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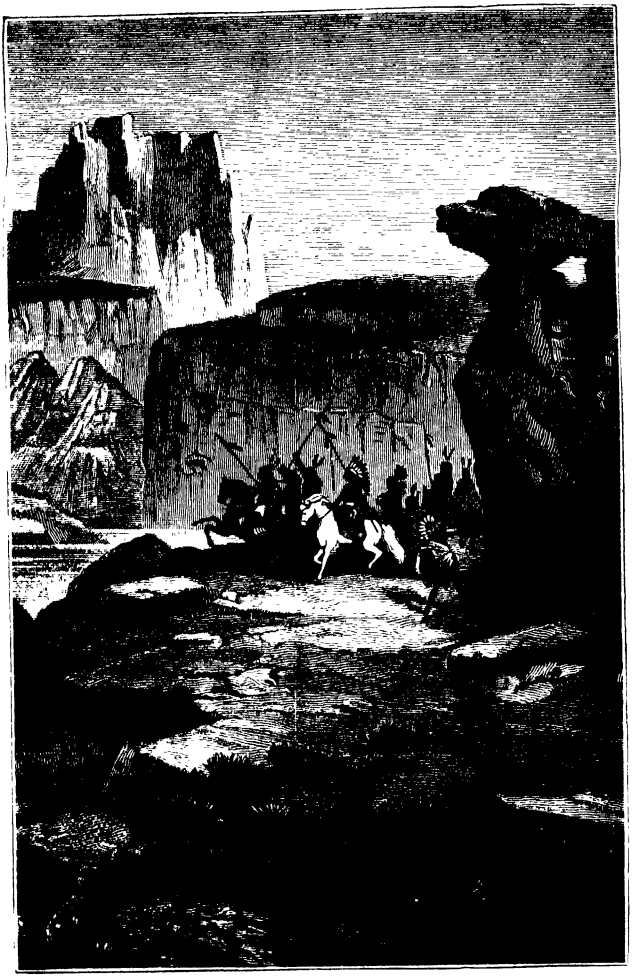

SAW AMONG THE CHIEFS A PAWNEE ON A WHITE HORSE.'

THE PURSUED

A Tale of the Yellowstone.

BY

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LONDON AND NEW YORK:
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.
1887.

Morrison and Gibb, Edinburgh,
Printers to Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

PREFACE.

I DEDICATE this book, as I did *Under the Avalanche*, to my son FRANK. Like it, it deals with a phase of Indian life of which, as yet, we have not heard much. The Red Man was not always on the war-path. Like other men, he had a home and a religion; but, like other men, he said little about them to the stranger or the enemy. As Sequoyah says, 'The sight depends on the seer; the rough and cruel come amongst us, and see only the rough and cruel; they think they alone can tell stories, and they will not hear the stories of the Indian.' How significant these stories may be is shown in Miss Emerson's *Indian Myths*, where some of the legends told herein appear in other garb.

The Pursued takes us amongst the wildest of the world's wonderlands. Those who think I have run wild in what I have written of it, may change their opinion after reading Professor Hayden's 'Reports of the Field Work of the Survey in the Yellowstone.'

W. J. G.

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THE PURSUED.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT OF THE EQUINOX.

THERE was excitement in the Pawnee village, — suppressed but unmistakeable. Twilight was deepening into darkness, and the Indians were as busy as if it were broad day. There was a confused murmur in the keen March air of much whispering and moving to and fro; and above the murmur, or rather mingling with it, and rising through it by fits and starts, came the lazy ripple of the shallow

Loup on its way to the wide stream which is now called the Platte, but was then known as the Nebraska.

All in the village, men and women, boys and girls, seemed to have much to do,—all save one, a boy of another race, alone in a distant lodge, but carefully guarded and kept in ignorance of the cause of the commotion.

To the lodge of the head chief came Green Oak, one of the minor chiefs, inviting the great man to a feast in an hour's time. Courtesy required that he should consent; and Green Oak went off round the village to request the attendance of the other warriors to whom he wished to be hospitable.

A Pawnee supper-party was in those days soon arranged. The squaw was not admitted to her lord's confidence, except by special favour. She was simply told about an hour beforehand that a feast was to be prepared for so many; and while her husband went off to deliver his invitations, either personally or by messenger, she had to provide the meal. She could cook what she liked, but it had to be good. If she had not pots enough, she had to borrow from her neighbours. She had, in fact, to manage matters somehow, but she must be ready to the minute with enough for the guests.

Green Oak had given his wife her orders at half-past six, — 'Supper for forty at half-past seven!' or words to that effect,—and of all the busy women in the village, Butterfly was now about the busiest. The work on which she, like the others, was engaged had to be laid aside, to be taken up again when the supper was over.

It was not, however, unusual for Green Oak to give a

party. He was fairly well off for an Indian, the owner of many horses, in which a Pawnee's wealth then consisted; and he was expected to live up to his means. Hence Butterfly was used to her work, and her task was not so hard as it might have been. She had soon borrowed the few kettles she required, and organized her staff of assistants, and when her lord returned from his round of invitations, a savoury, appetizing odour greeted him, and told him everything was on the boil. And when the guests arrived everything was ready.

The lodge, like all the Pawnee lodges, was a round one —much like a forty-feet kettledrum turned upside down. In the centre was the fireplace, about a yard across and five inches deep. Round it the earth was beaten smooth by mallets, and formed a clean, hard floor. Eight feet from the centre were eight strong forked posts about a dozen feet high; round them was an outer circle of smaller posts about seven feet high; the rafters being laid from the lower to the higher, and so crossed overhead as to leave a hole for the smoke to escape by. Against the outer circle rested a ring of poles with their ends fixed in the ground. The poles and rafters were all worked together with willow withes run in and out, so that the skeleton of the lodge was a huge basket. On the wickerwork came a layer of hay, on that a coating of earth about nine inches thick. On the eastern side—always on the eastern side, so as to catch the first glimpse of the rising sun—was the entrance, a passage seven feet wide and twelve feet long. In the doorway, with the buffalo skin that formed the door looped back, stood Green Oak to welcome his guests.

The first to arrive was Red Owl, the great chief, who

was received with much dignity, and escorted to the place of honour. This was on the low bench that ran round the hut, divided by partitions and buffalo curtains into so many separate bunks. In a bunk all by himself, on a pile of buffalo robes, Red Owl gravely took his station, placing his pipe to the right of him, and a large handful of tobacco to the left. At all Pawnee meetings it was the duty of the highest in rank to provide tobacco for the company at his own expense; and as the Pawnees were the first to make the pipe the symbol of peace, the custom was one not likely to be dropped amongst them. After Red Owl came White Hawk, his son, a noble-looking young brave of two or three-and-twenty, and after him at regular intervals the rest of the forty guests, each appearing at the door as his predecessor had been ushered to his place on the benches. When all were in and ranged side by side round the lodge, Butterfly placed the steaming pots together under the smoke-hole, and then with her helpers retired at a run, dropping the buffalo curtain as she left the passage. Her work for a time was over. She could now set about the other business in which she had been interrupted, and in which all those not invited by her husband were still urgently engaged.

As the door-skin fell, Green Oak squatted down on the corner bench so as to guard the passage, and then signalled to Red Owl that he could begin.

There was silence in the lodge as the chief rose from the buffalo couch. Leisurely and deliberately he filled his pipe. Its bowl was of the usual red pipestone, from the quarry on the Coteau des Prairies. Holding the bowl towards the supper in the centre, he said,—

'The Great Spirit called us all together at the Red Pipe.

He stood on the top of the rocks, and the red people were in the plain. He chose a piece of the rock and from it made a large pipe and smoked over us all. He told us it was part of our flesh he was smoking, and that, though we might be at war, we must meet there as friends. The red stone belonged to the red men. From it we must make our poaguns and thenceforth smoke them to him, to get his goodwill. And the smoke of his big pipe rolled over all, and he vanished in the thick cloud.'

Then Red Owl's neighbour on the left stepped to the fire, picked up a burning stick, and gave it to him. Red Owl lighted the pipe, taking one long, strong whiff. As the smoke floated towards the roof, he said,—

'To the Great Spirit.'

Then he passed the pipe to his son, who also took but one whiff, and made the same dedication as the cloud ascended; and so from hand to hand the pipe was passed round the lodge until it came back to Red Owl, every warrior taking but one whiff, and uttering the same formula as his neighbour.

That was the Pawnee grace.

Then the meal began, the guests helping themselves from the kettles, and retiring to the bench to eat their soup and boiled venison from the bowl each had brought with him. The speed at which the food disappeared was a flattering tribute to Butterfly's skill. An Indian is always greedy in his feeding, and the Pawnees, though one of the oldest and noblest races on the continent, were no exceptions to the rule.

When Red Owl found that all the food had been eaten, —in accordance with the requirements of Pawnee politeness,—he struck the woodwork behind him. The con-

versation stopped immediately, and he rose to speak in praise of his host and thank him for his entertainment. In fact, he practically proposed his host's health; and the proposal was received with every sign of approval.

Then the host made a short and suitable answer; and then the pipes were lighted and the real business of the meeting began. As Green Oak was the giver of the banquet, it fell to him to be master of the ceremonies and call upon the men to speak. Speechifying always followed a Pawnee supper, and it was the custom to invite one or two good speakers, so as to make sure of the company being pleasantly entertained. On this occasion there had been no need to do this; laboured facetiousness was out of the question, and enough interest was taken in what was passing without to ensure a lively debate.

'Silky Bear,' said Green Oak, nodding to the warrior on Red Owl's left, who had held the light for the grace-pipe.

Silky Bear gave a start as though of surprise. The artifice was unworthy of him. He was, in fact, the originator of the meeting, the prime mover in the little conspiracy of conciliation. He had suggested to Green Oak that the way out of the threatened difficulty might be arranged at an informal meeting of the heads of the tribe after a supper, and that even if the attempt failed little harm would be done. Like many other impromptu speeches, his had been carefully thought over and had a purpose in view.

He was a bulky, muscular Indian, with a broad, bald head; that is to say, a closely-shaven head, for among the Indians alone of the races of the world, natural baldness is never known. The long, lank, coarse, black, glossy

hair, is round in section, not oval, and it never falls off. Like all the Pawnees, his head was shaven except on the poll, where the scalp-lock was left to its full length, thickened with vermilion to stand up like a horn, and lengthened with horse-hair so as to droop down over the shoulders.

Silky Bear began by thanking Green Oak for his hospitality, and enlarging on the value of such pleasant gatherings in promoting good fellowship. Then he spoke in glowing terms of the greatness of the Pawnees,—or Panis, as it should be spelt were custom to allow it,—and more especially the individual excellences of those he was addressing. Then, having put his audience into a good humour with themselves, he proceeded with great caution to feel his way. Encouraged by the applause of those who were in the secret, he became bolder as he developed his attack.

'To-morrow we are to worship the Morning Star. It is an old custom. It is also an old custom that we should send the Great Star the spirit of a prisoner duly made ready for the sacrifice. Alone of the red men, we keep up the custom of our forefathers. But are we the better for doing so? Can we not do as others do, and offer to the Goddess of Fertility some other and more acceptable gift? Of old it was one of our own children we offered. Then our forefathers decreed that we should offer the child of our enemy. Why should not we change again, and let the boy live?'

A chorus of disapproval greeted the suggestion. Silky Bear was evidently in the minority.

'Is there no way by which we can please all? Let me buy the captive of the Spotted Wolf, and let the goods

I give for him be burnt, and the smoke ascend. The Star will be just as pleased. The value of the offering will be the same.'

Again the majority of the company showed their disapproval; and Silky Bear, having said as much as he thought advisable, sat down.

'Spotted Wolf,' said Green Oak.

Spotted Wolf was tall and gaunt, the ruthless redskin of whom we have heard so much, the typical Indian of the story-books, who has so overshadowed the rest of his race that it comes to us as a novelty to find that there were Indian statesmen and philosophers.

'What our forefathers did,' said Spotted Wolf, 'was always good. When we follow them we do well. The red man is not what he was, because he did not adhere to what he was taught. We worship the Great Star; if we do not worship her as we have been taught, where is our worship?'

Here there was a grunt of applause.

'Who is Silky Bear that he should know better than our forefathers? We will offer my prisoner as the wise men of our tribe have told us. We cannot do wrong if we do so. I claim as my right to do as I will with the spoil of my hand.'

And Spotted Wolf's eyes gleamed cruelly in the fire-light as he sat down.

'Yellow Fox,' said Green Oak.

Yellow Fox was a much older man, and, having only one ear, had a somewhat lop-sided face.

'What Spotted Wolf says is good. Let us do as our forefathers did. Our fathers made bows from the bow-wood. As they made them, they oiled them and handled

them to keep them pliable. They wrapped them with buffalo sinews to keep them strong. They made their arrows of dogwood, and rubbed them round with ground stones. With the bow and the arrow they shot the buffalo. They did not starve. Why does not Spotted Wolf use the bow and arrows as his fathers did?'

Something very like a laugh ran round the ring.

'I went out on the plains with my bow, and the white man met me with a rifle, and I lost my ear!

Again the firelight revealed a broad smile on the brown, shining faces.

'Since then I have bought a rifle. So has Spotted Wolf. Why did he buy a rifle when his fathers knew nothing of rifles?'

'Because there are not so many buffaloes,' said Spotted Wolf.

'Because the times have changed,' said Yellow Fox. 'What was fitting for our fathers may not always be fitting for us. If we led all the nations, we might remain as we are. But we do not. As he put by his bow for his rifle, let Spotted Wolf put by his prisoner for Silky Bear's goods.'

'Not so,' said Night Cloud.

'Night Cloud,' said Green Oak.

'Men may change their weapons, but they must not change their worship,' said the wise man, or the medicine man, as it is the fashion to call him. 'The Great Star is listening to us; she hears all we say. In the morning she will rise in her anger if she is cheated of her sacrifice.'

At a sign from Green Oak, Red Owl arose.

'It was the Great Spirit who taught our fathers how

to worship. Does not the Great Spirit teach us now? In the past the fathers of the Pawnees sacrificed to the Great Star, in order to be like the rest of men. Now we are left alone in that sacrifice, and we are no more fortunate than other men. Is the land of my people more fertile than other lands? Do not some worship and dig, and find the land fertile, and others worship and not dig, and find the land barren, and others dig and not worship, and gather heavy crops? Do not some worship and dig, and find the land barren, and others worship and not dig, and find the land fertile, and others dig and not worship, and starve? This is a mystery which none can explain for us. If it is the will of my people to sacrifice, the boy shall die; if it is the will of my people not to sacrifice, the boy shall live. Were I not the great chief of the Pawnees, but only one of the people, I should say, let him live. If the Star wants him, let her take him!

The chief resumed his seat. Night Cloud signified to Green Oak that he wished to reply, and the host nodded. The wise man rose and raised his arms, drawing himself up to his full height, as the fire flickered and brought his figure into full relief against the dark background.

'Red Owl is a man of thought. Let us offer the lad to the Star. If she wants him, she will take him; if she wants him not, she will save him. If she saves him, we shall know the Great Spirit no longer permits the sacrifice, and we will worship her no more!'

A grunt of applause greeted Night Cloud's proposal; and he sat down fully determined that, as far as he was concerned, the Morning Star should have every facility for accepting the sacrifice.

'White Hawk,' said Green Oak.

The young chief stood at his father's right hand.

'The wisdom of our fathers has not departed from us. Night Cloud has said what all must agree with. In the past the Star spoke by our fathers, and they worshipped her. We will offer her the sacrifice; and when she speaks through her messenger we will obey!'

'So it shall be!' said Red Owl; and, at a gesture from him, Green Oak raised the buffalo robe at the door, and the company filed out in the reverse order to that in which they had entered.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORSHIP OF THE MORNING STAR.

THE Great Star was thus to be worshipped in the old way. The Pawnees were busy preparing their personal decorations and rehearsing the ritual for the sacrifice. At dawn they would be assembled to greet the brilliant planet as she rose on the horizon. By sunrise all would be over, unless something happened to cheat Queen Venus of her victim.

The victim, all unconscious of his fate, was peaceably asleep on a pile of buffalo rugs in one of the lodges. He was a half-bred Ojibwa boy, whom Spotted Wolf had carried off from a band of Dakotahs in one of his northern journeys. The Dakotahs, or Sioux, to use their French name, were the hereditary enemies of the Pawnees; but the Ojibwas were not. Had Larue been a Dakotah, it is doubtful if any attempt would have been made to persuade Spotted Wolf to forego the sacrifice. Much as Red Owl and the more enlightened leaders of the tribe objected to the barbarous worship of the Star, they would not, under

such circumstances, have dared to interfere. But many had doubts as to the policy of killing the representative of a generally friendly nation, and Red Owl reckoned on

their support to stop the ceremony. Like all reformers, he saw that the only way to succeed was to join hands with every one who had a grievance, public or private, against the opposite side. Spotted Wolf's case was that

the boy had been taken from among the Dakotahs after struggling long and inflicting many wounds, and that, as he fought for the enemies of the Pawnees, he must be *himself* an enemy, and consequently eligible for sacrifice. Besides, on this occasion, the spring equinox of 1840, the Star would rise about an hour before the sun, as required by the ceremony; and as the opportunity of worshipping her, which so seldom occurred, had never been disregarded before, it ought not to be lost when a victim was available.

Spotted Wolf had handed over his prisoner to the safe keeping of the priests, and during the last few months, in accordance with the old custom, they had fed him on the fat of the land, in order that he might be fat. Never had Larue had a happier time than during this captivity. Knowing nothing of his fate, he had acted on the school-book principle of taking any given quantity, and was as fleshy as any goddess of fertility could reasonably require. He had been encouraged in laziness and luxury—why, he could not discover. All he had to do was to eat and sleep. The temptation was irresistible. He ate and slept so as to win Night Cloud's most honourable mention. And he was asleep now—a stout, sturdy, likeable little man of thirteen.

It was four o'clock in the morning. The Pawnees had all retired to their lodges, where they were waiting for the signal. Here and there, through the buffalo doors on the eastern side, came the feeble glimmer of the fire within. In the centre of the village rose the big dome of the sacred lodge, two hundred feet in diameter, looming huge and black in the starlight, as conspicuous as the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Out on the treeless plain in front of the lodge door, and con-

sequently at the eastern end of the street through the village, stood a solitary warrior, intently gazing towards the east, where the stars of the Eagle now lighted the sky.

The group of three, with Altair in the centre, is pointing to the object of his gaze. Where the line made by them cuts the line between earth and air, a bright star appears. The watcher stands ready with his rain-rattle, a hollow wooden egg swung round at the end of a string. The star rises slowly, edging to the south. In a few minutes it is followed by another star, nearly in the same line, and of the same magnitude. They are the horns of Capricorn. As the lower rises from behind the earth, the watcher swings the rain-rattle. Whirrrruh! whirrrruh! It is the signal.

Three men leave the sacred lodge, and pass by the watcher on to the plain. They are elaborately painted and bedecked, but the light is not sufficient for the colours to be seen. One carries a mallet; the centre one carries a small bushy branch; the other carries a strong pointed stake.

A hundred yards or so from the outermost lodges they stop. The bush is laid down, and the stake is driven through the leaves deep into the ground. Then the three return to the village, the man who carried the branch going up the street to the sacred lodge, the others taking their places on each side of the sentinel.

There is silence for a few minutes, then 'Whirrrruh! whirrrruh!' go the three rain-rattles, for the three watchers are all at work.

The doors of all the lodges are looped back, and the Indians crowd the passages, looking like shadows with

the flickering fire behind them. From each lodge issues a small procession of the men and boys, and these groups pass solemnly up the street to the temple.

The last has hardly passed the portal when again the rain-rattles are heard. It is a quarter to five, and the last star of the great Pegasus square has risen on the north-eastern horizon. The air is clear, and at its coldest, just before the dawn.

A horn is heard, and the head of the procession sets out from the huge lodge. Four is the sacred number of the Indians, and four deep come all the men and boys in the village. Slowly they come, with a peculiar hop and shuffle, to a chorus which sounds like,—

'Wah, wah, wah—lee; yah, yah, yah—lee; wolo, yahlo, wo.'

The drums made out of the hollow logs keep time to the fall of the feet, as the chorus grows louder and louder. The grey of the dawn is overspreading the sky, and the fainter stars are vanishing as the head of the column comes on to the plain with its—

'Wah, wah, wah — lee; yah, yah, yah — lee; wolo, yahlo, wo.'

The guard wakes Larue, who rises from his buffalo bed, amazed at the distant hum of the many voices.

'What is the matter, Long Rat?' asks he.

'Come!' says the Rat.

And from the embers falling together a flame shoots up, by which Larue sees that Long Rat has all his feathers on, and that his face is painted in two colours, mixed in buffalo tallow, vermilion red above and yellow from the bloom of the golden-rod below, the line being drawn from ear to ear, passing under the nose.

Long Rat leaves his weapons behind him as he comes out of the lodge, and at the door is joined by Green Oak, who walks on the other side of Larue. Green Oak is painted like the Rat. Larue has a deerskin hunting-shirt and trousers, and moccasins gathered in at the tip of the toe and at the ankle, in that peculiar fashion from which the Ojibwas take their name. As they come to the front of the sacred lodge, the procession seems to be marking time.

The horn is again heard. The fours begin to move, swaying from side to side in the dance. Larue can see that all the men are painted like his companions, and none have their weapons. Soon there is a break in the column. There pass him four of his best friends, although he knows it not, the bulky Silky Bear, the wizened Yellow Fox, Prancing Bull, and White Hawk, who are dancing like the rest, and joining with much unction in the never-ending,—

'Wah, wah, wah — lee; yah, yah, yah — lee; wolo, yahlo, wo.'

Into the gap behind them Larue is led by Green Oak and the Rat, who step back immediately. He is by the side of Spotted Wolf, whose tomahawk is the only weapon he can see. To each side, so as to form the four deep, steps an Indian carrying a bundle of sticks, behind him come Green Oak and the Rat, with a man carrying sticks on either hand, and after them come twelve carriers of faggots. At the end of the men's procession is Red Owl, with Night Cloud and two other priests. As the end passes the lodges, the women and children fall in behind, and the village is deserted, every Indian from it being gathered on the plain.

As the dancing column reaches the stake, it divides, half going to the left, half to the right. Larue knows nothing of this, and when Prancing Bull and Yellow Fox incline off, he sees the stake for the first time. He is about to pass it, when he is pinioned from behind, and in a moment is tied fast. Each half of the procession has curved off, and all are facing the east. As he is tied, he recognises his doom; and as his one long shriek of terror rings out, the Morning Star appears on the horizon.

At the same moment a wild shout of greeting rises from the Pawnees, continued again and again, until it takes the form of a sing-song, and gradually melts into the,—

'Wah, wah, wah—lee; yah, yah, yah—lee; wolo, yahlo, wo,' to which the dance again begins.

Then the dancers work in and out in snake-like movements over the plain. Round and round they go in the growing light,—a restless, tangled chain of life, whose links brighten as the shadows of the night depart. All but the brightest stars have gone, and Venus is in the east, almost alone. Higher and higher she rises as she souths. She will rule the east for fifty-seven minutes—and then?—

Larue is for a few minutes senseless. Slowly he comes back to life, and realizes his position. His Indian training and naturally courageous spirit assert themselves, and he stands upright at the stake, watching every movement, and thinking how he can escape.

And now the figure has changed. One by one the warriors glide to the front, and Larue can see how gaily they have been prepared for the ceremony. White Hawk follows his father in the dance before him. He

has the red and yellow on his face and breast. Round his head and falling down his back to his hips is a splendid wreath of the feathers of the war eagle, placed in double row, overlapping like the ribs of a fan, with the tallest on the top. The base of the head-dress is a strip of bright red cloth, which rests on a frontlet of white fur, with the tails falling down each cheek. Round his neck is a red plaited necklet and two blue cords. His breast is bare. A handsome Indian is White Hawk, with a face like Napoleon's, having only slightly higher cheek-bones; and very little darker is he than the Corsican. For the Red Indians are not all of them red; indeed the Blackfeet and the Mandans are almost white, while the Seminoles are an olive brown. Prancing Bull follows White Hawk. He also is a magnificent specimen of an Indian brave. Like him, he is six feet three in height, broad low shouldered, deep-chested, and as lithe as a snake. Following these come all the warriors of the tribe. Last of them comes Spotted Wolf, arrayed like the rest. As he dances, the faggot-bearers approach and pile their burdens round Larue.

A picturesque scene it is in that early morning, with the bright-coloured, gaily-dressed men, threading in and out in constant movement, singing the strange monotonous greeting, whose volume is every now and then swollen by the voices of the women and children in the outer ring. To the west is the village, with a strip of woodland behind it; to the north and south and east is the rolling prairie, with the river, full to the banks, crossing at an angle. On the north is a distant background of blue knolls, that look like clouds floating low; on the south are a few billowy sand-hills, and beyond them the prairie again.

It is close upon six o'clock. Over Larue's head the kite-like Swan is fading; the gems of Pegasus are few and feeble; Andromeda is a wreck. Capricorn has risen clear of the horizon and vanished as he rose; Aquarius was seen to rise all but the lowermost point, and that was lost like its fellows in the growing light. Venus alone—Phosphorus, Lucifer, the light-bringer, Pawnee Goddess of Fertility—for a brief space has the kingdom of the east to herself, and is veiling in the yellowing haze.

And now the chant is given in quicker time; and in a new combination of the dance an inner ring is for a moment formed of the twelve principal chiefs. The ring advances towards the prisoner, and retires and widens. Into the gaps so made glide a dozen torch-bearers, fantastically striped, and holding their flaming brands high overhead. The ring of flame closes round Larue. Night Cloud steps behind the torch ring to the north hand of the victim, Spotted Wolf comes to the south. The chorus swells louder and faster. The torches bow inwards to the faggots.

'Wah, wah, wah—lee; yah, yah—'

But what is this low growl that fills the air?

Above the din is heard a tumult in the west. There is a sound as of galloping horses. The women and children give way; the outer ring of dancers breaks; and full rush at the stake rides White Hawk, with a led horse by his side. He has been to the village, and armed himself. He has his gorgeously-painted shield, his lance bound with plaited red and blue; his tomahawk is in his belt, his rifle at his back, his knife in his hand. His eagle wreath bends low and floats behind with the speed at which he comes.

All is confusion; the interruption is so unexpected, and few know what it means. Silky Bear and Prancing Bull dash from the inner circle and leap against the nearest torch-bearers. Green Oak, Silky Bear's neighbour, reels against Night Cloud in apparent alarm. Spotted Wolf aims his tomahawk at Larue, but just as it leaves his hand Yellow Fox knocks the handle in pointing to the east, where the first ray of sunrise shoots aloft. The weapon misses its mark and spins harmlessly past. The white horses rear at the fire. White Hawk is down, and in a moment has kicked aside the blazing sticks and cut the prisoner free.

'Mount!' he says, giving the fat Larue a leg up on to the led horse. To the other he springs, and before the astonished crowd can close in the horses are off like the wind towards the village.

Spotted Wolf is furious. Night Cloud grinds his teeth and smiles bitterly as Red Owl points to the rising sun and says in a loud, measured voice of authority that is heard above the roar of disappointment,—

'The Star has gone! White Hawk was her messenger!'

CHAPTER III.

A HERO AND A TRAITOR.

For an hour Larue and his rescuer pressed on without a word. Through the village they swept, past the sacred lodge, into and through the strip of woodland, out on to the prairie again, then on for five miles of open, and again into a woodland strip. White Hawk looked round once or twice, but there was no sign of pursuit.

Through the wood ran a feeder of the shallow river; into it they splashed. It was more of a swamp than a stream, and the water was hardly above the horses' fetlocks. Out on to the coarse grass land lay the way, still to the west; then on to another shallow river, nearly a quarter of a mile broad, in the centre of which the horses were slowed and turned to the north. Up the hard sandy bed of this stream White Hawk rode at a walking pace, with Larue following in his footsteps. For about three miles he kept to the main stream, taking no heed of several tributaries he passed to the left. At last he came to a broader one than the rest, and, turning to the west, continued his walk up it. This led them

through a thick wood with the branches meeting here and there above them. The ground rose, the banks deepened, and White Hawk left the water and kept on under the cedar trees till he reached the top of the ridge. Then he dismounted.

'No farther,' said he. 'Now, you go alone.'

'Alone?' asked Larue.

'Yes. I go back. You go to your people.'

'It is a long journey.'

'That is not my fault. Get down and rest.'

'Why was I to be killed?'

'As an offering to the Great Star. It is our worship.'

'Then they will pursue?'

'Perhaps, but they need not find you.'

'They will kill you.'

'No,' said White Hawk proudly. 'They dare not. I am the son of Red Owl and the messenger of the Star. Night Cloud forgot who I was. He has remembered. He will do nothing. I shall have to reckon with Spotted Wolf, and he is of no account.'

White Hawk sat down on a fallen tree and looked out across the plain to the north-west.

'Were you ever the Star's messenger before?' asked the half-breed.

'No. But my father in the past came from the stars.'

'Did he? How was that? Tell me'

'You are but a child.'

'I have been through the fire!'

'True. It is well. I will tell you. Listen to the story of the great White Hawk; and then you must go. Many, many moons ago there was a young hunter of the Pawnees who found a strange thing on the prairie. It

was a circle in the grass, smooth and beaten as if it had been the floor of a lodge. And yet it was alone, and there were no paths to it. The centre was green, and the ring was broad and brown where the grass was beaten down. It was so strange to him that he waited to watch it, and he lay down in the grass to see if anything came to it. As he watched, he heard a sound as of distant music, and looking upwards into the sky he saw a little cloud. The cloud grew larger as the music grew louder. The cloud as it came nearer took the shape of a basket of osiers, and in it were twelve beautiful maidens, each with a drum to which she sang. The basket dropped into the centre of the ring, and the maidens got out and began to dance, striking a shining ball as they did so. The youngest of the maidens was very beautiful in the eyes of the hunter. And he loved her, and rushed to seize her. But he could not, for the girls all ran back into the basket and went back again into the sky. The hunter found his way to his lodge, but the vision haunted him, and he could do nothing. So he went back to watch the wonderful ring. Again he saw the basket descend, and again the girls got out and danced to the shining ball. Then the hunter changed himself into an opossum, hoping to get near to his beloved. But the elder sister saw the opossum and shrieked, and they all fled to the basket and rose into the sky. The hunter waited all day and all night, but the girls did not come back. Next day he saw the little cloud again, and as it came nearer he changed himself into a mouse and hid himself in the stump of a tree. The basket came to the ground, and the maidens danced; and one noticed the stump and gave it a kick, and many mice ran out, and the girls pursued them and

tried to kill them. And they killed them all but one, and he was chased by the youngest maiden, and led her from the ring. Soon she came near, and was going to strike him, when the mouse turned and became the hunter, who clasped her in his arms. The eleven sisters shrieked, and jumped into the basket and rose into the sky. But the hunter took home the daughter of the stars. And she grieved much, and would not speak to him. But he was kind to her, and watched over her, and after long waiting she consented to be his bride. And she was a good wife to him, and he was a good husband to her. And then a boy was born to him. And after the boy was born the mother longed to return to the stars. And she took osiers and made a basket. And when the basket was finished she took the child in her arms and sat within it, and it flew upwards into the sky. For the hunter came home too late, and only saw it as it left the earth. And he sorrowed much Then the boy grew up with the starfolk, and was happy; but when he got big he craved to see his father. And his mother also thought of him she had left. And the boy told his grandfather in the stars, and the grandfather said, "Go down," to his daughter; "bring your husband up to me, and let him bring with him a part of each animal he kills, so that we may know them and speak about them." And the hunter came to watch the ring and mourn for his wife and son, and he saw the cloud, and the cloud became the basket, and in the basket were those he longed for. And the daughter of the stars gave him her father's message, and he consented. And he went hunting, and of each sort of animal he killed he kept a specimen. And then the husband and wife and child got into the basket in

the middle of the ring and rose to the stars. And the chief was pleased to see his son-in-law, and thanked him for his present. Then he called together his people, and told them to choose each a specimen from what the hunter had brought. And some chose the tails, and some chose the claws, and some chose the beaks, and some chose the wings. And a wonderful thing happened. For all the people were changed. Those that chose tails or claws became beasts, and those that chose beaks and wings became birds. But the hunter took the white hawk's feather, and he and his wife and child floated down to the earth. And the hunter was the great chief White Hawk, and,' said the Pawnee as he rose and drew himself up to his full height in the full blaze of the morning sun, 'they say I am very like him!'

'And now,' continued the distant descendant of the king of the starfolk, 'you must go. Here is food for you when you can get no other.'

The food did not look very inviting. It was a few strips of dried fat and lean deer flesh, to be eaten alternately, uncooked when fire was not obtainable.

'Here is a knife. Take the bow and arrows that are strapped on your horse. You will not starve. Go, and do not come back.'

'Where am I to go?'

'To your people.'

'That is to the north-west. But Spotted Wolf will follow me over the prairie.'

'Then go the straight way into the mountains, through the land of fire, where the rivers boil, and the trees are turned to stone. There Spotted Wolf dare not follow.

He would think of his ancestors. He did not come from the stars.'

'But can I get through? Shall I not perish?'

'There is nothing I should fear. But you are different.'

And without another word White Hawk sprang to his horse and was off like a shot.

Larue was so surprised that he did not even thank him and say farewell. Before he realized that he had gone, the Pawnee was fifty yards away, bending low over his white horse's neck, tearing under the trees like mad. For a moment as he raced across a narrow gap the sun streamed down on the powerful figure and lighted up the brilliantly-coloured shield and lance and the rifle and the eagle plume. And then the shadow fell on him, and he was gone.

It did not take long for the Ojibwa to remember that there was at least quite as much need for him to be in a hurry as for the Pawnee, and in a very few minutes he was in full flight towards the western hills. All that day he kept on at a steady pace across the plains; and at nightfall he walked his horse for a short distance up one of the streams, and then halted in a patch of woodland much the same as that in which he had parted from his rescuer. He had no sooner laid himself down than he fell asleep, and dreamt the day's doings over again.

And now, who was this half-bred Indian that had been fattened for the sacrifice and turned adrift in the wilderness? How came he by so strange a name as Larue, when the sounds of L and R are foreign to the Ojibwa tongue? Why is he on his way to the west, to the land of the Shoshonehs and Arrapahoes, the Blackfeet, the Bannacks, and the Crows, instead of through the Dakotah land to the usual hunting-grounds of the Ojibwas?

For his name he was indebted to his father. In 1823 Pierre Larue was a clerk in a store at St. Louis, and intending to marry his master's daughter. His master, however, disapproved of his addresses and dispensed with his services. To earn a livelihood Pierre started as an Indian trader or travelling pedlar, a line of business in which, though dangers were great, profits were large.

No class of men did more harm in America than these petty traders who brought into the woods the few common articles the Indians required and took away in their horses' packs peltry saleable at a profit of quite a thousand per cent. They seemed to be specially sent to impoverish and destroy. They did not only deal in dry goods. 'The savage stands no chance against the white man'—particularly when the white man trades in the spirit that is popular! With the aid of a cask of whisky and a few carving-knives, it is astonishing how many difficulties as to heirship and possession were overcome! Larue was not a scrupulous man. His object was to make money, and he made it.

His first trip led him among the Cherokees, who in 1818 had emigrated from Georgia to the western bank of the Mississippi. It was a modified success. The Cherokees are the keenest bargainers of the Indian nations. Alone of the American peoples they could count up to a million, so that they were quite able to put two and two together without risk of error. Pierre found it difficult to puzzle his customers by the tricks of the trade that had been taught him; and, half willingly, adopted honesty as his best policy.

That he did this was in a great measure due to the influence obtained over him by an Indian with whom he

met on the first day of his arrival in the first Cherokee village. This Indian was the one great genius of his race, the famous Sequoyah, who had just come from Will's Valley to teach his western cousins to read and write in the alphabet of his own invention. A friendship sprang up between the dissimilar men. Sequoyah was pleased to meet with one who could appreciate his ingenuity and take an interest in the steps by which success had been obtained; and seeing that Pierre was talented above the average, and likely to go astray against his will, chiefly for the sake of doing as others did, he made it his business to help him in honest dealing.

During 1823 and the two following years, Pierre Larue traded among the Cherokees, and did well. Each time he returned to St. Louis he saw the girl he desired to marry, and each time he was told that unless he made more money the marriage was impossible. At last he let his Cherokee friend into his secret, and the result was a quarrel.

It was the day before his return in 1825. He had told his story, and Sequoyah with his dark luminous eyes searched as it were into his very heart to read his hidden meaning.

'Well?' said Larue, quailing at the long earnest look.

'Give her up,' said Sequoyah. 'She will do you no good. She tempts you. You do not know yourself. You may yield in a time of weakness, and to get money do that for which you will be ashamed.'

'That is complimentary.'

'It is true,' said Sequoyah. 'I know you. You might be a good man; you may be a very bad one.'

'Just look here'—said Larue, getting angry.

A whiff from Sequoyah's pipe rose into his face as the Cherokee interrupted him.

'I mean it as a friend. Be not angry. I have read your character. I say no more. But—remember. Give her up!'

Pierre was indignant, and rose and left the hut. Early next morning he returned to St. Louis, heavily laden with the result of his bartering. Again he was greeted with the cry for more.

More? But more was not to be obtained by trading with the Cherokees. How was he to make more? By going further afield. And further afield next year he went. On his way north he met with a fellow trader, who 'put him up to a thing or two'—with results.

On the upper waters of the Missouri he found himself among the Ojibwas. He made friends with them. He even offered to marry one of the Indian girls, as many other traders and trappers had done. The marriage took place. Helped by his wife's relatives, his stock of furs grew rapidly—as he had expected it would. He had, in short, married the girl for what he had reckoned to be her commercial value. In 1827 Brownbloom bore him a son—the Larue we left dreaming of the worship of the Morning Star.

For three years did Pierre Larue live among the Ojibwas and grow wealthy; and then the time came for him to complete his plan. He told his wife he must go to St. Louis and take his furs to market. Brownbloom told her uncle, who was the chief josakeed or medicine man of the tribe, and rejoiced in the name of Meta Koosega, which being translated means no more and no less than Pure Tobacco! The josakeed was only a conventional

wise man, but he was wide awake enough to see through the trader's plot. He also was shrewd enough to know that nothing could be done except to shoot the trader, and for that Brownbloom would never forgive him. So the oracular reply was, 'You must obey your husband,—but load not his canoe too heavily.'

So the canoe was loaded with the choicest skins and all made ready for the journey. Fearing much that she would never see her husband again, she embraced him and bade him good-bye. He stepped into the canoe, and she waited by the riverside with her child.

'Kiss me Johnny,' said Pierre.

The mother held the boy, and his father stood there in the canoe. Then a thought of good, or evil, flashed through his mind.

'I will take the boy!'

And the canoe shot out into midstream.

'Give me back my child,' shrieked the mother.

'I will look after him,' was the answering shout as the canoe leapt along.

'Come back! Come back!'

And Brownbloom ran by the riverside.

'Give me my child!'

But the only answer was the swifter paddling of the canoe.

For an hour or more the poor woman ran after the scoundrel, who had begun to curse her and threaten her life. At last she slipped and fell exhausted; and father and child swept on down the stream.

They reached St. Louis in safety, and Pierre Larue married the girl for whom he had disgraced himself. 'To him that hath shall be given—and the sooner the better,'

said her father, and he added dollar for dollar to the amount shown him by Larue. When he heard how the

money had been obtained, he expressed himself as being quite proud of a son-in-law who could thus 'outwit the

thieving redskins. And as to the boy, well, of course, you will bring him up, and turn him adrift when he begins to give trouble.' A highly respectable family was that of which Pierre Larue had become a member!

Their respectability was not to go unshocked. Three months after the marriage there walked into the pleasant little sitting-room of the house she had done so much to furnish no other than Brownbloom! She had tracked her husband back, and come all alone to claim her son. Pierre refused to give up the boy, ordered her out of the house, and at last threw her out. Little did he know the Ojibwa woman. Two nights afterwards the house was broken into, and the child stolen. Brownbloom would not 'leave her boy to be the toy of the paleface.' She fled with him in her arms away to the north to her people. With them he lived for the next eleven years. The old josakeed had looked after him and practically adopted him, which, however, meant little, as property among the Indians is dealt with through the mother, and not through the father. When the branch of the Ojibwas moved further west, Larue, as he was called, went with them, and he was on a journey with his uncle through the Dakotah country when he was captured by Spotted Wolf a few months before the sacrifice to the Morning Star.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

'WAL?'

Larue was asleep, and the sun had been up for some time.

The question, if question it could be called, did not wake him. It was repeated in a louder tone.

'Wal? I say!'

The speaker reached out his hand and touched the sleeper. Larue was up in an instant.

'You are mighty well fed for such a tawny skin, and you are spry enough although you are fat! Who are you? What's your game here?'

'What do you want with me? Who are you?' asked Larue.

'Wal, you might be a bit more civil, my boy! Who am I? That's good. Wal, I am Franklin Salter, born when I was a boy in the woods of Vermont, and looking after the varmint in these woods ever since I have been a man, which is a good time since, I reckon. And now, young Ojib, or semi-Jib, or semi-demi-Jib, or whatever you are, just speak up and give a civil answer to a civil question. What is your name? You needn't look so sulky. Don't you think eight o'clock is about time for a boy to arise in the morning?'

'I am on a journey.'

'Then you are a Jib Indian! I thought you were from the look of your toes, but you've got a face on you like—like—for all the world like that pedlar chap that couldn't cheat the Cherokees!'

'My name is Larue.'

'And so was his.'

'I am on a journey'—

'In a hurry somelike? Eh?

'How do you know that?'

'It must be true. I read it in print. Your horse was the printer. His hoof makes a bold mark on a wet soil.'

'I am going to the north, to the land of my fathers.'

'To the land of your mothers, you mean! Where do you come from? Just tell the truth by way of variety.'

'I always tell the truth.'

'Oh, do you? What! Call yourself Larue? Got a face like your namesake? Got a squaw for your mother? It is the truth you always speak, is it? Wal! suppose

you try a change and tell me the other thing. Let me get at the facts.'

'I was a prisoner among the Pawnees. I was tied to a stake to be burnt, and White Hawk saved me.'

'What! Prisoner? tied to a stake, and some one saved you? Here! come along here! You needn't be afraid. Square it is!'

And Mr. Salter led the way for about thirty yards to the clearing where he had camped. His horse was packed and ready to start, but he handed out to the boy a good slice of deer flesh and told him to eat.

'You are welcome to it as if it was your own,' he said. 'I have a fellow-feeling for you. I was once a prisoner. I was tied to a stake to be burnt But I saved myself. Anyhow, I have always told the truth since, and I'll give you credit for doing the same.'

'Were you sacrificed to the Morning Star?'

'I'm not sure I fancy mine was to the sun, or something. Anyhow, it was an unpleasant experience. You seem to have got away with your clothes on. I didn't'

'How was that?'

'How was it! Wal! Go and take a drink; it'll do you good; and then come back and tell me how yours was, and I'll tell you how mine was.'

Larue, having taken his drink, proceeded to relate what had happened the morning before, and enlarged on the gallantry of White Hawk's rescue.

'Wal!' said Salter; 'that is a queer story; never thought Pawnees would try that game. Perhaps the rescue was part of the sacrifice, eh?'

'No'

'No? Then it's funny. The Pawnees are not at all

bad fellows as a rule. I wonder there weren't more White Hawks amongst them.'

'There were some others that helped.'

'Oh, then I see! There won't be many after you. Spotted Wolf may track you.'

'That is why I am going through the fire country.'

'Why so?'

'White Hawk said Spotted Wolf dared not follow me there, because it would remind him of his ancestors.'

'Oh! Ah! Ha, ha, ha! Geewhillikins, that's a joke! Not bad! not bad! But here's a queer thing! When I spoilt my sacrifice I got away through the fire land.'

'Did you, though?'

'That I did.'

'And is it all on fire?'

'No, it isn't all on fire, but there are signs enough of fire. There are fountains of steam, roaring and jumping away half a mile high, and the water in the pools is on the boil, spitting and bubbling as if it was in a camp kettle at supper-time, and great splutters of hot mud go skyrocketing aloft as if they had been blown up with powder. It is a wonderful place. There is one corner of it where everything is turned to stone.'

'Hot stone?'

'Hot stone! No, of course not; cold stone; at least, I suppose so. Anyhow, there are all the sage bushes done in stone; all the leaves and branches looking just natural like, and yet all turned to rock. And under the bushes you see the rabbits and sage hens just as if they were all-alive-oh, but all stone. And there are stone trees with stone fruit—ahem—proper stone fruit with stone

flesh and stone stones, and when the trees fall, and you can look at their insides, they are full of sham diamonds and rubies and emeralds, and—but what is the use of my talking like this? You don't understand half of it.'

'Is it true?'

'Wal, now, look here! Didn't I tell you I always spoke the truth? You believe me, and I'll believe you. When I took a new spell of life I reformed. So do you. It's all true that I have told you. When you get to the Wonderland, you'll see. I'm going there now. I have got my traps cached up there, for it's a capital country, and not over-crowded. It is too hot for most chaps. It reminds them of their ancestors! Ha, ha, ha!'

'Do you go to the land of fire?'

'Yes, every year; and I'm on my trip now. Two years ago there was an Indian meeting there, and I saw among the chiefs a Pawnee on a white horse, who must have been your White Hawk. The same day I found some writing on a rock, and that old Cherokee, Sequoyah, who takes an interest in such things, is going to have a look, and there's one of your Jib friends, who has got the unearthly name of Pure Tobacco'—

'Meta Koosega!'

'Something like that. Do you know him?'

'He is my uncle. I want to find him.'

'Then come along with me. The land of fire is a sacred place among you Jibs, as you know, and Pure Tobacco will be there to get a little—ahem—inspiration, and instruct Sequoyah in the mysteries. I fancy, though, the instruction will be on the other side, though I wouldn't be uncivil to your uncle.'

'I will go with you. But how about your sacrifice?'

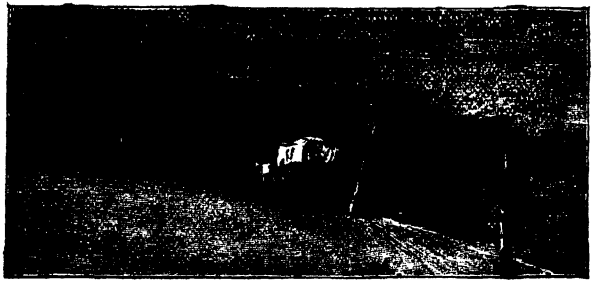
'Ah, there, we were forgetting that. Wal, as you can understand my lingo like a Christian, I'll tell you. It was this way I was out with a friend of mine trapping among the forks of the Missouri, when early one morning, who should attack us but half a hundred Blackfeet. Poor old Sam was settled right out, shot through the head, and I was marched off to the west, to the Blackfeet villages. There I was kept for a week or two, though I wasn't fattened up as you seem to have been. Then one morning after breakfast the beggars came dancing about in all their finery, and danced me off to a stake stuck in the ground, just as they did you. But before they got me there they knocked me down and stripped me, and tied me to the stick stark naked. And then they went that mad that they didn't seem to know what to be up to. They jumped, and screamed, and yelled, round and round in what might have been a very pretty worship if I had understood it, but it seemed to me very like tom-foolery. There was too much go in the mummery to be pleasant. I did feel skeered to see these ugly wretches, all daub and grease, working themselves up into such a passion. Wal, this wild game went on for some hours. And then they brought the bushes and piled them up round my knees. And then they set them alight, but the fire didn't spring up as fast as they hoped. But it smoked and nearly choked me. As soon as the light was put to it, the raving madmen thought they would frighten me to death before I was burnt, and whit! whit! came the tomahawks past my ears, and there was some firing of guns and I heard the bullets pinging away. I don't know whether it was a bullet or a tomahawk, but some fellow made a bad shot evidently,

for I felt the rope was cut that bound my wrists to the stick, and somehow I wriggled free just as I was getting scorched. And I jumped clean at the beggars out of the smoke and ran for my life. As I passed through the ring they tried to clutch me, but I was like an eel; I had nothing on, and they had nothing to catch hold of. Some of them fired, but missed, and others came in chase. I did run, I tell you! You can get along when you are in a state of nature! Nothing comes amiss. So I cut on like a lunatic, straight as an arrow, running, jumping, swimming, land or water just as it came. At first the pack made a great row behind, but the dogs had been dancing too long to stay well, and the pursuers tailed off and quieted down entirely. I kept on, though, not caring for anything but to give it the go-by, when all at once I found a canyon running crossways in front of me. I didn't stop, couldn't stop, but slipped over the brink. What with running, tumbling, jumping, and sliding, I somehow reached the bottom, leaving a lot of my bark on the walls. I dashed through the river and began to climb the other side. I dragged myself up a bit, and was just beginning to feel a little more sensible when my heart went lumpety, lumpety, lumpety. I thought to myself, "I have had enough; I'll sit down." And I did, no thanks to me, though. For I don't remember sitting down. All I remember is waking next day about this time, and finding myself on a ledge in the canyon cliff, with every joint in my body as stiff as if it had been glued. Wal, I got aloft, and hard work it was, and I made a meal on thistle roots I pulled. And all that day I kept away east. Next morning when I awoke, there were six Bannack Indians looking at me. Good fellows

they were, and they gave me something to eat and lent me a shirt and things. And I kept with the Bannacks for more than a year, till I had worked out a new outfit and got gun and traps again. There's not a Bannack now that I don't know and wouldn't help me if he found me in a fix The fire land, Yellowstone country, or whatever you call it, is part of the Bannacks' range, and the fellows that found me were on their way there. So I went with them direct. And that was the first time I saw these wonders. And they are wonders! It is not a nice place for an uneasy conscience, I can tell you. But when you have been dead, as I felt I was when the Blackfeet lit the fire, and alive again, as I felt I was when I set eyes on the Bannacks, you start fresh, and if you don't spoil your second chance you need fear nothing. I have got a shack in the thick of the squirts and pools,—at least close handy,—and I look on and wonder how such awful strength does so little harm, but some chaps I know have been there once and cleared out at first sight with their hair white as snow. And sarve them right!'

And Mr. Franklin Salter was so pleased with his peroration that he echoed it slowly and deliberately,—

'Sarve—them—right!'



CHAPTER V.

THE CAMP IN HOODOOLAND.

LARUE and his lanky friend were soon on the move.

'Early off and early win,' said that eccentric individual. 'Come along, young Jib, and don't cry Wolf! till you see him.'

Salter had taken quite a fancy to the lad, and his interest in him grew as he gradually heard his history. His comments were not always compliments, but they were remarkable pithy.

'You've got your father's face, Larue, but try and take after your mother. A good red is better than a bad

white, but it's much rarer—at least, it is the fashion to say so. I always follow the fashion; I look like a fashionable man. But of course a poor little mixture like you don't know what a fashionable man is. Why, when I was your age away east, I used to study the dandy. I watched him and I read about him. Yes, read about him. Suppose you are a know-nothing, and can't read? Unless, maybe, you know old Sequoyah's new-fangled A B C. Eh? not know your A B C? What is the use of your uncle? Is Pure Tobacco all smoke?' And the trapper indulged in a lengthy chuckle, ending in a 'Geehup, Jerushah' to his horse, which had the effect of breaking the pace into a trot.

The road lay almost due west, so as to strike the old emigrant trail on the North Fork of the Platte, where Fort Laramie now stands. Then it bore north-west for some seventy miles, where Salter left the trail and re-crossed the river. From this point, now marked on the map as Fort Fetterman, he steered a more westerly course, leaving Rattlesnake Mountain to the left, wading Big Powder River, and passing the southern spur of the Bighorn Mountains, through No Water Creek, and so on past the Bighorn and over the Grey Bull. It was a long ride, and when they camped on the Grey Bull, thirteen days had passed since they first had met. They were now well up among the Rockies, and hemmed in by the mountain barriers through which they were to break by passes only known to few.

Salter's road—it has since been called after him—was easy enough to those who knew it, but it was not an easy road to know. The track was of the faintest; every mile or two it seemed as though it would give out altogether

against some unclimbable cliff, when suddenly it would run off at an incline, outflank the obstacle, and yield a possible way for an hour or more. Up and down it went, generally up, and every camp was higher than the last. As it crept upwards the difficulties increased, but the progress was steady and uninterrupted. Leaving Cedar Mountain to the left, Larue and his philosophic friend struck northwards from the Grey Bull into Hoodooland, and there, amid the marvellous, their camp was pitched on the 11th April 1840.

There is no need to dwell on the familiar details of the three weeks' journey. Camps were formed, or rather arranged, at convenient intervals. Everything went smoothly. Game was plentiful. Five herds of buffalo yielded each a victim. There was no need to have recourse to the slips of fat and lean so thoughtfully given by the Pawnee. Every meal was shot as wanted. There were no incidents of interest; nothing happened but the ordinary everyday experiences of travel in the wild west with which we are all familiar.

There were no signs of Spotted Wolf, and the trapper had come to the conclusion that he would not follow after the first day.

'No,' said he to Larue; 'you can take it easy now. The Wolf has all his work to do to settle with White Hawk. If he has got the best of it, he may be waiting for you in your own country. But I take it, he wouldn't think it worth his while. I don't see what he has to find fault with in your behaviour. It was White Hawk and his friends that did the trick, and he ought to square up to them. But I fancy the other Pawnees would be too much for him. If Night Cloud hears you have gone to

the Wonderland, you can lay your best lacehole he'll put a stopper on Spotted Wolf. Of that be sure. Those medicine men don't care about others knowing as much as themselves. The secret of the whole show is how you look at things, and the spirit in which you approach them. Why, when the moon gets up, all these things here round about, that you are looking at with as much sense as a pig, will seem alive, my boy! and maybe they'll come to life sooner. Fact! It is curious what the eye sees when it is told what to look for.'

And then, suddenly changing his tone, and gazing intently into space as he pointed to the neighbouring mountain side, he said with great solemnity,—

'You thought those were all rocks! You will be skeery all night, I guess, fancying they are all on the nod at you! Look! there's that fellow on the move now! You thought that was only a lump of stone; but look now! See! see his head! that bear—there!'

Larue looked round leisurely, and jumped up in amazement. Salter was pointing to a brown mass standing out from the wall of the cliff. It was merely a pillar weathered out from the rock, but to the boy's eyes it was unmistakeably a bear.

'It moves!' whispered he, cowering back.

'Ay, it moves! or you move! But it has been there too long to go far.'

'But it is alive!'

'Eh? and I suppose that eagle is alive, lower down. Look! See him wave his wings! See the feathers flutter as they move!'

The boy looked from the bear to the bird. To him it certainly seemed as though the wings waved and the feathers fluttered, and as his eyes wandered down the valley, it became full of living creatures. Salter's pretended earnestness had called them into being. The boy's eyes had learned their lesson. Before the old man spoke the rocks in the valley had been to Larue what they would be to many boys, mere rocks hardly worth looking at; now they were breathing, thinking animals, gathered as for another naming, panting in the evening stillness, eager for the word to go.

It was indeed a wonderful scene now that the trapper had revealed it. From the camp under the firs Larue looked out into the gathering night. Along the face of the Goblin Mountain the ice in distant ages had smoothed a wilderness of rugged breccia, and this had been denuded again in one huge scar for a thousand feet or more from the summit. The unequal hardness of the rock had given the strangest diversity to the work of the weather. For years the frost and storm had been destroying and

degrading, slowly the harder beds, swiftly the softer beds, cutting down deep channels, cleaving lofty walls, following the lines of joint and bedding, slicing the ramparts into pillars, carving the pillars into every shape in the maddest freaks of erosion. Every form of the fantastic was there: the symmetrical was unknown; birds, beasts, and reptiles had been sculptured by the score; it was an animal statue gallery. Pillars, pyramids, spheres, and obelisks all took a limb-like form. One rectangular rock there was from which rose a tall straight shaft of stone, two-thirds of the way up which crept a gigantic beaver. Near it was a huge mushroom with a wolverene asleep on the summit. Round every corner peered big elk and antelope and moose and bighorn. It seemed the great House of Representatives of the fauna of the Rockies. All the bears were there and recognisable—grizzlies and cinnamons, smuts and blacks, and silkies and silvers. Right in front of where stood Larue was an apparently advancing cougar. Not far off was a pack of wolves, and, dotted about on the flank of the hill were foxes, red and black and grey, badgers and otters, beavers and minxes, martens and sables, ermines and rabbits, hares and moles; and terrible mice and rats, porcupines and rock dogs, squirrels, skunks, and chipmunks; and over all, with the old cunning look in his eyes, his long nose in the air and his head cocked knowingly on one side, was the ever artful coyote.

And though the shades of night were veiling them, these sculptured stones that so strangely crowded the mountain side were still gorgeous in their colouring. For the rock is no thick mass of monochrome, but gay with every tint an autumn sunset yields—every brown from fawn to umber, every blue from turquoise to indigo, every

yellow from sulphur to sienna, every green from beryl to chrome, every red from scarlet to crimson, every purple from lilac to plum, every tint from light to blackness through every step of the scale. And all these colours showed out in lines and veins and dots and patches, softly and yet more softly melting into each other as they faded into half tints in the milky purple haze in which the night was hiding them.

'Look! look! they are all alive!'

'No, no, my boy; they are not what I call living.'

'But look! the small ones on the top of the cliff! they are moving! see!'

'Where? Eh! What! Wal! Bless the boy!' said the old man, rubbing his eyes. 'Has he charmed me? They move! They are bighorn! But they are pigmy bighorn by the side of that fellow they are coming to. He doesn't move! Nothing else moves to my eyesight! What can it mean? They are coming closer to the big fellow. Why, he would make a dozen of them. Oh, I see! they are real bighorn. They are alive. How dead those living things have made the others look! Look at the lambs with them!'

The small herd of bighorn glided slowly along the brink of the cliff in dark profile against the sky.

'Look, there is a bird rising!' said the boy.

'Wal, I never! So there is. It is a hawk. No. It is an eagle, by all that's wonderful! He is in a hurry.'

The eagle had risen from the rocks lower down the valley, and was rising swiftly in the air. Higher and higher he went, until, diminished almost to a dot, he stopped motionless. Then, quick almost as the lightning flash, he swooped on to the bighorn, and rose with a lamb

in his talons. A few leisurely flaps of his wings took him over the valley, and then he dropped the lamb, which fell to be crushed to death on one of the strangest of the rock sculptures a thousand feet below. It was a large altar, over a hundred feet in height, rising from a pyramid, and bearing on its top the figure of a victim laid on the brushwood ready for the sacrifice. Round it the larger animals seemed to be chiefly collected, and to it the eyes of nearly all the images seemed to be turned.

The lamb fell on the altar, and the eagle flew down to enjoy the evening meal he had so quickly won, and for which he had probably waited long. But no sooner had the bird alighted than he rose again, and without the lamb.

'What does that mean?' asked the trapper. 'There is something where that lamb fell that could dispute the prize with the eagle. Grizzly? Couldn't get up there. Cougar? Couldn't get there Bird? He would have flown up when the lamb fell. Man? It must be a man. Nothing but a man could climb there; nothing but a man below would frighten the eagle.'

Then to himself he muttered, 'Wonder if it's that rascal Spotted Wolf!'

The altar was full in view, and their fire must be full in view from the altar.

'Wal, it's awkward!' continued Salter; 'but I don't believe it can be that artful skunk. We shall have to keep an eye open all night whether or no, unless'—

'Look! there is a man alive!' whispered Larue. And from behind the giant altar stepped an Indian, appearing but a dwarf beside the vast pile of rock. Alone he came down the mountain side, the seemingly living things all

turning to stone and looking dead as he passed them. Soon he reached a more open space, where he could be seen more clearly. Hitherto he had been recognisable only as an Indian. Now he could almost be identified.

'It is not Spotted Wolf,' said Larue.

'No. He isn't a Pawnee,' said Salter.

The Indian disappeared behind a rounded pedestal from the flat slab on the top of which a bird seemed ready to spring. A few minutes passed. Had he stolen away? No. From amid a group of grizzlies, seated on their haunches, he jumped on to a strip of green.

'Meta Koosega!' almost shrieked Larue, setting off towards him at a run.

'Wal, of all the queer places to find Pure Tobacco! What a gay time of it the old boy must have been having! I wonder if he's alone! Come here in search of wisdom, I guess. Wonder if he's discovered the difference between what he sees and what he thinks he sees? I ought to have caught him first, and called the boy out of a stone. That would have put his conjuring into the shade a bit, I fancy.'

And Salter calmly followed Larue towards the josakeed.

The Indian at first looked alarmed at seeing Larue tearing up the hill towards him. Soon, however, he recognised that it was no phantom from among the stones, but his living nephew thus strangely returned to him in the most unlooked-for place. He hurried to meet him, but his welcome was not a particularly cordial one, even for an Ojibwa.

'The old man will have to take that boy as an apprentice to the medicine business. He can't help himself now he has found him here, and the boy will know too

much—more than is good for him if he hasn't got more ballast than his father had.'

And the trapper marched up to the stately chief and shook him by the hand.

'Wal, Old Whiff! How do? or rayther, Hoo doo? But this location is no joke. Glad to see you. What do you think of my medicine, that brought your nephew to life in Hoodooland? Astonishing, isn't it?'

'It is,' said the Ojibwa; 'but among the wise there are ways that are known.'

'That's so. They know the tricks of the trade, eh? Wal, never mind! I am real glad to meet you, though. I thought you would be up by the canyon.'

'I came here alone to search.'

'For wisdom?' asked the trapper.

'No. For that;' and Pure Tobacco put something heavy into his hand.

'Gold!' said Salter.

'Gold,' said the Indian.

'Is there much of this about?'

'No. I cannot find any more.'

'How long have you been looking?'

'All day.'

'Oh, is that all? I thought you had been prowling about for a week. Pretty good day's work, isn't it?'

'Good enough for me.'

'We'll have another day of it to-morrow?'

'No. We will go. Sequoyah is at the hut.'

'Oh, all right! Then we'll be off, and come back soon. Better get over to our camp; it isn't so tombstone-looking as where you came from.'

'I was not going to camp there.'

'I thought you had chosen the altar as a proper place for a josakeed.'

'No. Yours is the proper place. It does not look like an altar except from where you stood.'

'Merely a lump of stone, eh? Well, it does all depend on the point of view.'

The three were soon seated at supper by the camp fire. Meta Koosega listened to all his nephew had to tell him of his strange escape. When Larue had finished he was gratified by his uncle remarking emphatically, 'Good boy!'

'Yes,' said Salter, 'I think he is. You never told me you knew his father, though, and I was quite upset when he said you were his uncle.'

'There are some things that are not good to talk of.'

'Yes; I understand. We'll have a quiet chat to ourselves some day. How came you to turn gold-hunter?'

'We will talk about it to ourselves.'

'Brayvo! Score one!' said the trapper, throwing a stick on the fire. 'Are there any strangers about?'

'No. We are alone in the valley. The wise come, and the wise stay away.'

'If you could talk English a little better, you'd say the wise come, and the otherwise stay away.'

'That is what I meant,' said the Ojibwa, with a good-humoured grin.

A kindly-looking man was the josakeed, on whom the dignity of his calling did not sit too easily. In face he was very unlike the typical Indian, being probably of mixed descent, like so many of the chief men of the northern tribes. To hint such a thing would have been a mortal insult, but his pedigree, like Larue's, was un-

mistakeable in his features. His dimpled chin, kind, intelligent look, bright, laughing eye, and high forehead, with the grey hair growing long, hanging down on one side and pushed behind the ear on the other, would have proclaimed him a European, if it had not been for the dark brown skin and Indian bearing which no white man ever acquires. He was not a big man, being at least four inches shorter than the trapper, whose gaunt aquiline face was if anything the more Indian of the two. The strange thing was that the mouths and chins of both seemed to have come from the same mould. Salter had often told his friend that he ought to change his name.

'Who ever heard before of a man called Pure Tobacco? Why don't you change your name?'

'My name suits me. There are no others like it. Who ever heard of another Pure Tobacco? What name do you think would do as well?'

'Sometimes I think Good Joke would suit you.'

'Did you ever hear of a josakeed named Good Joke?'

'No. But did you ever see a josakeed that looked so much like it? Why, your name is a joke, and you know it.'

'It was given to me when I was young, and I am not a Pawnee to change my name whenever the fancy takes me. It will do. As to Good Joke, I will be careful. An Indian knows nothing of joke.'

'Oh no, of course not! But I won't tell anybody, my solemn magician.'

And as they sat to-night over the camp fire in Hoodooland, Salter could not help thinking of the many talks that had ended in the same way. The josakeed was a delightful companion,—when he was not on duty,—and

as he sat chatting of his travels since he had last met his friend, his jokes were many and the merriment was great.

At last the talk became more serious, and worked round to the strange adventures of Larue.

'Did you know the Pawnees had this Morning Star worship?' asked the trapper.

'Yes! But only the Pawnees now.'

'Only the Pawnees?'

'The Riccarees also had the worship, but they lost it.'

'Then it is dying out?'

'Yes. I think White Hawk has killed it.'

'The Wolf might get hold of Larue and keep him for next year.'

'No. He could not. The Star does not rise next year.'

'Come, come! wake up! No Morning Star next year?'

'Not the same star on the same day.'

'Oh, that's it! How you Indians know all these things beats me! Then if the Wolf comes, he means mischief?'

'That is so.'

'And he'll get it? Eh?'

'That is so.'

CHAPTER VI.

SEQUOYAH.

THE next morning, half an hour after daybreak, Pure Tobacco, Salter, and Larue were on their way out of Hoodooland, bound for the old shack, or blockhouse, where Sequoyah was awaiting them. It was a long day's journey amid scenery of startling beauty. Crossing the east fork of the Yellowstone, a little below Miller Creek, Pure Tobacco led the way north-west up the rising ground, below what is now Specimen Ridge, and down the wild irregular plateau between deep and broad creeks. Late in the afternoon the hut was reached.

At the door was a little ox-cart, the first wheeled thing that had ever found its way over the mountains to this remote, mysterious land. By the cart was standing a Cherokee boy, who, as soon as he sighted the approaching travellers, went into the shack to tell his master. In a few minutes, during which preparations were probably begun for increasing the meal, so that the two unexpected guests might not go hungry, Sequoyah came out to welcome them.

He was an active old man of seventy, with such a pair of keen, glowing eyes as are rare amongst men. On his head was not a scalp-lock or a feather, or any such conventional Indian decoration, but a gaily-coloured handkerchief folded into turban shape. The handkerchief was red, with white stripes, or rather stripes with green and gold embroidery on a white ground. The handkerchief was worn well back, so as to show the broad, flattish brows, buttressed, as it were, by the prominent nose. The mouth was well cut, and the firmness of character it showed was emphasized by the massive chin and under jaw. The ears were small; in the lobe of each was a gold ring. The feature of the face was, however, the eyes, which compelled attention, and gave the would-be critic of the countenance all his work to do to study them.

Except that he wore moccasins, there was very little that was Indian in the old man's dress. He wore a red shirt, over which a dirty white undershirt peeped, and over all was a loose blue hunting-jacket, which had evidently seen much trouble in its day from its generally seedy and mottled appearance. An Indian brave Sequoyah was not; he was an Indian inventor and philosopher, and neither inventors nor philosophers are as a rule particularly careful of the look of their attire. So long as the coat is comfortable and decent, it is enough for them, and it was enough for Sequoyah.

The story of his childhood in one respect resembled Larue's. His mother, a Cherokee girl of good position,—for there was an aristocracy among the Indians as among all other ancient peoples,—was living with her tribe in Cherokee County, Georgia, when a Dutch trader, named George Gist, appeared on the scene, and married her.

Soon after Sequoyah was born, in 1770, his father disappeared. As the youngster grew up, it became evident he was not as other boys. Instead of joining in the Indian games and striving to excel in feats of strength and endurance, his time was spent on things mechanical. Everything he could take to pieces and build up again he did. He went into the woods alone, building toy bridges over the brooks and toy houses by the hillside, and making friends with the beasts and birds and flowers in a way that procured him notice as being either imbecile or lunatic. His mother owned many horses and much cattle, and the mad boy, in whose madness there was much method, soon became expert in managing them. Whatever he undertook in his quiet, orderly way he succeeded in. With his own hands, while yet in his teens, he built a dairy for his mother, and had achieved a reputation in the tribe as its most skilful horsebreaker. A farm of eight acres became his, and he cleared it and planted it in corn and cultivated it with the hoe. The farm being in good-going order, he looked out for another means of adding to his mother's income, and went with the hunters into the woods, buying the skins from them on the spot, in the valleys of Ohio and Tennessee, and bringing them home so as to trade under the best advantages. Soon he became an expert hunter himself, keenly alive to all the habits and peculiarities of the animals he sought, an unerring shot, and skilful in every wrinkle of woodcraft.

From a hunter he became, of all things in the world, a silversmith. The fashionable ornaments of the tribe were silver, and the traders that supplied them made such enormous profits that Sequoyah resolved to make his

mother's finery himself. To do this was not easy, for not only had he to make the ornaments, but he had to make the tools. To be a silversmith he had first to be a blacksmith. But to be a blacksmith he must have tools, and he set to work to make them. It appeared to him that the key of the position in a blacksmith's shop was the bellows, and the bellows he first attacked. Having got his bellows into order and started his fire, he managed to turn out a very clumsy hammer. With this hammer he made other hammers, each better than the last, with them he made his chisels and pincers, and soon he had his blacksmith's tools ready to make his silversmith's tools. Then he began on the precious metal, and in a few months acquired such skill, that even in these days articles stamped with his name are sought after as works of art. To introduce variety in his designs, he had to teach himself to draw, and in a short time he advanced from the usual Indian caricatures of horses, cattle, and deer, to really recognisable portraiture.

Nothing came amiss to him; bit by bit he mastered every trade and calling that he came across. In 1820 something quite out of the common suggested itself to him. Up to then the only written communication amongst the Indian tribes was by picture and symbol. Elaborate as these symbols were, their reading was an accomplishment kept secret to a few; they could not be compared with the letters of the whites. How thoughts could be written in Roman characters resembling nothing else in nature, and capable of a different interpretation according to their position, was unintelligible to the redskin mind. One night a conversation took place in Sequoyah's presence as to the wonderful gift the whites

had of interpreting these strange figures without, apparently, previous instruction.

'It is the gift of the Great Spirit,' they agreed.

'Yes,' said Sequoyah; 'but the gifts come to those who seek them.'

And he resolved to seek this gift at all costs. In vain it was urged that the gift was magical.

'Then I will learn magic.'

'But the medicine men of the palefaces are so wise.'

'I will try to be as wise as they are,' said Sequoyah. And he proceeded to invent a means of written communication for his people.

At first he tried to find a character for every word in his language. On this road he struggled for some time. The number of symbols, however, became too many for his memory, and so he tried another path. He split up the words into syllables, and invented a character for each. An old English spelling-book came in his way, and eighteen of the letters he found in it he used up amongst the eighty-four he required. Of the sound or sense of these letters he then knew nothing, and he did not trouble himself to know anything. They were ready-made symbols, and he was not above using them.

His alphabet was divisible into six columns, the first of which contains all syllables ending in a, the second all ending in e, the third all ending in i, the fourth all ending in o, the fifth all ending in u, and the sixth having endings in y, n, and v. A capital D, for instance, stood for a, W for la, G for nah, R for e, L for tle, H for mi, A for go, Z for no, K for tso, J for gu, M for lu, E for gv, R for sv, and B for yn. The other syllables were shown by other letters or symbols with stranger twists and

turns than any system of shorthand. Step by step Sequoyah advanced. At first he cut his letters on bark, and conversed with a helper in the next room. Again and again he had to simplify, but in the end he triumphed, and produced the so-called 'Cherokee Alphabet,' in which the Scriptures were first printed so as to be intelligible to the Indians.

All the time he worked in silence, saying nothing of his progress. When his alphabet was complete, he tried it on his daughter Ahyokah, a child of six years old, who in a week could read all that was written in it. When his daughter had thus proved its value, Sequoyah introduced it to his tribe. A grand council was held, the new system was experimented on, messages were written and found to be readable, and thenceforth, throughout the red men of America, the name of Sequoyah was a household word. Books soon appeared printed in the new alphabet, and at this very moment a daily newspaper is published, printed entirely in the syllabic alphabet of the ingenious Cherokee.

The alphabet was given to the world in 1821. In 1822 Sequoyah was in Arkansas, teaching it to those who had emigrated from Georgia. In 1823 he went, as we have seen, once more among his people, and became acquainted with Larue. Since then he had learnt the speech of the palefaces and devoted himself to the study of the native languages. In his little ox-cart, laden with articles for Indian trade, he had journeyed over America, mastering the many dialects, respected even by the wildest of the red men, allowed to go in peace by all, looked upon as the very medicine man of the medicine men, the man who could do everything, and whose proceedings, though

unintelligible, must needs be wise. What gain there could be in pottering about rock inscriptions and legends and religions, few Indians could understand. An ordinary man inquiring into such matters would have been shot forthwith, but Sequoyah was Sequoyah, and the man with the keen glowing eyes held a safe-conduct everywhere. In his little ox-cart he had now come into the American Wonderland to view some strange inscriptions reported to him by old Salter, and to look about generally for anything that might be interesting. Of fear Sequoyah had none; of admiration for the grand and beautiful he had much; and on all occasions he placidly smoked his pipe, thought much, and said little.

The trapper's greeting contrasted strangely with the way in which he had addressed Pure Tobacco.

'Well met, Sequoyah,' said he. 'I am sorry to have kept you waiting.'

'It matters not,' said Sequoyah, taking his pipe from his mouth. 'No time is wasted here. Who is that boy? I know the face somewhere.'

'It is Brownbloom's boy, Larue,' said Meta Koosega.

'And he has had a roughish time of it lately,' said Salter. 'Pure Tobacco picked us up in Hoodooland, and I picked up the boy away down by the North Platte, where he had been nearly roasted alive by the Pawnees to please the Morning Star.'

'Which set you thinking of your visit to the Blackfeet?' said Sequoyah.

'Wal, it did! and I felt quite friendly to the young rascal. He isn't as fat now as he was when I found him. They had fed him up for the fire to frizzle him better.

That is a note for you. You might head it—Pawnee cookery!'

'Well, before I do that, let us put the horses right, and try some Cherokee cookery.'

When the old man heard Larue's full story his opinion differed from that of the trapper.

'The Pawnees as a tribe,' said he, 'will trouble themselves no more about the boy. They would never have let him go, surprised though most of them were, if they felt strongly in the matter. White Hawk acted under his father's protection, and between them they have settled the sacrifice. When a victim escapes like that, the whole worship is thrown into contempt. It was an old custom kept up merely because it was old, and not for the good it might do. The Pawnees are better than that sort of thing. But there are bad and spiteful Pawnees, powerful for evil, powerless for good, as there are always such among men. Spotted Wolf is one of them. If ever he meets Larue he may kill him. I think he will track him. It is all very well to say that he dare not come to such a hot place, but a know-nothing bully like the Wolf is just the man to disbelieve everything he does not think he sees. He may run off in terror as soon as he sees the spouting springs; but he will come. He will end by believing in all that he has been taught in his boyhood, and yet having no faith. If his companions make merry at his cost, he will come sure enough. And though he may lose his life, he may do us injury. We must be ready.'

'The boy has been through the fire, and he shall not be hurt,' said Pure Tobacco.

'I hope not. But he may have been through the fire

once to fall into it again. Even Salter here may come to a bad end yet, though he would die like a man and not like a frightened brute. Anyhow, old as I am, it would please me greatly to have a shot at the Wolf.'

'So say I,' said Salter. 'I'll help you. Give us anything of a chance, and we'll make him considerably more of a Spotted Wolf than he bargains for.'

'Let the boys go,' said Sequoyah. And Larue and the young Cherokee went off to lie down and sleep.

'And now, Meta Koosega,' said the old man, 'what have you done in that strange Hoodooland?'

'I found this piece of gold at the back of the altar.'

'By itself?'

'Yes. Nothing near it; no trace of its being brought there. The ground untouched.'

'Then it was dropped there by the eagle, there can be no doubt. And it must be true, as we are told, that much gold is there, and to the north up Soda Butte Creek.'

'Do eagles fly about with nuggets, then?' asked Salter.

'Sometimes. How else could it have got there? It could not have fallen from the rocks, for gold is never found in rocks like those.'

'How did you know it was there, then?'

'We met a Shoshoneh, who told me that eagles haunted Gold Creek, and used the altar in Hoodooland to smash their victims on. So I thought it best to look. It is a valuable find.'

And so it was; and, owing to it, the gold mines now in work were long afterwards started at Clark's Fork.

It was then arranged that in the morning Sequoyah should cross Deep Creek and ascend the opposite mountain,

where the inscriptions discovered by Salter were to be found.

'What people have lived hereabouts in the past?' asked Sequoyah.

'Bannacks, Crows, Blackfeet, Shoshonehs'—

'Sheep-eaters,' added Salter.

'What do you mean by Sheep-eaters?'

'A tribe of undersized Indians,—mere dwarfs,—who fed on bighorn mutton and clothed themselves in bighorn fleeces, and had neither guns nor horses, but fought and hunted with weapons made out of the hard black glass in one of the western canyons. They lived in the caves in the cliffs, and buried their dead under stones quite differently to any of the other tribes. And instead of stalking their game, they had long driveways down which they chased them till they got them into a crowd. You'll see traces of the driveways. But about this writing on the rock, perhaps you'll recognise it. It goes like this at one end.'

And Salter drew some figures on the ground with his knife.

Meta Koosega gave a start.

'What is the matter?' asked Sequoyah. 'Have you seen that before?'

'It is part of a sacred plate.'

'How many plates, then, have you?' asked Sequoyah.

'We have many, and none can touch them but one of the ten chief josakeeds. Should one of the ten die, his place is filled, so that there are always ten to keep the records of our tribe. There are three sacred depositories of our records, and these are kept secret. Every fifteen years we open them, in the month of August, and we look

at the plates, which are of slate or copper or lead or birch bark. If one is decayed we make another, copying it exactly, so that there can be no mistake, and the record is as we have received it from our fathers. The old plate we share equally amongst the wise men, and gain wisdom by its possession.'

'Do you carry one of these wisdom-giving plates?'

'I do.'

'And that is a part of one of them?'

'It looks like it.'

'And what do you call the records, and how do you keep them?'

'We call the code of laws "The Path made by the Great Spirit," and we keep them in a long ditch with a cedar tree sunk in the centre, which tree is hollow and sealed with gum below, and above it is left open and filled with swansdown. The earth is thrown over, and none but the ten know where the cedar log lies.'

'And are those plates all cut in the old picture writing?' asked Sequoyah.

'They are, and that seems to be copied from one of them.'

'What would be the punishment for revealing the secret?'

'Death,' said Pure Tobacco; 'and after death to be sent down the large river in the stone canoe to the lake in which is the Island of Delight. If the betrayer has lived a good life, and the betrayal has not been for gain, the stone canoe will carry him to the island. But if his actions have not been good, or he betrayed his secret for his own gain, the canoe will sink and leave him floating in the water, for ever looking at the happiness in which he cannot share.'

'But that,' said Salter, 'is not the usual punishment. You let the traitor down easily.'

'He is one of the wise.'

Sequoyah laughed as he remarked,—

'The wise are not always so lucky. But who first made these records?'

'They were made by the Cranes, long, long ago, who added to them as the time rolled on. Even now, the Cranes are among the chief of the Ojibwa clans. They came down from the sky much as Larue says White Hawk told him his forefather did. The Great Spirit made two of them, male and female, and let them down to earth through an opening in the sky. They were to fly over the world, and when they found a proper place to settle, they were to fly to it and fold their wings close to their bodies. And they flew over many lands, over the prairies, and tasted buffalo, but thought it would not last, and elk and beaver, but that did not please them. At last they came to the rapids, at the outlet of the great lake, and there were fish in such numbers that they thought it would last for ever. And there, on the little knoll by the fort, near the rapids, they settled. And they folded their wings and became a man and woman.'

'Are you a Crane?' asked Salter.

'I am of that race.'

'I thought so. Pure Tobacco of the race of Birdseye! Let us turn in.'

CHAPTER VII.

A DAY IN WONDERLAND.

It is early morning. Sequoyah has walked out from the block-house to the brink of the marvellous canyon, whose western side is now ablaze with every hue of frost and flame. There is no cloud in the sky; the mist has gone; the sun gleams undimmed from an unbroken ocean of steel blue, and the light is as pure as if gathered in a diamond lens and shot from a silver shield. As the old man looks into the rift, the colours shine out brilliant and sharp, even where toned by the purple shade. So bright are they, wet with the morning dew, that it seems as though the gorge had been scooped in skein upon skein of floss silk, in all the glorious wealth of colouring from cream

to indigo. Varied as the blending bands of the spectrum, the slopes, in their innumerable streaks of every tint known to nature, look like a wild triumph of the dyer's art. But no dyes are half so pure or rich, or yield such harmonies.

Below, deep down, is the stream. It roars on in silence, for no sound rises through that awful depth of fifteen hundred feet; and so lessened is it to the vision that it looks but a motionless thread furred here and there with dots of frosted silver. Along its banks, and up the many-coloured slopes, are hot springs and fountains innumerable, whose clouds of steam break up the light into a million rainbows. From other springs that bubble and overflow, the waters are leaping down the rocks,—coloured waters, black and blue, and grey and red, in thin vertical bars, crossing the horizontal streaks. In Hoodooland the forms are rounded and animal; here they are squared and architectural. Back the breccia has been cut into every form of buttress and pinnacle, which, in gem-like lines of emerald, sapphire, carnelian, and topaz, literally crowd the ravine at every height. Below is a rampart of pure cobalt and cadmium and carmine, covering a narrow shelf of lemon and lavender. Here a pillar has been moulded in alternate bands of cinnamon and alabaster, repeated on the opposite side of the river in a broad sunken arch. Arches and porches there are of every order known to the architect; and temples there are of every creed in scattered piles of ruin, broken into many gaps wherein the pine trees have planted themselves giving just sufficient living green to help the colouring. Now and then fragments of basaltic dykes rise in prismatic masses, black and grey, jointed and sharply angled, contrasting in their rigid

symmetry with the blocks at their feet, and throwing into greater prominence the wild disorder of the more easily eroded rock. On many of the spires are the nests of eagles and hawks; and the birds, soaring high over the stream, into which they swoop, almost vanish from the sight as they near the water, to seize the fish that swarm therein.

Sequoyah stands on an overhanging promontory, and gazes, deep in thought, up the wondrous furrow that the stream has ploughed and is ploughing. Before man was, the plateau on which he stands was the bed of a vast lake. Through it the volcanic forces burst, and the lava cooled under its waters into the basaltic prisms. Volumes of ash and broken sandstone were thrown up from the craters, as the pieces of limestone are hurled from Vesuvius to-day. The ashes and the rubble subsided in the water into strata, mingled with the sediment from silicious springs. Over them there gently fell the velvet rain of mud, brought into the lake by its many mountain feeders. Then the deposit ceased as the land began to rise. Higher and higher, in leisurely grandeur, the whole region came up. The lake drained away, and the present river began to flow in and out and across where that lake had been. The beds formed in the lake were by the river first cut through; then the easily eroded breccia was worn into; deeper and deeper the channel was gouged, while the wind and the rain and the frost chipped and moulded the minor sculpturings; deeper and deeper still, until the grinding and weathering bit down even into the flinty deposits of the old hot springs, which, as they are denuded of the garments that for ages have clothed them, are draped by the springs of to-day in watery robes of sepia

and vermilion, decked and broidered with pearls and sapphires.

At the sound of footsteps, Sequoyah wakes from his reverie. The tall trapper comes striding up, with Larue in vain trying to keep step, by his side.

'I have brought the boy to have a look,' said Salter. 'He may not have another chance. It may do him good. I always feel a better man when I look down that wonderful cut. It is much nobler than the Goblin; the Hoodoo looks like devil's work to this. The sight of this hangs round you for months. I can fancy a man dreaming of it for the rest of his life.'

'As I shall do,' said Sequoyah. 'It is as though an autumn sunset had steeped in its colours a wilderness of ice and snow.'

'Maybe,' replied Salter. 'It is beautiful enough. The Fairyland they tell children about is a joke to it. No fairy tale I ever heard told of a scene like this. It licks them all. What do you think, my boy?'

The boy was gazing wide-eyed and awestruck; but the question called him back to what perhaps after all was his true self.

'Did anybody ever fall down there?' he asked.

'Wal, not that I ever heard of! But if that is all you have been thinking about, I don't suppose the world would miss you much if you were to.'

'You never can tell,' said Sequoyah. 'The true Larue may not like to be seen.'

'There is a pillar of salt,' said the boy, not heeding what had been said.

'Yes,' said the trapper; 'looks like it. There's a lump like that in the Platte country, where the Saline

'AND EVEN USED TO CARRY HER ABOUT WITH HIM.'

joins. And there is a story about it too, as I daresay there is about that one, if we only knew it. There was an Indian, a regular rowdy customer that every one fought shy of, until some girl fell in love with him. Then he got tame and behaved himself, and grew very fond of her, and even used to carry her about with him. For he married her, and he was a good sort—till the old woman died. It cut him up badly, poor chap; wal, I pity him. Anyhow, he went mad after fighting again, and used to bring all his scalps to his wife's grave. One night he came and slept by it, and when he woke there was a pillar of salt standing beside him. Wal, he couldn't make this out, but he was too frightened to touch it. So he stopped there till sunset, and by long watching fell asleep. In the middle of the night a low wailing awoke him. Up he started, as well he might; for where the salt had been a fight was going on between an old hag and his wife, and his wife was getting the worst of it; but that didn't last long, as you may guess, for he was at the old woman like a shot, and there was a tough turn-up for a minute or so, till he got his tomahawk into play, when he whipped into her skull pretty slick. But it chopped into the pillar of salt, for the old hag vanished as he struck, and so did his wife, and he never saw them again. There's the pillar of salt now with the chop in it, so there's no doubt about it.'

'And the Indian,' said Sequoyah, 'was a better man afterwards. He had slain his spirit of cruelty, eh?'

'That's it, I suppose. But I fancy these stories are made up first, and the sermon comes in afterwards—sometimes after a precious deal of seeking.'

'Not always. The lesson had to be taught; as a lesson

it would not have been remembered, and so it was made interesting and turned into a tale.'

'Fitted up with flesh and blood, eh? But that was a ghostly tale, so the flesh and blood won't do—yes, it will; it is all right. How easy it is to get into a muddle when you want to be sharp! This is one of the spirit streams of the Lenni Lenape. Do you believe in the spirits, Sequoyah?'

'I know not what another man sees.'

'Ahem! that's true. But we hear tales of family ghosts, father to son, father to son, all seeing the same thing in turn. How about that?'

'There is no difficulty there. They may all see it, and yet it may not exist.'

'How is that? How can you see what isn't?'

'Easy enough. The first sees the victim murdered, or whatever it may be. That sight is stamped on his or her memory. The child inherits the particular impression, just as that boy did his father's face. There are no family ghosts that I know of, unless children have been born after the shock was given to the father or mother. But I never saw a ghost, to my knowledge. That is more in Meta Koosega's line.'

An hour later Sequoyah, Pure Tobacco, Salter, and Larue set out for Amethyst Mountain, leaving instructions for Joe, the Cherokee boy, to have the supper ready on their return. It was a long tiring day's work, but the two wiry old men made light of it, and Mr. Franklin Salter seemed never to know fatigue. Before the day was out the boy had had quite enough; but he was too proud to say anything. Meta Koosega would have left him at the hut, but Sequoyah wished him to come, as he might learn some-

thing, and Salter insisted on his coming, that he might see for himself that when he spoke of trees and fruits in stone he was in no way romancing.

Up the slopes and ravines and along by the rugged cliffs of the petrified forest the trapper led the way. Where the cliffs had foundered, huge scars hundreds of feet high showed forest standing upon forest, to build up the mountain. A strip of sandstone, then a strip of shale, then a crowded stack of trunks standing out as if chiselled, with branches interlacing and matted together, filled in with clay and coarse conglomerate; then more sandstone and shale, and then another forest grown on the top of the other; and so on up the cliff side, the roots of each forest standing on the branches of that below it. In one place the cliff was cut down, and showed a section over two thousand feet in height of these strange vegetable remains. The ground was strewn with trunks and limbs turned into milky, greenish chalcedony. From the slopes the trunks stood up like teeth, or irregularly, like piles in a breakwater. Prostrate trunks there were fifty feet long, some of them six feet in diameter, all in stone, and yet so woodlike as to cheat the eye into mistaking them for the fallen giants of yesterday; even the rings of growth were preserved, so delicately had the change been wrought. Sometimes the trunk was changed to one long mass of agate or opal, with its cavities full of crystals of quartz and calcite, and among the roots were specimens of all shades, from amethyst-purple to the deepest cherry-red. Sometimes the tree lay complete, with roots, bark, branches, leaves, and fruit. The flora of the Miocene was here in its glory: aralias, magnolias, limes, ashes, and bays, crowded in thousands on every hand, so thick together

that it is a wonder how they lived. And amid the clusters of crystals that sparkled in the sun, calcite, aragonite, apophyllite, quartz of every tint to amethyst and cairngorm, were cushions of carnelian and chalcedony and leek-coloured carbonate of lime, and lumps and nodules that might well be mistaken for the living wonders turned to stone of which the trapper had told.

To the top of the mountain the trapper did not go. Turning off to the left of the ravine in which the confusion is wildest, he led the way under an overhanging cliff into a sheltered cave. The cave was a shallow one, and along one of its sides was an incrustation of chalcedony, on which an inscription had been cut, or rather scratched. The inscription could never have been very plain, and now only a fragment remained. What the symbols signified neither Sequoyah nor Meta Koosega could tell.

'I thought you said they were Ojibwa,' asked Salter.

'What you drew on the floor was Ojibwa,' said Pure Tobacco, 'but these are not. Your drawing is not as good as I thought it was.'

'Or you don't think it convenient to let a paleface too deep into your mysteries.'

Sequoyah, who was carefully copying the figures on the stone, looked up and laughed.

'It would have been better for the redskin if he had told the paleface more of his mysteries. The paleface would have respected him more.'

'But have done him no more good,' said the josakeed. 'The white man does not tell us all his mysteries, and many even of the white men do not know that mysteries exist, or they say they do not. To them all their stories are true, all true.'

'Now that will do, Pure Tobacco. Just you see here for a minute. I tell Sequoyah of this thing on this wall, and I bring him all this way to look at it, and you come with us as a wise man, a josakeed, to tell us what it all means. You say this is a sacred place, and it all has a meaning, and you, as the wisest Ojibwa in creation, know all about everything that is here. The very first riddle we ask, you give up. Do you know, or don't you know what that means? If you don't want me to know, or the boy to know, we'll clear out and have a game at skittles among the diamonds.'

'The Indians do not come here. Their sacred place is the other side of the canyon. Their writing is by the Fire-hole river and the lake. I really know nothing of this.'

'Indians not come here!' said Salter with contempt. 'Then who wrote that?' pointing to the inscription.

'Oh, Indians! But I meant Indians I know of.'

'You mean Indians before the Cranes came down from aloft.'

'Yes.'

'Then what a new family yours must be! You think you are better than the rest, I suppose—a later importation? Oh, Pure Tobacco! we shall have to invent something better than you.'

'And better than you too,' said the Ojibwa. 'I don't know what that inscription means, and you don't know what it means. Where do we differ?'

'In this,' said Sequoyah; 'you do not want to know what it means, and he does. Neither of you have the knowledge, but he has the desire for knowledge, and that is something. However, I have done. If there is no more to see, let us get back.'

By another road they found their way down the mountain, out of that strange forest of stone.

The supper was waiting for them, and so was Joe, who was not nearly so much at ease as when they had left him. He had been to one of the creeks close by and caught some trout, and on his return about noon had amused himself by climbing on to the roof of the blockhouse, and there, sunning himself, lay at full length. Happening to look away to the south over the falls, he had seen a wondrous apparition. High in the air was the figure of a man upside down!

'What sort of a man?' asked Sequoyah.

'An Indian.'

'What sort of an Indian?'

'He looked like a Pawnee, but so big, so big, and in the air on his head!'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE CANOES.

HAD Joe seen anything?

He stoutly asserted that he could not be mistaken. In the south, high in the air, he had seen the shape of a man walking with his feet uppermost. What could it mean?

'Let us stay where we are for a day or two,' said Meta Koosega.

'Let us go and see what's up,' said Salter.

'Let us go on to the Firehole as though nothing had happened. Let us do our work first, and look for this thing afterwards,' said Sequoyah.

Larue said nothing. He wished himself safe at home in the tents of his tribe. The Wonderland was too wonderful for him. He had seen stone animals, he had seen spouting springs of steam, he had seen a stone forest; he did not want to see giants in the air with their head where their feet should be.

In the morning, however, the shack was locked up, and the party started on their journey to the spot mentioned by the trapper, to see which Sequoyah had come. It was now the 14th of April. On the 30th Salter's companions were due at the hut which was their headquarters during the trapping season. Then he would return and begin

his year's work. He was now holiday-making, and the fortnight would soon run away.

After another visit to the great canyon, and another peep at its wondrous depths of sulphur, and primrose, and scarlet, and purple, and brown, the little ox-cart and its escort slowly moved off to the south-west to gain the higher ground and strike the Indian trail. In the afternoon they followed the bank of a stream, and on the right for some time could see the steam of a group of small geysers and mud springs, with the Sulphur Hills behind them like a long string of brimstone beads. The east fork of the Yellowstone was crossed at the ford where the trails crossed, and then, following the south bank, they turned to the west till they reached the bank of the lake upon whose beach the westerly wind was dashing a heavy surf. Round the shore the hot springs were steaming, and behind them rose the blue hills, running up into the snow-line, with peaks blushing rosy red in the rays of the setting sun.

The camp was near the entrance of Pelican Creek, where the springs issue that throw down in coloured rings a beautifully-blended carpet of rust and sulphur and pearly flint. The waters were hot, about a hundred and sixty degrees, in fact, and yet the channels were lined with clumps of mosses and other lowly plants, and the water itself was vividly green with the vegetation. Not far off, the tiny geysers began leaping a foot or more from vents of brilliant sulphur, sometimes fringing the brim in a solid mass, sometimes in a fine lacework of crystals so fine that the slightest touch would crush them.

The air and water were alive with birds—swans and pelicans, gulls and geese and ducks; and the water

swarmed with bright speckled trout, though all were sickly that were caught. To the south was Frank's Island; to the west was Stevenson Island, hardly distinguishable from the mainland; thick jungles both, and homes of the bear and cougar.

'That might be the Island of Delight,' said Salter, pointing across the water to Frank's Island, as he sat lounging by the camp fire.

'What Island of Delight?' asked Sequoyah.

'The one that the josakeed of the Ojibwas is to contemplate when he is bobbing about up to his chin for betraying the secret of the sacred plates. By the bye, there is a man named Smith—I daresay you have heard the name before—wal, Smith, this Smith, has got some people to believe that an angel—spirit, you know—some years ago came and told him to go digging in a hill near Palmyra, in New York State, and there he unearthed a bunch of gold plates with a pair of barnacles to read them by. And very strange things he read, I'm told. Among others, he declared the plates revealed that the redskins came from Jerusalem. Did the Cherokees come from Jerusalem?'

'Not that I know of,' said Sequoyah; 'who said so?'

'Why, this man Smith. True or untrue, I don't think much of his find now. Wonder what his folks would have said if they had heard Pure Tobacco calmly telling us it was the custom of the Ojibwas to write their records on plates and dig them up to look at every fifteen years? The Jibs call their plates, it seems, the Path of the Great Spirit. Smith called his the Book of Mormon, which doesn't sound so genuine. He must have got round a josakeed somehow, and been put up to his little game.

That angel must have been one of the ten wise men. Eh, Pure Tobacco? Away there in the shadow, you can fancy that the head of the delinquent is bobbing about now, for having betrayed his trust.'

'I have not betrayed my trust,' said the josakeed. 'I spoke as one who knew to those who should know.'

'Right, all right. Beg pardon. I wasn't serious.'

For a few minutes there was silence by the fire. Then Salter spoke again.

'This is a mighty big lake for such a high one. It does seem mysterious in the night air. There ought to be some tale about it. I'm sure—in fact, I know there is, but I can't remember it. When I was among the Bannacks I heard it one night.'

'I know that legend,' said Sequoyah. 'Is this the lake?'

'So I was told. But I forget the tale. Let us hear it again.'

'As far as I remember,' said Sequoyah, 'the story is this. A young chief fell in love with a maiden, and the maiden died. And the young man, finding his life a misery without her, resolved to give up everything and seek her in the Land of Souls. So he journeyed many days, and, after asking of the wise, found his way to the lodge that stood by the road to that land. There he was stopped by the guard, who asked him what he wanted. He told his errand, and the guard told him he might pass if he left behind his body and his bow and arrows. And he left them in some strange way, and set forth to walk through Shadowland, being himself a shadow. Thus he came swiftly, until he reached the shores of the lake, and on the beach was a canoe of white shining stone. This

he launched, and in it paddled off towards the island. Soon he found that he was among a fleet of similar canoes, and that one bearing the maiden he sought was by his side. With her he swept onwards towards the island. But they paddled into troubled water. The waves rose, and all the white canoes were terribly tossed.

Those carrying children went safely through the storm, but others met with much disaster. Only a few ran into smooth water again. The rest were upset, and drowned the shadows that had driven them. The maiden and her lover were among the saved, and the chief landed on the Happy Island, where everything was delightful, where there was no pain, or hunger, or war, or death. There the

Indian thought he could stay with his beloved, but a great voice called him, and he fell to the ground and listened, and the voice said to him, "Go back to the land whence you came. Your time has not yet come. Your duty has not yet been done. You will rule your tribe for many years. You have done well so far; continue to do well. Be brave and pure. The maiden you have accompanied is accepted, and will dwell here for ever, as young and as happy as when I called her from the Land of Snows." And the chief left the island in the white canoe, and paddled across the lake to the shore, and found the path, and at the lodge entered again into his body, and took up his bow and arrows, and came back to his people, to do his duty and remember his lost love.'

'Is that story real Indian?' asked the trapper.

'I think so,' said Sequoyah. 'It is very old amongst us. But who can tell whence a story comes?'

'It seemed like a white man's make-up to me. The fittings were Indian, but the burden of the tale was pale-face.'

'The burden of the tale is human. It speaks to all hearts, and tells of what all men and women can appreciate. There is little difference, after all, between the nations.'

'Wal, that's so! But before I knew you, I did not think a redskin had a heart, much less a pile of stories like that. I thought them, saving your presence, a regular bad lot, a crafty, drunken set of rogues.'

'I know,' said Sequoyah; 'like others of the white men. The sight depends on the seer. The rough and cruel come amongst us, and see only the rough and cruel. They think they alone can tell stories, and they will not hear the stories of the Indian. They worship; but theirs

alone is the true worship, they say, and they think the Indians' worship mere waste of time. There are good men amongst the whites, but such do not come to the wilderness. A good white man is no better than a good Indian, and a bad white man is worse. But the whites are in thousands, and the Indians are few. So the Indian must go. The bad white man comes amongst us, and lives badly. But he prospers, and his people are great, and the poor Indian thinks that all white men are as he is, brutal, drunken, filthy. And they think they have but to do as he does and they will prosper like him; and they become bad copies of the bad paleface. He scoffs at all worship, and they begin to scoff at all worship; he cares for no legends, and they leave off caring for their legends; he was not taught in his childhood, and they leave off teaching their children. So the stories and worships of our fathers are dying into the night. Only the wise remember them, and the wise do not speak of such things to the scoffer.'

'There's truth in that! Wal, Sequoyah, I'll behave myself a little better, for it was a broad hint. Not that I want to pry into your secrets, but I do like a good square yarn, and I like it clean—which some of the Indian yarns I have heard are not.'

'No. Nor are the early yarns of any race. Indian stories are of all sorts. You cannot judge of them by only a few. Some of the tribes I have been among had stories so stupid, that I was going away in scorn from them, when suddenly I found a man who told me something very different, and set me on a new trail; and the stories of those people were beautiful. They gave me what they thought I wanted, as a trader tries to sell his

goods. They thought I wanted stupid stories, and they told me stupid stories, and when they found I liked stories of another sort, they told me other stories. So it is with the white man. What he seeks he finds. The Indian was not a brute when the white man found him, but he will end in being a brute, and then he will go.'

'That is the old chant of the redskin prophets, Sequoyah—"Throw up the sponge, we are no good against the white man."'

'I think we are as good as the white man, but none believe me. I have tried to stir them up to work and think. But they will not learn anything. They are like children, wilful and perverse. The Great Spirit must often laugh at the folly and selfishness of man.'

'Wal, yes!' said the trapper. 'But I have known things done on this earth that would make the Great Spirit weep in sympathy, and feel proud of the good intentions with which men have gone astray.'

'The dead put that right when they die,' said the josakeed.

'Do they?' said Sequoyah. 'It would be better to leave the dead a little less to do. Why should not the accomplishment be as good as the intention?'

'It never has been,' said the Ojibwa. 'Man would not be man if he did not fail.'

'That is not my thought, Meta Koosega,' said the Cherokee. 'Because man has failed in the past, that is no reason why he should do so in the future. If he is to leave off being a man when he leaves off failing, let him be something else.'

'The world is old,' said the Ojibwa.

'What is the length of the world's life?'

'None can tell.'

'Then if you know not how many years are to come, how can you say those that are past make it old? I think this is but a baby world as yet. The Great Spirit has given us a task to sift out the good from evil. There is enough good to make an island of delight, enough evil to make a land of misery. But the sifting has only begun.'

'Ay,' said Salter, 'there's a good many want shaking up. Now those Blackfeet would require some sifting to pick out the good among them; and what are we to say to Night Cloud and his Pawnee sacrifice to the Morning Star? Downright cruelty I call it; no land of delight for them. Who invented such torture?'

'It is a sacrifice,' said Sequoyah. 'The victim is a gift.'

'But why do they sacrifice a fellow creature?'

'Because it is the most valuable thing they possess.'

'Why do they burn him alive?'

'That his smoke may rise to the sky.'

'Why do they tomahawk him?'

'To put him out of his misery.'

'That requires a good deal of sifting, Sequoyah.'

'Yes. Perhaps the object at first was good; now the evil is greater than the good, and the Star will lose its worship.'

'I thought just now you said the Indian was on the road to ruin.'

'So he is; but man is not. There were nations ruined before the Indians came. The nation lives, and when it ceases to do good it dies, but from it another springs.'

'That is taking it quietly. When you can't keep up running, clear off the track, eh?'

'Yes. The black man had his day and went, the red man had his day and is going.'

'Wal, I don't know so much about the black man, but you are right enough about the red. If he would only go in a lump it mightn't matter, but he is slipping off in halves and quarters—worse luck to him! Present company excepted, of course. But there are some things no man can understand. I wonder what is the truth about Joe's Indian upside down.'

'He may have fancied he saw it,' said Sequoyah.

'Perhaps he had had something for breakfast that disagreed with him, eh?'

Though the apparition might be due merely to Joe's disturbed digestion, it was thought best to treat it as a warning, and a careful watch was kept through the night. Many were the strange sounds that greeted the white man's ear at midnight, all of which he analyzed, and none of which he feared. A fortunate man was Salter, notwithstanding his humble trade.

'I settled my accounts years ago with the Blackfeet,' he would say, 'and now I do not fear to die. I live, as it were, in another world, in which death makes no difference.'

And he found his 'other world' by no means a dull one.

Next morning the march was resumed across the ford of the Yellowstone, and up the hills to the water-parting, where the camp was pitched. This time Pure Tobacco kept the midnight watch, and again there were no signs of an enemy.

CHAPTER IX.

FIREHOLE VALLEY.

day they journeyed down the north side of the river flowing to the west, and early in the afternoon came in view of the lowermost plains of fire. Beyond were the dark pine woods, and in front of them, against the background of dark green and the deep blue sky, were scores of steam columns rising from the earth as if the plain were the coat of a boiler which had been riddled by shrapnel. Regularity in arrangement there was none; here, there, and everywhere the vast seething spouts were rising and falling, playing steadily and collapsing, one after the other soaring aloft as its neighbours sank. Through the plain of steam jets ran the Firehole River, up which lay their route for another dozen miles, and

beyond the trees were the snow-white mountains from which its cold waters came to mingle with the boiling products of the springs.

Through this wilderness of wonder Salter led the way.

'We shall come back this road,' he said; 'so do not stop now. The same sort of thing gets much finer as we go farther. There are all kinds of springs and spouts and mud pools higher up.'

And so past them went the little ox-cart, in which sat Joe, the very picture of terror. Larue took things more coolly, but even he kept looking round as if he expected the earth to open and swallow him. Sequoyah noted everything as he strode along, and made his notes for future use as if he had been one of the wise men of Europe. Pure Tobacco had a showman's smile, and seemed to wish it to be understood that he had the entire management of the entertainment.

Some of the columns rose from basins, some from craters built up of the silica they had held in solution and thrown down as their waters evaporated; for all the springs are mineral. Here was a group with circular basins having overhanging rims covered with flinty lace and leafwork. Here amid a group of smaller jets shot up a giant fifty feet high from a pool a hundred feet across. Every spring swayed in the wind as it thinned aloft, and showered down its spray, from which the layers of silica were spread, transparent when thin, translucent when thick, filmy, glassy, pearly, milky, and then deepening to tints of rose and blue. How lightly and swiftly the films are laid may be guessed from the fact that in one thick mass of solid rock Sequoyah found a butterfly. The insect had lost none of its beauty; not a leg or a

feeler was injured, and the wings were as bright and soft in colour as if they had not lost a scale. About an eighth of an inch of transparent silica had formed upon them, and there they lay imbedded in the rock for ever.

Soon the valley narrowed, and the high timbered hills closed in on it. For two miles or more Salter headed the procession, and then another group of geysers came in view, from the centre of which rose the highest steam column in the world. The tumult was tremendous; the mighty mass of boiling water, sixty feet through, rose for three hundred feet before it broke, rising in huge throbs, higher, higher, higher. Rock masses as big as hats and saddles were being hurled aloft and pitched off to leeward. The water as it fell in a torrent swept into the river, here a hundred yards in width, and the steaming stream was overflowing its banks in its rush towards the throat of the valley.

And all round, out of the trees and among the trees, great spouts were rising and paying tribute to the aptly-named river.

Again Sequoyah and his friends entered a peaceful valley, and again they came out on a scene of force and fire. Now they had reached their goal, and the steam springs were in full fury. The air seemed heavy with sulphurous fumes; the vapour was thick enough to veil the sun as it sank behind the western mountains. The ridges and knolls on every hand were covered by clouds which floated in long plumes over the tree-tops. There was a branch to the river, and in the angle formed as they met the battery was thickest, but along the main river on either bank was an unbroken line of nature's artillery.

'THE STEAM SPRINGS WERE IN FULL FURY.'

Roaring and thundering, the tons of water shot aloft, breaking into crowns of steam which condensed into spray as it fell, and gave all the colours of the sunset as it split and bent the beams of light.

Along by the hills just skirting the trees Salter took his charge.

'Are we to camp here among the vapours?' asked Sequoyah.

'No; at the very end. There we shall be in fresh air, and see all, and take things easy.'

At last the spot was reached. It was on an elevated terrace beneath a tiny clump of trees standing out from the main mass of the forest. Before it the plain of fire lay like an open book with the steaming river down the middle. To the east of it was a quiet pool halfway between it and the woods. To the side of it, about fifty yards to the north-east, was a mass of whitish rock, evidently the crater of an extinct or dormant geyser, shaped not unlike a gigantic bushel basket half worn into, the resemblance being the closer from the colour and the strangely irregular manner in which the material had been deposited.

'Will you not have the fire there?' said he, pointing to the rock.

'Wal, no! I think not,' said the trapper. 'I don't like the look of that place somehow. I don't feel at home in it. I tried it when I was here, but it didn't suit me. Others have camped there, I know, and some white man, but I do not know who. He was careless, whoever he was, for he had left his things about, and the Indians must have made free with them. It looked as though there had been not a scrimmage, but a robbery. At least

that is what I made it out to be. Perhaps they were skeered at the writing on the wall.'

'Is that where the inscription is?' asked Sequoyah.

'Ay, that's it; and now Joe and the boy are ready to cook up, we will go and have a look.'

And so, leaving Larue to help the Cherokee to get supper, the seniors strolled off to see that for which they had come so far.

The crater was to the left of the camp, but nearer the pool, with its broken wall facing the south. The wall at its highest did not exceed eight feet; the ring when complete was thirteen feet in diameter, and it had either been worn away or blown away for some twenty feet of the circumference. The hole in the ring had been blocked up by falling stones either from other geysers or from the one that here had played. But the floor was all covered with a thick coat of silica; in most places frothy and like lumps of stony cauliflower, in other places pearly and transparent, as if the rough blocks had been sunk in thick oil. On one of the flat blocks were the remains of a fire, and the charred sticks had been coated with the flinty varnish.

'When I found this place two years ago,' said Salter, 'that break in the jelly in that corner had been freshly done. It looked as though something had been dug out of it. I couldn't say what. I fancy some fellow had camped here and come to a bad end somehow, and that his things had been found and carried away afterwards. That is what I said to myself, but I couldn't say for certain.'

'How strange that old fire looks sunk in the stone!' remarked Sequoyah.

'It does. It strikes more home than the butterfly did. You see you couldn't tell if the butterfly lived last year or a dozen years ago. Now that fire doesn't seem to have died out more than a year ago. And, besides, who cares for a butterfly? This shows man.'

'The fire may be ages old.'

'It may be, but it isn't. Do you see that bit of gun flint peeping out at the side?'

'I see a piece of sharp flint, but it looks to me like one of those arrowheads that men used before they learnt to sharpen metal.'

'Wal, I didn't think of that. It may be the fire kept the man warm who wrote up this thing.'

And Salter stepped across to a niche in the wall, where, close to the ground, on a pearly slab somewhat hidden from view, was an oblong group of Indian symbols.

'Now, that's what I call curious,' said Salter, pointing to the figures. 'You see some folks have scribed these things up here, and then the glass from the spouts has blown this way and settled on them and kept them fresh.'

Meta Koosega sprang towards the figures with a loud grunt of surprise.

'Reckon they are Ojibwa this time,' said the trapper.

The josakeed was silent, gazing in astonishment.

'They are Ojibwa,' said Sequoyah, 'but it looks to me as though they were on something other than the rock, and that they had only been covered up by this film.'

The Ojibwa medicine man continued to stare at the rock.

'Wal,' said the white man, 'what's the matter, Old

Whiff? Got 'em this time, eh? Is this a mystery? Am I to clear out?'

'There is no mystery in the writing; the mystery is how it got there.'

'Why, what is it?'

'It is one of our sacred plates!'

'Framed and glazed, eh? Wal, what does it mean?'

'It is the story of the Cranes I told you by the canyon!'

'Geewhillikins!' ejaculated the trapper. 'Here have I brought you hundreds of miles to find the pedigree of Pure Tobacco!'

Sequoyah laughed loud and long, and Salter soon joined in, and even Meta Koosega's horror thawed into mirth at the strange discovery.

'I thank you, Salter, for bringing me here,' said the Cherokee when the fun had somewhat subsided. 'Had it not been for this writing, I should never have seen this Wonderland.'

'Wal,' said Salter, 'as you came for the writing, and it is only a plate, you might as well have it. Take your tomahawk, old medicine, and chop out that pedigree of yours.'

The task was not an easy one, but the josakeed was skilful, and the plate was at last flaked off. It was of slate, and, according to the Ojibwa, it had been considered obscure at the last opening of the records and had been replaced. It had been given to him as a charm, and he had lost it, how he knew not, a good many years ago. His joy at recovering it was quite equal to his wonder at how it had got into this extraordinary place.

The mystery was soon to be explained, or rather very strong circumstantial evidence was stumbled on that afforded a clue. On their way to the camp the three men went round so as to look at the pool which lay between it and the woods. It was a beautiful circular basin some thirty feet across, with a wide margin of geyserite, as the flinty deposit is called; and this thirty-feet ring of translucent glass was edged with a deep scalloped edge dotted with pearly nodules.

'One of Nature's brooches!' as the trapper said.

And such a centre! The water was still and silent and ethereally blue, blue of a purity unequalled, deeply, darkly, beautifully blue; and the wall of the basin in which it lay was white as driven snow.

Meta Koosega led the way round the basin, gazing into the beautiful water, and taking no heed of the sheet of geyserite on which he stepped.

As he reached the side nearest the camp he turned to go away.

Suddenly he looked down, gave a piercing shriek, and fled in terror. The slate dropped and broke on the hard flinty rock.

Sequoyah and Salter had been peering into the pool. They looked up and round, but nothing met their gaze. They were starting to run to the camp when the trapper stooped to pick up the broken slate.

He jumped back as if thunder-struck.

'Sequoyah! Look! By all that's wonderful, here's Pierre Larue!'

Yes! entombed in the pearly geyserite was the body of the husband of Brownbloom. The face was but little changed. The corpse had been covered by the film, and

there it lay, so kept from the air that no decay could touch it.

The two men stood and looked. It lay on its back with the face looking to the sky. Its left arm was by its side. Its right hand grasped something shining that was fastened by a leather thong round the neck. How the death had come was a mystery, for no wound could be seen.

'The boy must not see his father,' said Sequoyah; 'we must move down the valley.'

'He'll be all right to-night,' answered the white man. 'Let us get back, and say nothing. This is a horrible ending. What does it mean?'

'Choked by the vapours, perhaps, and then covered over.'

'But why come here?'

'And why that plate?' added Sequoyah. 'Let us rest awhile. It may all come out some day.'

And the Indian and his friend returned to the camp, where, after a few words with Meta Koosega, they sat down to supper.

But eat they could not.

'It's no use,' said Salter; 'I can't get on with this.'

'Let us see how the spouts look in the moonlight.' And they went a short distance along the terrace, away from the terrible pool.

Soon they came back again.

'Let us try and have a nap.'

And they lay down to sleep, all but Sequoyah, whose turn it was to keep guard.

The boys, in happy ignorance of the horror that was near, were still and silent as deep healthy sleep could

make them; but very little rest had either of the men.

Each thought of the mystery of Pierre Larue; of the father turned to stone, and the son, by some strange freak of fortune, snatched from a horrible death to find his way to his father's side at Firehole River. And with these tragic links in the chain of thought were mingled others of less sombre hue.

Try as they would, neither of the three could prevent the Ojibwa plate from rising every now and then into remembrance; and the scene at its finding forced itself upon them. Salter, of course, suffered from the most frequent attacks of unwelcome mirth. Strive all he could to be serious, the thought of the josakeed's astonishment, the Cherokee's uproarious delight, and his own disgust at leading a wild-goose chase, proved too much for his gravity; and as the night wore on Sequoyah heard many an unmistakeable chuckle coughed away.

About four o'clock Larue awoke. Seeing Sequoyah looking wearily into the fire, the boy rose and came to him.

'I will watch,' said he.

'Lie down, my boy, and sleep. You may want all the sleep you can get.'

'I will watch. I want no more sleep to-night. You are tired.'

'I am thinking.'

'You will think better if you do not have to watch.'

'That is true. And no harm is likely to come now. Stay close here, that is all; do not go near the pool, and keep in the shade, so that the fire does not shine full on you.'

Then he lay down, and left the boy to watch. Peering down the valley, Larue saw the steam fountains hurling their spray aloft to gleam greyly in the leaden dawn. For the atmosphere was thick and heavy, and in the north the vapour cloud lay low.

Tired of watching the boiling springs, he turns to the other side, looking towards the woods across the forbidden pool. The laced and sculptured bank that girds it looms large in the growing light. From where he sits he cannot see the pool, which lies sunk in its frame. To the right and left and away to the woods all is clear. Nothing can cross that glacis without being seen. He has a strange feeling of impending danger, but whence can the danger come? From the old crater wall? He watches it for some minutes. All is still.

It is nearly five o'clock, the time of sunrise. The stars have faded, all but one, and that he glances at, thinking of the morning sacrifice from which he fled. He almost persuades himself he can hear the gallop of White Hawk's horses. He almost falls asleep. Then he wakes himself with an effort, and after one long careful look all round he rises. He has an irresistible desire to peep inside the ruined basket of stone. It seems to him he is fated to go there, and go he must.

Keeping careful watch to the right and left, he leaves the camp and crosses to the crater. He enters the circle; the tiny colosseum is empty. Nothing is there to be seen, —nothing, to his eyes, but bare, cold rock.

He walks round the outside, but nothing meets his gaze. And then he goes again within the ring, and, climbing to the top, lies down to rest.

For a time he is still. But, careless sentry as he seems,

he is awake and on the watch. He is looking towards the pool, whose azure-centred silver ring he can just see. He thinks he will go to it. Why should he not? It shines like a mirror; why should he not admire himself and peep within the frame?

He has drawn himself closer together, so as to slip from his resting-place, and he happens to glance away beyond the pool. He sees something creeping across from the trees to the forbidden spot!

Light as a snowflake, he drops to the ground, and with his head down, screened for a while by the bank of the pool, he noiselessly runs back to the camp and crouches in the shade of the cart. Again he looks, to make sure he has not been deceived. The figure is now in full view. It is a man!

Stealthily as a cat he wakes the trapper, who wakes Sequoyah, who wakes the Ojibwa, and in the shade of the clump three rifles are ready pointing at the man who, taking advantage of every scrap of cover, advances swiftly towards the pool, dragging himself along like a snake. Soon he is near enough to be recognised.

'Spotted Wolf!' gasps the boy, his tongue clinging to his mouth.

'I'll spot him!' said the trapper. 'Lie still.'

On comes the Indian, and climbs over the rim of the geyserite, and creeps along it flat on his stomach. The ridge shelters him. From the camp only the tips of his feathers can be seen as he approaches the side.

'If he would only see what is there!' muttered Sequoyah.

A roar as of thunder comes from the blue water. The Pawnee starts and looks below him. He sees that face glaring into his.

There is another roar. With a yell he jumps backwards and stumbles into the pool. Instantly the ground quakes, and, with a growl and crash that seem to rend both earth and heaven, the rim of the pool falls in.

Boiling and raging, the water begins to rise! The pool has become a geyser! The Indian's body has acted like the stone which men throw in to make the geyser play!

Surging and foaming, it lifts straight from the centre, the full thickness of what was once the pool. The walls of the mighty cylinder of steaming water are vertical. Up, heave after heave, it goes; five feet, ten feet, twenty feet, forty feet, sixty feet. Then the head bursts off, and from its rounded top aloft it springs in one grand fountain, two hundred feet in altitude. Seen from the camp it rises above the distant trees, above the yet more distant mountains, higher, higher, till its waters fall in a silver cloud backed by the purple sky, and in the upper fountain appears the body of the Pawnee, dancing feet upwards, higher, higher, then falling, and caught and driven up again.

'The spirit on his head!' shouted Joe, for the roar was deafening.

'The evil spirit of the boiling spring!' said Sequoyah.

'The judgment of the Star!' said Pure Tobacco.

'The last good deed of Pierre Larue!' said the trapper.

'Make sure of the Wolf,' said Sequoyah.

'Wal, I guess I'll leave him!' said the trapper, who had quite recovered his equanimity, which had never been much troubled. 'I haven't let slip my Blackfeet job. They made too sure of me, and shot and set me free. I might blow that fellow out of his bath, and I reckon I'll leave him. If he falls clear he's mine.'

But he did not fall clear. He was lifted once more to the very top of the pillar of steam, and then from the full height fell on the edge like an empty sack, and slipped back into the boiling water.

And now great fragments of rock were shot upwards as if from a gun, and danced and dandled in the roaring water. The giant seemed revelling in its strength, as the huge lumps were thrown aloft. The noise was tremendous; in great gulps and splutters the stony storm raged furiously.

Chipping and clinking, thudding and thundering, the masses of geyserite dashed against each other and leapt on high, scattering in all directions. One lump fell close to the camp.

'We must make a move,' said Sequoyah. 'The hail-stones are getting too large. Larue, throw that lump into the cart!'

The half-breed picked up the stone, which was hot, and threw it into the cart, and soon a move was made out of reach of the terrible rain.

And then Larue was told how his father had been found.

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERY AND ITS MEANING.

'WAL,' said Franklin Salter, as he attacked his breakfast, 'all this is mysterious.'

'Yes. Pierre Larue stole your family history, Meta Koosega, that's evident,' said Sequoyah.

'And Spotted Wolf has been on the track after you, my boy, that's evident,' said the trapper.

'And he saw Pierre Larue's face,' said Pure Tobacco.

'Yes. That's evident! But why that pool should go growling and skyrocketing aloft just when it did, is not so evident.'

'Joe,' said Sequoyah, 'fetch those pieces of slate out of the cart.'

Joe came back with his teeth chattering.

'What is the matter with the boy?' asked Salter.

'The stone! the stone!'

'What stone?' asked Sequoyah.

'Oh, I know! The lump in the cart!' said the trapper, jumping up and running.

'Here,' he shouted as he reached the cart, 'Sequoyah! Meta Koosega!'

They ran up.

'Look, it's a piece of Larue's hand, and it has got that thing in its fingers. What is it?'

'Chip it out as we did the plate,' said Sequoyah.

'Now then, Pure Tobacco! You're the man to chip away!'

The josakeed did not appreciate the remark, nor did he offer to touch the stone.

'What! are you skeered? Here! lend us your tomahawk. What! not yours? Well, let us have yours, Sequoyah; it won't hurt it.'

Carefully was the tomahawk used. The rock, pearly and porcellanous, and not porous like the Icelandic geyserites, was flaked off conchoidally. One unlucky tap split the specimen in two, and out jumped a silver medal.

'Well hit!' said Sequoyah, stooping to pick it up. 'This is a dollar ground smooth, and—whew!'

'Eh?'

'Here's a message for you, Meta Koosega, and here's one for me, and one for the boy.'

'Nothing for me?' asked the trapper.

'No; you are not thought of this time. Look!'

One side of the medal had the picture-writing of the Ojibwas and the Cherokee characters invented by Sequoyah. The old man was quite proud when he caught sight of his own alphabet.

'Pierre Larue was a man of sense after all!' he said.

'That is head,' said the trapper; 'what is tail?'

'It is in English. You had better read that;' and Salter read:—

'Message from Pierre Larue to John Larue, son of Brownbloom of Rainbow Fork; or Meta Koosega, Ojibwa josakeed; or Sequoyah, the Cherokee. Take this soon to Zennor, lawyer, St Louis.'

'That is what it says in Cherokee,' said Sequoyah.

'And that is not what it means in Ojibwa,' said Pure Tobacco. 'For it is only a bad copy of a bit of the plate.'

'Then,' said Salter, 'the best thing for you fellows to do is to hurry off to St. Louis and see what you can make of this little game, for I am up a tree over it. What can it mean? It is the nearest thing to a nightmare that I have heard of for many a long day.'

Meta Koosega turned the medal over in his fingers. Then he looked through the hole where the string had been by which it had hung to the dead man's neck. Then he looked at it edgeways.

'What are you trying at now?' asked Salter. 'It is as thin as paper; can you get an inscription on a knife edge?'

'No. But I am looking for something to put us on the trail.'

'The only trail is in the cart to St. Louis, and it's long enough in all conscience! What shall we do with these fingers? Throw them into the spout where the others are?'

'They will be shot forth again,' said Sequoyah.

'And so will Spotted Wolf! Eh?'

'It would seem so.'

'Well, we'll throw them in and chance it. It won't do to leave them about.'

'On no account,' said Pure Tobacco. 'Pierre Larue would come and claim them.'

'They say,' said Sequoyah, 'that if you do not burn the bones of the animal you have slain for food, the spirit of

that animal comes to see, and goes back to tell all of its kind to keep out of the way for the future. But that will hardly happen in this case.'

'We shall have the ghost of Larue come, moccasins, medal, and all.'

'That cannot be,' said Sequoyah. 'There may be a spirit of what the Great Spirit has made, but there cannot be a spirit of what is made by the hand of man. If Larue comes, he comes naked. There is no spirit of clothes, of shirts, of moccasins; and as to the medal, where is the spirit of a mineral?'

'Where?' said Pure Tobacco; 'but it may exist all the same.'

And so the splinters of the flinty rock were taken to the geyser and thrown in. The mighty fountain was in full play as the josakeed bore them towards it, but as he approached the column, it perceptibly sank. The stones seemed to have a magical influence, though it was purely a coincidence. The fact was that the period of eruption had ceased; the time had come for a lengthened rest. Down, down, dropped the roaring waters as the internal growling lulled. Soon the huge and no longer beautiful basin was smooth and dry. The water and every fragment of stone had been sucked down the deep tube which now revealed itself in the centre.

Salter went close to the edge and looked into the wide funnel. All was smooth and bare. The eruption was evidently one of a new series, and had cleared out all the deposits that had lain undisturbed for so long.

'Cleared its throat pretty well,' as the trapper said. 'But,' continued he, 'will those things that have gone down out of sight come up again?'

'I know not,' said Sequoyah. 'Perhaps the hole joins in with another spring.'

'That might lead to giving Spotted Wolf a spout up every spring in the valley.'

'Let us leave this place,' said Pure Tobacco.

'And chance it!' said Salter. 'Let us pass on the difficulty to somebody else.'

'Like most other men,' said Sequoyah. 'Now I should like to stay here and find out all about these things.'

'Wal, you're welcome to stay here as long as you like. And the longer you stay the longer you and I shall be in the same neighbourhood. But you or Pure Tobacco ought to get away to St. Louis. I must get back to the shack. I can't spare time to go

tripping it half across the continent. You can. When you come back, you will find me somewhere about; if you don't come back, you can send word. Let the news be generally known, and it's sure to reach me somehow.'

'It is best to go,' said Meta Koosega. 'I will go with you.'

And so Sequoyah left the Firehole river and its geysers, and, to save the difficult road across the mountains, went away first to the north, back through the valley as the trapper had said. He looked at all the wonders on his road, the wells and springs and mud volcanoes. Down the upper, midway, and lower basins, as they are now called, the little ox-cart found its way. Down Obsidian Creek it went, along the road by the marsh, paved with fallen rocks and bounded on each side by the huge angular masses, black and banded, that build up the cliff walls for two hundred feet and more. Under the obsidian walls, at a spot where the black pentagons are capped by huge globular cushions, the camp was pitched; and close by the old Cherokee lighted upon a great heap of flakes and a finished axe left behind by those who in early days had here made their weapons. Here and there along the road were traces of the old trail that led to the Wonderland previous to the memory of the red men.

The next camp was at the great hot springs with their many-tinted pools and brilliant veils, down which the limpid waters overflow. The scene was then in all its wildness and native purity, and the hillside looked as bright and light as the gate to Fairyland, guarded by the frozen cascade that hangs from the lake where the beryl and the turquoise grow.

Next day came the parting between Salter and Sequoyah, who never met again.

'Good-bye, old friend; it may be for the last time.'

'None can tell,' said Sequoyah. 'It may be, but it matters not. We have learnt much together; we cannot undo what has been done, and, though we may even forget each other, our future thoughts will owe much to our present friendship. Good-bye, old friend. I shall not forget!'

'Nor shall I.'

Pure Tobacco and Larue had gone on ahead. The parting with them had been more conventional. They were almost sure to be seen again. And so, when the little ox-cart moved off, the trapper was left alone.

'Good-bye, Sequoyah,' he muttered to himself. 'You are the most go-ahead half Indian that I ever heard of. You have given the redskins their last chance. If you had not thought much of them you would never have helped them. But you are worth the whole boiling, Pure Tobacco and all!'

And he turned his horse's head to the south-west, and set off towards the Falls of the Gardiner, on his way to the meeting-place by the canyon. But he had not forgotten the Hoodoo gold; and when opportunity offered he went prospecting, and finally found the creek from which in after years he drew his fortune.

After a long tedious journey, Sequoyah and his Ojibwa friends appeared in St. Louis, and found out the lawyer to whom the medal thrown from the geyser was to be taken.

The lawyer guessed their business as soon as he heard their names, but he made no sign.

Sequoyah told the story of the strange events in the Firehole Valley, and produced the silver token.

Zennor took it in his hands, looked at it deliberately,

and then, searching in his desk for a stick of red sealing-wax, very leisurely proceeded to take an impression of both sides. Then he rose, and out of a cupboard produced a pile of papers, which he ran through quickly with his fingers until he found what he wanted. This he opened and spread out. It bore two seals, and with them he compared the seals he had just made from the medal.

'Is your name John Larue?' asked he of the boy.

'Yes.'

'Is that so?' he asked the men.

'Yes,' said Sequoyah and Pure Tobacco together.

'Then keep that queer old dollar. It is your father's last gift to you. And he was not such a bad fellow in the end as you have been led to think him. This is his will, and by it he leaves you all he had, turned into coin that you can do what you like with. Three years ago he came here and told me your story. I do not suppose he told me all, but he told me much. His wife had been dead two years, and he had come to think that he had done injustice to your mother and you. So he came here and made this will, and then set off to find you. He thought he would never come back, and he was right. But to get at you somehow he had made up his mind, and so he ground down that dollar and wrote on it what you see. And then he sealed this with it, so that its identity would be unmistakeable if it ever came home—as it has done. That dollar he hung round his neck, intending never to part with it as long as he had life. He heard your people had moved to other hunting-grounds to the west, and off he went from here, thinking he could reach you quickest by the straight road which led across the parts where you found him. That he is dead I have

no doubt; how he died, I know not. He rode out of here a mourning man, resolved to set right what had long been wrong. There is another thing; he was rather superstitious. After he left Rainbow Fork, he was what the world calls a lucky man. And he attributed his luck to a bit of slate with curious characters on it, that he took from Meta Koosega's hut the night before he came away in the canoe. That piece of slate he took with him. He called it his charm. He really believed it would bring you all together. Somehow it has done so. I suppose it was blown up with his body.'

'It is here,' said Pure Tobacco, producing the broken sacred plate.

And Sequoyah told how it had been found.

'Well, it is a strange story, but it has come right in the end,' said the lawyer. 'It would be a satisfaction to know how he met with his death, but I suppose it will remain a mystery.'

But it did not. Before the year was out, the mystery was cleared up by none other than Franklin Salter, who, camping one night with his friends the Bannacks, heard a medicine man tell the story of the death of the man by the pool. The Indian and his fellows had watched him, from the strip of woodland, come from the camp in the crater to look in the pool, when a mist rose from the water that seemed to choke him, for he fell backwards. They fled, for the mist seemed to be spreading so as to cover the valley, but a few months afterwards they were passing that way, and noticed a small geyser playing in the centre of the pool. From this the spray must have drifted to coat the wall on which the plate was found. Of the plate they knew nothing, but they had heard that

some of the Blackfeet had found an outfit among the upper springs, and that would account for the other circumstances of this strange case.

When Salter next met the Ojibwas, he told them the news, and it found its way in due course to St. Louis.

Larue is still living, but much changed in this quickly changing world. His days of trial are over. Happy is he whose troubles come only in his youth! With what he had from his father, and what he had from his mother, who did not die until 1852, he became quite wealthy. And, like many half-breeds, the charms of civilization proved too much for him. He was found out by the missionaries as soon as he returned to his delighted mother, and from them he received such schooling that his learning quite overshadowed that of Pure Tobacco. Indeed he grew to be such an excellent scholar that he started as a professional man.

Should you visit Waterville, a flourishing station on the new C. P. R. R., you will find a handsome house in the main street with 'J. Larue, Solicitor,' on the door. The grey-headed, sallow-faced old man of sixty who may peer at you over the blind is no other than 'The Pursued' of the Cherokees, Pawnees, and Ojibwas,—pursued by his mother, his foe, and his father, all working so strangely for his worldly welfare.

Meta Koosega became quite a well-known character, and the most important personage amongst his people. It was even thought worth while to send an artist to take his portrait, and the visitor to the Washington Indian Department can, if he wishes, gaze on the cheery features of Pure Tobacco, which, be it clearly understood, was the real man's real name.

And what became of Sequoyah?

When he parted from the Ojibwas he re-stocked his cart, and set out to visit the Pawnees of the Loup. Among them he was welcomed as he had been elsewhere, and on the night of his arrival Green Oak gave another supper-party, and Red Owl came to preside. White Hawk, Silky Bear, Prancing Bull, and Yellow Fox were amongst the company that did full justice to Butterfly's famous cookery. Night Cloud was dead, and when Sequoyah had related the strange events in Firehole Valley, White Hawk told him what had happened in the village after the worship of the Star—the last worship, as it proved, for never again was heard the mystic wail of the 'Wah, wah, wah — lee; yah, yah, yah — lee; wolo, yahlo, wo.'

'When I came back,' said White Hawk, 'many of the people were angry. But Night Cloud counselled them to keep quiet, as the Star had spoken. But Spotted Wolf would not be satisfied. And as none would help him, he started off alone.'

'Then was it really Spotted Wolf that Joe saw in the sky?' asked Sequoyah.

'Yes; I think so. Such things have been known before. When a man stands on a hill in the Wonderland it is said he can be seen far off, as though he were on the top of a higher hill; but how it is I know not.'

'Nor do I,' said Sequoyah; 'however, it must be so.'

And Joe said, 'It was so.'

And so it was, being merely a case of mirage, in which layers of air of different temperature or different humidity give different angles of refraction—as explained in all cyclopædias.

Among the Pawnees Sequoyah lived for some time, listening to their legends and noting them in his books.

A strange fate fell to the Pawnees. White Hawk became head chief, and on his death the tribe went very much down in the world. After a time a railway was run through their country, and they secured the privilege of riding free on the line through their territory. Of this privilege they very considerably availed themselves, and many spent the whole of their time on the line, living the life of the Railway Dog of whom all have heard.

At last their land became too valuable to be let lie comparatively waste, and in 1875 the remnants of what, take them all in all, were the noblest of the Indian peoples, were moved into the Indian territory, where their descendants are peaceable tillers of the ground under the patronage, strange to relate, of the Society of Friends. Needless to say there is now no going on the war-path. The worthy Quakers take good care of that.

When Sequoyah moved on again it was to New Mexico, where the story went that part of the Cherokees had settled before the Spanish landed in America.

In 1842 the little ox-cart came to a rest at San Fernandino. The pilgrimage was over. There Sequoyah died.

The men of science have taken care that his name shall never die. They have given the noblest tree that America grows the latinized name of the most gifted of her redskin sons—Sequoia.

THE END.