leaves, brought health and refreshment to the body and soul of every one. The meadow-lark, and woodland birds sang louder and sweeter than they were wont to do.—A good man had died, and Nature, animate and inanimate, seemed anxious to pronounce his requiem. A larger funeral than this I have seldom seen. Old men and women, young men and maidens, and little children, with tearful eyes followed the old Indian to his grave.

It is situated in the northeast corner of the burying ground, in the shadow of two weeping-willows, that seem the guardians of his silent resting place."

On the following morning, an hour before sunset, I stood beside the clay cottage of my Indian friend. Green was the grass, and many and beautiful the flowers that flourished above his grave. I plucked a single harebell and placed it in my bosom, and its sister flowers I watered with my tears. Those tears, which were not the offspring of corroding grief, but of a mournful joy, were the only tribute that I could pay to one whom I dearly loved,— who was born a benighted heathen, but who died a Christian. The mildly beaming and beautiful evening star had risen in the west, ere I departed from the "Silent City;" but I felt that the flower I had plucked, though faded, would in after hours remind me of my friend, and I therefore came away in peace, repeating to myself these words:

"And I am glad that he has lived thus long,  
And glad that he has gone to his reward;  
Nor deem that kindly Nature did him wrong,  
Softly to disengage the vital cord.  
When his weak hand grew palsied, and his eye,  
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die."

*Bryant.*

And now comes the conclusion of my long rhapsody. The time of my departure for my distant city home is at hand. A few more wilderness pictures, illustrative of my native state as it was in other days, and I will lay aside my pen.

Weary with the hunt, I lately sought the shady side of a gentle

hill, and extending my limbs upon the green-sward amused myself by watching the sky. I gazed upon the blue canopy, and fancied it to be an ocean, beyond which the broad and beautiful fields of heaven were basking beneath the smiles of God. A few white feather-clouds were floating there, and they seemed to me to be a fleet returning from their home of peace. In the dark regions of night they had fought and conquered the enemy, and now, laden with redeemed souls, were hastening to the haven of eternal rest. Fancy, which had pictured this image, was gone; I saw nothing save an eagle playing above the trees of the forest, and in a moment I was a dreamer.

It seemed to me that I entered the forest just as the glorious summer sun was sinking to his repose. The evening star rose in the west, and in a little while from the zenith a thousand other bright constellations looked smilingly down upon the earth. Something whispered me that I must spend the long watches of that night in wandering in the wilderness; and I departed with the silence of a shadow, and the speed of an antelope. Strange, and wild, and beautiful, were the scenes I beheld.

The mighty trees which rose on every side seemed like the columns of a vast temple, whose mysterious winding aisles, overhung with a multitudinous foliage, were deserted and desolate. No moving objects met my eye, save the fire-flies that darted in all directions, floating and sinking like burning flakes of snow. The gloomy silence was broken only by the chirp of the cricket, and the song of the katy-did. At intervals, too, the clear soothing voice of the whippoorwill would echo far and near. The huge masses of foliage above, reminded me of thunder-clouds, and like them oppressed my spirit; and it was so still that "the dropping dew woke startling echoes in the

sleeping wood."

My pathway was not smooth, for I was forced to leap, now over some dead tree, and now over a pile of brush; and again over a mossy hillock, or some gurgling brooklet. Ever and anon I caught a glimpse of the deep blue sky; but in a moment it was lost to view, and I was in total darkness. My vision was wonderful. I saw all surrounding objects with intense clearness; for to me the "darkness was as the light of day." At times I paused to listen, startled by some distant sound; the howl of a wolf, the hooting of an owl, or the "trumpet-tone" of a flying swan; and as I listened, it would become a murmur, then a whisper, and at last die into a breathless stillness.

At the foot of a gnarled and stunted oak I saw the manly form of an Indian, wrapped in his scarlet blanket, and extended upon a bearskin. He was fast asleep. On one side of him, and within his reach, lay a bundle of arrows, and an unstrung bow; on the other, a knapsack of provisions and a wolfish-looking dog. But this guardian of the slumbering savage was also fast asleep. As I looked upon this simple picture, the feelings of my heart responded to my thoughts, and I exclaimed, though there was no echo to my words: "Poor lone Indian! Is that dog thy only friend? Art thou indeed alone in the wide, wide world? Hast thou no wife to sympathize with thee, to love thee, in those hours of disappointment and troubles incident to human life? No children to play around thy knees, and make thee happy in some comfortable wigwam, when the blue and scarlet birds make melody in summer, and the wind Euroclydon howls and roars among the forest trees in winter? Hast thou no daughter to protect and cherish, that she may be the bride of some future warrior? No son to listen, with flashing eye, to thy hunting

lessons; to smite his breast with pride and anger as thou tellest him of the bravery and wrongs of thy ancestors? O that I knew thy history! But I will not disturb thy slumber. May thy dreams be of that land beyond the sunset clouds, where perpetual summer reigns,—the land of the Great Spirit,—the God of thy fathers.”

How vividly do the scenes and incidents of that night rise before my vision! I see them now with the same distinctness that I beheld them then. I stand upon the shore of that dark stream, rolling through the dense woods, where the full blaze of daylight has not penetrated for centuries. I hear that uncouth but solemn funeral hymn, and see a band of stern red men performing their mysterious rites over the grave of an aged chieftain.

Not less sudden than varied are the scenes I behold. On that high dry limb, under a canopy of leaves, a flock of turkeys are roosting. They are all asleep save one, and he is acting the part of a sentinel, darting out his long neck, now this way, now that, as if he beheld an enemy. Fat, sleepy fellow! There was a time when it would have been temerity to look at me thus. I am not a hunter now, else would I bring you down from your lofty resting-place.

My course is onward. Hark! I hear a yell, and a rushing sound. Two wolves are chasing a beautiful doe. Poor creature! Its strength is already lessening, its race is run. The wolves have seized it. There is a struggle; the blood issues from her graceful neck; one gasp more and the tender mother of two sweet fawns lies dead. Its bones will moulder and mingle with the earth, giving nourishment to that cluster of hazel-bushes, which stand beside her mossy death-bed. Awakened by the scent, a croaking

raven is wheeling in the distance. Its wings flap heavily, and there are two, and still another! See! we come to a kind of opening,—a place where the trees grow less closely together. A cloud of thin white smoke is rising, as if from yonder pile of underbrush. It is an Indian encampment; a dozen bark wigwams, shaped like a sugar-loaf. But why this bustle, at so late an hour? The men have just returned from a three days' hunting tour, and they are now releasing their pack-horses from their loads of spoil. The blaze from a fire gives all surrounding objects a ruddy glow. In dire confusion upon the ground lie haunches of venison, red and gray squirrels and racoons, turkeys, grouse, ducks, pheasants, and many other lesser birds, mingled with guns, bows and arrows, shot-pouches, powder-horns, skins, halters, brass kettles, and the like. The men are busy, and the women too. Roused from a four hours' nap, several children are coming out from their tents, rubbing their eyes. They seem to be the only playmates of the whining dogs.

Lo! what a beauteous sight! A herd of deer reposing like a family of wood-sprites, near yonder clump of young maples! There are three bucks, five does, and two lovely spotted fawns. Upon that decayed "stump" beyond, a solitary American nightingale is resting. It is my favorite bird. Would that I knew the cause of its complainings and chastisement, for every now and then it utters forth the cry, "Why whip poor Will?"

What silver rays are those darting down through the leafy bough? The moon! the moon! High in the heaven she sails, in queenly beauty. The very heart of the forest is not beyond her vivifying influence. Festoons of creeping plants hang from the surrounding limbs; and the ivy and grape-vine have twined themselves so closely around that ash, as entirely to hide from

view the bark of the trunk. I thrust my hand against a bush, and a thousand dew-drops fall to the earth, glittering in the moonbeams. If my lady-love were with me, what a gorgeous wreath could I now weave for her beautiful brow out of the purple and scarlet iris, the blue larkspur, the moccason-flower, the crimson and green lichen, and other mosses, flowers, and vines, too delicate to have a name!

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A gentle breeze is stirring. The tops of the trees are moving to and fro with the strong but gentle motion of a ground-swell. Soothing is the music of the leaves; they seem to murmur with excess of joy. Another sound echoes through the listening wilderness. It is but a scuffle between a panther and bear. Let them growl and fight; who cares? How like two hot-headed politicians they seem!

Again are the trees becoming thinner, and my steps are tending downward. The green-sward I press is without a single stick or bramble. Here I am upon the brink of a little lake of the very purest water! The breeze has spent its force, and every thing is still. It is “the bridal hour of the earth and sky!” What a perfect mirror is this liquid element! The counterpart of two willows, a grass-grown rock, tall reeds, and beyond all, a row of slender elms, and a lightning-shivered pine, are distinctly seen, pointing downward, downward to the moon and stars, in the cerulean void beneath. And in yon deep shadow a flock of ducks are floating silently, amid the sweet perfume of the wild lotus and white water-lily, which are growing near. One or two have wandered out into the lake, making no ripple, but moving as if lured away by the glossy loveliness of their shadows. The same mysterious influence which has brought me thus far, will transport me to the opposite shore.

I am there! yet still my course is “onward.” I am come to a little lawn, so smooth and beautiful that it seems a fit play-ground for the fairies. Perhaps it is here the water-spirits and wood-nymphs are wont to meet, to revel and rejoice at midnight, “the dawn of the fairy day.”

What sound is that!—so like the far-off tones of a hundred musical instruments, faintly murmuring? Ah! I thought so. Here they are:

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“They come from beds of lichen green,  
They creep from the mullen’s velvet screen;  
    Some on the backs of beetles fly,  
From the silver tops of moon-touched trees,  
    Where they swung in their cobweb hammocks high,  
And rocked about in the evening breeze;  
    Some from the hum-bird’s downy nest,—  
They had driven him out by elfin power,  
    And pillow'd on plumes of his rainbow breast,  
Have slumbered there till the charmed hour.  
    Some had lain in the scoop of the rock,  
With glittering izing-stars inlaid;  
    And some had opened the four-o’-clock  
And stole within its purple shade.  
    And now they throng the moonlight glade,  
Above—below—on every side,  
    Their little minim forms arrayed  
In the tricksy pomp of fairy pride!”

*Drake.*

That was but a flight of fancy. I look again, and instead of the fairies, I behold a myriad of fair flowers, peeping at the sky

from the green luxuriant grass.

But see! I have reached—surely it can be none other—a prairie! What dark cloud is brooding over this motionless ocean?—a mighty flame bursting from its centre? It comes! it comes! The prairie is on fire! The wind is rising, and swift as the wind speed the flame-banners. Maddened by fear, the buffalo, the wild horse, the wolf, the deer, birds, and other living creatures, are fleeing for their lives. Roaring and hissing the fire-flood rolls on, swallowing up every thing in its course. And now it has gone, leaving behind it a wide path of blackness. The smoke obscures the moon and stars. “Far-off its coming shone;” the incense of a sacrifice offered to the great God by the Earth, for some enormous sin. But it is gone; and I resume my journey.

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I am now in an open country of hills and dales. A narrow but deep river is gliding by me in its pride and beauty. Now it is lost to view by some abrupt headland, and anon it makes a long sweep through a plain or meadow, its ripples sporting in the moonlight. I hear the splash of fish, leaping from their watery bed. I hear the measured stroke of a paddle. It is an Indian in his birch canoe, passing down the river. He has started a loon from his wavy cradle below the rapids. I hear the sound of a waterfall. A mile away there is a precipice, where the river gathers all its strength for a fearful leap. Now its surface is without a ripple,—but in a moment more, and it plunges down among the rocks, and the waves struggle, and leap, and rise and sink, like demon-spirits in agony.

I am standing on a hill which overlooks a lovely landscape of woods and lawns, streams, hills, valleys, and cultivated fields,

—farm-houses and church-steeple. In the distance sleep the bright-green waves of Lake Erie. A streak of daylight is in the eastern sky. The spell is broken;—my dream, and my book about the wilderness, are both ended.

THE END.

# FOOTNOTES

[1]

Portions of this chapter have already appeared in print, but as they have been re-written, and moulded, with other matter, into a complete whole, I trust that I shall be excused for the liberty I have taken, in publishing them again.

C. L.

[2]

James H. Lanman, Esq., uncle to the Author.

# Transcriber's Notes

- Retained the copyright notice from the printed edition (although this book is in the public domain.)
- Created an original cover image for free, unrestricted use with this Distributed-Proofreaders Canada eBook.
- Silently corrected a few palpable typos.
- In the text versions only, delimited italicized text in underscores.

[The end of *A summer in the wilderness; embracing a canoe voyage up the Mississippi and around Lake Superior* by Charles Lanman]