

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenquies.

J. H. Ingraham

Table of Contents

<u>Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.....</u>	1
<u>J. H. Ingraham.....</u>	2
<u>CHAPTER I The Lodge.....</u>	3
<u>CHAPTER II. Natanis and Sabatis.....</u>	8
<u>CHAPTER III. The Chase.....</u>	13
<u>CHAPTER IV. The Indian Maid.....</u>	17
<u>CHAPTER V. The Lover's Plot.....</u>	22
<u>CHAPTER VI. The Spies.....</u>	27
<u>CHAPTER VII. Canassa and his Daughter.....</u>	32
<u>CHAPTER VIII. The Camp.....</u>	36
<u>CHAPTER IX. The Pursuit.....</u>	41
<u>CHAPTER X. The Two War Chiefs.....</u>	45
<u>Conclusion.....</u>	48

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- [CHAPTER I The Lodge.](#)
- [CHAPTER II. Natanis and Sabatis.](#)
- [CHAPTER III. The Chase.](#)
- [CHAPTER IV. The Indian Maid.](#)
- [CHAPTER V. The Lover's Plot.](#)
- [CHAPTER VI. The Spies.](#)
- [CHAPTER VII. Canassa and his Daughter.](#)
- [CHAPTER VIII. The Camp.](#)
- [CHAPTER IX. The Pursuit.](#)
- [CHAPTER X. The Two War Chiefs.](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

CHAPTER I The Lodge.

The young chieftain Natanis stood in front of his hunting-lodge leaning upon his bow. Tall and noble in person, and in his attitude commanding, yet graceful, he looked like a young Apollo just returned from the chase. At his feet lay a doe with a freshly oozing wound in her soft white breast, and upon the ground by his side crouched, panting, a huge black wolf-dog.

The bronzed chest and right arm of the young Indian were naked. A panther's skin hung negligently from his left shoulder in massive folds. He had slain the fine animal without weapon, as Samson had overpowered the lion, and with a vanity pardonable in a young and handsome chief, wore his skin as a trophy of his exploit. Beneath this shaggy toga was visible a buff-coloured hunting-shirt of dressed deer's hide, girdled at the waist by a gorgeously embroidered belt of wampum. In this belt he carried a long French dagger with a silver handle and sheath of the same metal. His leggins were also of deer's skin, died scarlet and fringed with bead-work in a very curious and beautiful manner. Upon his feet he wore moccasins, elaborately wrought with beads of the richest tints in representations of birds or stags in flight pursued by winged arrows.

At his back was slung a quiver, containing, at this time, a single arrow. The quiver was made of the silvery bark of the birch tree, and ornamented with divers pictorial figures, beautifully colored, though with rudely-drawn outlines. Upon his head he wore no covering; but a band of wampum in which was delicately worked in parti-colored grasses, his name and warlike deeds bound his brow, leaving the jet black masses of hair falling free upon his finely moulded shoulders. From the front of this band towered a bright, scarlet feather, rising above his lofty forehead from amid a dark eagle's plumage that half encircled it like a crescent. This feather was the badge and insignia of his rank as chief of the powerful Abenaquies; and it also gave him the designation, by which he was known among warriors, of—'The Scarlet Feather.'

Before him flowed the waters of the romantic Kennebis, its dark, transparent tide almost bathing his feet and reflecting his stately form. The river was narrow, and its opposite bank almost overcast with its shadows the green spot where the cabin of Natanis stood. It was near the close of a sunny day in October, that season of richness, when Nature, investing herself with a thousand dyes, mocks even the gorgeous palette of the painter.

Natanis gazed silently, as if in admiration, upon the darkly flowing water reflecting from its banks foliage of gold, crimson and orange, and upon the gorgeous forests that clothed the hills and mountains; and from these, his eye rested in the distance through a gorge of the river hills upon a lofty peak shining with snow, and thence uplifted, they reposed upon the deep, still, pure blue of heaven over all.

It was a sweet, secluded spot where the young chieftain had pitched his hunting lodge; a green, quiet vale upon the river back shut in by pleasant hills, yet commanding a beautiful and varied prospect. At intervals as he stood leaning thus upon his bow as if calmly enjoying the scene and the hour before entering his cabin, the sound of a distant waterfall would come fitfully and soothingly to his ear. Drawn up on the green sward before his cabin was a light birch canoe of that graceful shell-shape peculiar to these barks of the sons of the forest; and by the side of his cabin-door reclined the sharp flat paddle and a salmon-spear which he had just before taken out of it; for he had landed at his lodge from his canoe but a few moments before. Around the lodge, upon branches cut for the purpose, hung several skins of deer, stags, and does; and one of a huge black bear, the glittering tusks being left in the head. Within the lodge were a few rude implements for preparing food, and upon the ground was thrown a skin which served the occupant for a couch.

The sun-beams of the closing day had left in shadow the vallies, and were lingering upon the snowy peak of Mount Bigelow, when Natanis changed his position and turned to enter the lodge. Before going in, he sent as if by habit a quick, searching glance up and down the river. As he did so, his eye was arrested by a canoe gliding out of the shadows of the bank below and approaching the lodge. His whole manner was transformed by the sight, as if by magic. His figure dilated and his dark eyes lighted up with fire. He seized his yew bow, which was seven feet long, with a firmer grasp, pressed his knee upon the middle, and strung it till the deer's sinew, which formed the chord, had the tension of a steel rod. Then drawing from the quiver his sole remaining arrow, he fitted it to the string, and throwing himself at once into an attitude defying, and yet inquiring, he waited the movements of the

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

canoe. He saw that it contained two persons, and that they were 'pale faces.'

As the boat came within a hundred yards of the lodge, it stopped at the bank, and one of the men alighted, and waved an Indian *calumet* in token of his peaceful intentions; at the same time he placed against a tree a rifle which he carried, and there leaving it standing, advanced a few paces unarmed, and stood still, as if awaiting the decision of the young Chief.

Natanis, after surveying him a moment longer, seemed to recognize him, dropped the head of his arrow, and holding it and the bow together in one hand, made a dignified motion of the hand for the stranger to approach.—The intruder was a man of extraordinary make, being full six feet and a half in height, yet as slender as a youth of seventeen, a compound of long bones and sinews most uncouthly, yet muscularly put together. He wore a tall, box-skin cap with the tail pointed down his back, a blue, linsey-woolsy hunting frock, checked trowsers, with half, deer-skin leggins and moccasins. He carried a knife, sheathed in a leathern case stuck in a belt that had once been a soldier's, and a sort of haversack of bear-skin was slunk across his left shoulder and rested upon his hip. His countenance was large featured, hardy, and stamped with decision and good nature. He had no beard, his hair was yellow in hue, and worn long and strait over his neck; and his skin was burned as brown as mahogany.

He walked towards Natanis with enormous strides which seemed his natural gait.

'There! stand *there!*' commanded the young chief pointing with his bow to a point about ten paces from him.

'What would you, stranger, that you visit the lodge of Abenaquis?' he enquired with dignity.

'I come as a friend of the Abenaquies,' answered the hunter in the Tarratine language with which he had been addressed. 'If thou art Natanis, "The Scarlet Feather," I am thy friend.'

'The Abenaquis well knows all his friends. He knoweth not thee! yet, he suspects who it is that has sought him in his hunting lodge! I have heard of Ustaloga, called also the "Sharp Knife!"'

'You guess right, Natanis. I am the hunter you call the "Sharp Knife!" If you know me, you know I am the friend of the Abenaquies!'

'I know thou art a great warrior, and art from a child a dweller of the forest with the tribe of the Kennebis; yet I have never seen thee before.— But I believe thou art a friend to our race.'

'I am more Indian than Christian, Scarlet Feather,' said the hunter laughing; 'I never knew my white name, having been taken prisoner by the Chief Ustaloga, who gave me his own name, and raised me a warrior!'

'You have done great deeds in battle, I hear! I am glad to welcome a brave man to my lodge. Enter, Ustaloga, and be welcome to my hospitality. Who comes with you? go bring thy brother.'

'Tis *thy* brother, chief.'

'My brother?' repeated Natanis with surprise, and endeavoring to pierce with his keen eye the foliage which partly hid the companion of the hunter from his sight.

'It is the Sagamore Sabatis, chief. He delays but to bring with him some presents for thee!'

'My brother Sabatis?' cried the young Indian warrior, his fine, dark countenance illuminated with an expression of pleasure, which the next moment passed by, leaving behind a sorrowful expression; for he suddenly recollects that when he and his brother had last parted, it was in coldness.— He therefore restrained the impulse by which he was first moved to hasten to meet him, and remained where he was, calm and silent, awaiting his approach.

The chief, Sabatis, at length advanced towards the lodge, bearing in his hand a package wrapped in the skin of an otter. He was a man of large stature, of great breadth of shoulder, a massive frame, and features bold and prominent. He wore a blue striped blanket, with a deep fringe, wrapped round his form, leggings of undressed deer-skin, and a single eagle's feather tipped with crimson, bound in the masses of his dark locks. He was older than Natanis, and with a sterner visage; yet his carriage was marked by the same lofty port, and haughtiness of air.

'Welcome, brother,' said Natanis, as the Sagamore came near; and he advanced a pace, and stretched forth his hand.

'Natanis, let us meet as brothers;' said the elder, throwing his arms around him and embracing him. The young chief with frankness and cordiality returned the embrace, and the brothers were reconciled!

'Come, brother, let us enter the lodge. I have a doe here, and we will feast together!'

'No, Natanis, not now. I and Sharp Knife have both eaten. I have come to see thee on affairs touching thyself and thy greatness. Let us talk, for we must pursue our journey with the rising of the moon!'

'Whither does the prow of your canoe lead you?'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

‘Northward! We seek in haste the river's source, and our feet must not rest until we have crossed the mountains of the wilderness, and our canoe floats again in the waters that flow north into Lake Megantic.’

‘Why this haste? Do you pursue game, brother, you and Sharp Knife, that you thus follow the trails into the northern wilderness?’

‘Listen, brother!’ answered the Sagamore Sebatis, after the three had seated themselves on skins in front of the lodge, Natanis a little removed from, and facing his guests.

‘My ears are open, brother.’

‘Three moons ago, Natanis, when I sought you in the midst of your people, and there proposed to you to join with me in taking part with the English of Quebec against the pale faces who inhabit our hunting grounds, you refused.’

‘I *did* refuse, Natanis. The English I know not. They are far removed from us! Their king's lodge is beyond the sea, and his hunting grounds lie beyond the rising of the sun. What have we to do with giving our arms and aid to strangers? So I answered thee then, so I answer thee now!’

‘And who are these you would take part with? are they not the very men who invade our hunting grounds, and who press us back from the sea and the pleasant valleys of the rivers into the wilderness? The English of Canada have not robbed us of our lands, and they are at war with those who possess them from the shores of the Kennebis and the Bay of Massachoiset to the far south, more than a moon's journey.’

‘I know not the English. They are neither my foes nor friends! The Americans I do know! I know that there are among them men of wisdom also great warriors! why should I take up the hatchet against them? It is true they dwell upon lands that our father once hunted over; but those lands have been sold to them brother! I shall not mix with this war!’ he concluded in a firm tone of voice.

The Sagamore sat silent, and his countenance grew dark after his brother had ceased. The hunter, seeing that he would soon reply with anger, hastened to prevent any quarrels, and said to him,

‘Scarlet Feather, noble Sagamore, does not show any hostility to the English. He will remain neutral at least.’

‘I want my brother's arm and warriors,’ answered Sebatis sternly and impatiently. ‘I have given the English the promise of mine, and the braves of my tribe. Natanis, we are brothers! We are chiefs over brother tribes, which our father divided between us. Let us not be at enmity. Thy tribe, numbering eight hundred Abanaquies, and mine of a thousand Tarantine warriors, will be of great service to the English.’

‘And have *you*, brother, sold yourself, and your warriors?! demanded Natanis with haughty surprise.

‘No! I have only pledged myself as an ally, and to be ready to serve the English King, whosoever I may be called on!’ replied Sebatis with equal haughtiness.

‘What does he give thee, brother, for this service? asked Natanis with contempt.

‘When the war is ended, I am to have restored to my domains by the English King, the hunting grounds of my fathers, now possessed by the white-faces, and lying between the Kennebis and Andre-coquin!’

‘And this they pledge thee?’ pursued Scarlet Feather, his fine, dark face eloquent with scorn and pity.

‘They do. I have the word of the English Sagamore Carlton whom I saw in Quebec four moons ago!’

‘And what is this service required of thee?’

‘To be ready to march upon the frontier of Massachoissetts whosoever I shall receive orders, placing myself under the command of one of their chiefs to unite with their army against Boston!’

‘And is there such a plan?’ demanded Natanis starting with surprise.

‘The movements of the British I don't fully know. Besides you are their enemy, brother!’ replied Sebatis cautiously, and darting a searching glance upon him.

Said I, I was their enemy?’

‘He did not say so, Sagamore, that is a fact,’ said Sharp Knife readily.

‘True!’

‘Brother!’ said Natanis, speaking with enthusiasm, his dark eye kindling with the fire of scorn and contempt, that was awakened in his generous bosom; ‘have I been so unhappy as to sit here and listen to such base words as thou hast given utterance to! Have I heard a son of the warrior Abanaquis, has Natanis heard his brother confess that he has sold his independence to the Pale-Face? Shame brother! have you been so dazzled by the gold of the white man, that dishonor appears to you without a stain? If you have lost your hunting grounds, are you so craven

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

as to seek their restoration by the aid of the British bayonet? Where are your thousand warriors? are they women? Have they no arms? are they sick? Does it become a warrior chief of the Tarratine nation to descend thus from his dignity and native independence? Have I lived to hear Sabatis confess that he is ready at any moment to place himself and his braves under the command of an inferior chief of the great British Sagamore? Shame, brother! where are the shades of our fathers that they do not rise from their forest graves, and reecho *shame* upon their degenerate son?"

Sabatis listened without moving a muscle. It was plain the Hunter anticipated that he would the next instant spring upon Natanis, for he rose quickly and stepped between them. Sabatis, however, remained perfectly unmoved. The young chief Scarlet Feather having thus spoken with such eloquent indignation his feelings, sat silent, haughtily awaiting his brother's reply. At length Sabatis opened his lips and spake. His voice was calm and deep:

'Brother, you have spoken, and my ears have heard what was in your heart. You are young, and I heed not your fiery speech. What I have done, I have done! I have wisdom, and know what I do. I am chief of my tribe, and I will lead them to what fighting ground I will. We are brothers; let us be at peace. There is my hand.'

Natanis took his brothers' hand, and the two remained a few moments seated in silence. The excitement gradually disappeared from the face of Scarlet Feather, and lighting his calumet, Natanis smoked a few whiffs, and then handed it to Sabatis.

'Brother, where are your warriors?' asked Natanis in a careless tone, after he had again received the pipe from the Sagamore, smoked and handed it to the Hunter.

'They are on the Konoco Lake. They hunt and fish there! I left them three days ago to come hither.' Sabatis cast his eye down as he and Scarlet Feather saw that his brother deceived him in his reply.

'Why are you here? If I am not mistaken this is not far from the Nerijeweas, the foes of your tribe, he remarked in a quiet way.

'Their lodges are in the valley beyond the ridge of hills to the East!' answered Sehatis looking in that direction.

'You are bold also, Scarlet Feather,' said the Hunter to lodge so nigh them! We little thought to find you here!'

'Nor did I look for Sabates so far from his hunting grounds. Why does his brother have the honor of his visit? did Sabatis come expressly to see Natanis, or has he met the Scarlet Feather by accident?'

Sabatis made no reply. He was not inclined to tell the truth! The truth was that the meeting was purely accidental. He had seen and recognized Natanis the moment the latter had beheld the boat advancing, when finding that he was discovered, he had landed and sent 'Sharp Knife' forward, after first holding a short discussion with him; for this unexpected recounter with his brother was far from pleasing, either to him or Sharp Knife. He remained behind himself, to make up a parcel of pretended gifts, from trinkets he had brought to reward such Indians as he might employ in his expedition to assist in carrying his canoe from one river to another. From policy, therefore, he had feigned great joy on beholding his brother, though he apprehended difficulty, in the further prosecution of his purposes in passing up the river, from his opposition, should he discover or suspect the object of this secret expedition.

As Natanis regarded both his brother and the Hunter with a look of suspicion while he put his question to him, the Sagamore said evasively,

'It was accident meeting you *here*, brother! but our visit was to you; though we expected to find you a day's journey to the north and east.'

'My tribe's lodges lie to the south and east! why then should my brother seek for me in the direction he has named?' demanded Natanis with increased suspicion. 'But I am found by you, brother. What would you with Natanis? why have you come so far, and unattended to seek me.'

Before replying, Sebatis spoke a few moments earnestly aside with the Hunter, and seemed to be influenced in his answer by Sharp Knife's opinion.

'To get your final decision, brother! will you take part with the British? If you consent, I have a great advantage to offer you and an important secret for your ear!'

Natanis was about to reply with a stern refusal, when the last words his brother uttered, seemed to suggest to his mind a sudden thought. His whole bearing was instantly changed to one of eager desire and intense interest.

'Advantage said you, brother?' he asked with earnestness. 'What advantage can I gain by joining in this quarrel between the pale-faces?'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

Sabatis looked at Sharp Knife inquiringly as much as to say, 'shall he be trusted?' The Hunter shook his head doubtfully. This was not unnoticed by Natanis, who was by this confirmed in his resolution to adopt the course which had just before suggested itself to his mind.

'Brother, I *fear* to trust you, yet I would do so,' said the Sagamore.

'Did you not come to see me to trust me? Will my brother go again as he came?' and the young warrior rose and walked haughtily away some steps.

'I will *not* trust you, brother,' answered the Chief after a moment's hesitation, rising also. 'By the light of the Great Spirit I will not trust you!'

'We must do it, Sagamore, and confide in Scarlet Feather's honor;' said Sharp Knife very firmly, but in a tone that Scarlet Feather could not hear. 'If we do not, he will, at any rate, suspect us; and as we can't return now but *must* go on with our message, he will of course suspect mischief, seeing us continue our way north, after having visited him. We can give him no excuse for keeping up the river. Besides, if we turn back, and then double on our trail again, you may be sure, with his suspicions awakened as they are, he will be a spy upon our heels. It was the fiend's luck falling in with him here; and I wonder what he is doing, pitching his hunting lodge so far from his own ground, and so near those of the Nerijewecs! It would seem as if he was waiting for us; yet he could not know of our coming; and besides, he doesn't seem to suspect the news we bear! we had best trust him, as I think, from what he just said, he might be brought over to our views; the idea of advantage to himself seems to have taken hold of him.'

The Tarratine chief deliberated a moment, and then, as if deciding to make a confidant of his brother, advanced towards him as he stood gazing silently into the shadowy waters as they flowed by at his feet.

At the moment Sabatis came near, the quick eye of the young chief had detected a stag coming down to the water on the opposite shore to quench his thirst. The shades of evening placed the spot where the lodge stood in dark shadows, it being on the west bank, while the shore on which the stag stood, was still reflecting the light of the western sky. Quicker than lightning, the bow of Scarlet Feather was raised, and his arrow levelled from his ear. Sabatis, who was at the instant, almost within its range, fancying himself the object, sprang back with a cry of surprise, drew his tomahawk from his belt, and brandished it before him! The Hunter sprung forward to arrest the arrow which from the position in which he stood, seemed to his view aimed at the Sagamore's heart. But the arrow flew singing from its string, which rung with a loud twang as if a chord of a base-viol had been strongly struck, and the dashing, headlong plunge of the stag into the flood showed them the true object of the young chief's hostile demonstration. Natanis smiled proudly and said with a tone of mingled grief and contempt,

Brother! did you think that Natanis would lift his hand against the child of his own mother! we are *brothers*.'

The Sagamore gloomily, and with a mortified look, replaced his tomahawk in his girdle, while the hunter, springing into the canoe, darted swiftly across the rapidly flowing river to secure the noble animal which had mingled its life with the dark tide.

CHAPTER II. Natanis and Sabatis.

The two brother-chiefs stood a few moments in silence, watching the receding canoe as it went on its swift course leaving behind it a silvery wake of dancing waters; and when they saw the white Hunter disappear in the shadowy curve of the river, beneath overhanging trees, in pursuit of the stag which the current was bearing away upon its bosom, they turned and gazed upon each other. The forests of the new world have never given birth to two nobler sons than these two warrior brothers. Noble in their persons, commanding in their carriage and height, native majesty seemed enthroned upon their kingly brows. Erect, bold and fearless, with an eye like the eagle's, and his head set upon his arched neck like a stag's, his dignified port tempered by youthful grace, Natanis stood before his brother a model for an Indian Hercules, or, better, the model for a statue which should combine the strength of the Nemean hero with the elegance of Apollo. His high forehead surmounted by his coronet of Eagle's feathers and his towering scarlet plume; his arched brows spanning an eye clear as light and full of courage; his Roman nose, chiselled without a fault, even to the thin, delicate nostril; his expressive, well-shaped mouth which ever betrayed most eloquently by the slightest workings of the bright vermillion lips the least emotion of his soul, with the spirit of intelligence and feeling that shone through all, presented a countenance such as seldom meets the eye, save among the proud, independant, chieftains of the Indian races. His panther's skin, depending from his shoulders, leaving the right arm and breast exposed and hanging like a mantle down to the knee, with the firm manner in which he stood, like a pillar that may not be moved his arm extended and grasping his bow, were in perfect harmony with the whole man, and completed a striking picture of that native independence, and physical dignity characteristic of the Indian warrior.

The Sagamore was of a more powerful make, without the grace which relieved the muscular strength of his brother. He had none of the Apollo in the strong outlines of his massive frame. He was a savage Hercules, gigantic, yet symmetrical; and looked as if he could slay lions by pressing his knee upon their chests, and rending their jaws apart with his hands. His countenance expressed none of that quiet dignity and nobleness of nature which characterized the loftier features of Scarlet Feather. His brow was heavy and very massive, with large, quick, fiery, gleaming black eyes, ever restlessly moving beneath their deep coverts. His complexion was darker and coarser than that of Natanis, and his features stronger and more heavily moulded. His nose indicated great strength of passions and his mouth, full and large, betrayed the existence of a character daring and ferocious. In a word, there was in the face of this chief, with all its dignity of outline, an expression which repelled confidence at first sight, and inspired the opposite sentiments of mistrust and dislike. His cheeks were striped with blue and red paint, drawn in such lines as would increase the natural ferociousness of his aspect. His height, bearing and person were, nevertheless commanding; exhibiting the native majesty of form and stature peculiar to the family of the Abanaquis, from which he, as well as Natanis, had sprung.

'Brother,' said the Sagamore in a deep, guttural tone, 'you are a great brave, and your warriors are as the trees of the forest. Yet you hold dominion over but a third of the hunting-grounds our father swayed.'

'Egos-mah! Natanis hears his brother's words. They are true. What does the Sagamore mean to say more?'

'That Natanis is not a warrior unconcerned to let the pale-face dwell where his fathers' lodges stood! he is not the chief to let the pale-faces' white-winged ships sail upon the rivers that once flowed through his fathers' hunting-grounds, when he can regain them! does Natanis behold the silvery peak of yonder mountain piercing the skies? the boy of fifteen years can remember when, within the eye's wide range from its summit, not the smoke of a white man's cabin curled upward to the clouds; now the huts of the white woodman are fast approaching its base; and ere the boy be gray, from yonder peak the eye of the solitary and homeless Indian shall behold, from horizon to horizon no where ascending the smoke of a lodge belonging to his tribe. The axe of the pale-face will have levelled his forests, and the cities of the pale-face will stand in the vallies and by the rivers! Does my brother hear?' asked Sabatis with a dark frown.

'I hear,' answered Natanis; 'I know that the white man covets our lands, and that he has many leagues of our hunting-grounds! these were not sold him by Natanis, but by our father. Of Natanis, no pale-face shall ever have

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaki.

a bow's span of land, save for his grave. What he received from his father, he will keep.'

'Aio! well spoken, Natanis. Now, we are one. I find in your breast an echo to my own thoughts. But let Natanis open his ears, while his brother speaks. The power of the white warriors increases. The winged ships at every wind bring pale-faces from the rising sun. They must have more lands! Their Sagamore at Boston came to me two moons ago, and asked to buy lands for gold? I refused him!'

'You did well, brother,' said Natanis with pride. 'So came to me a messenger from the same white Chief. I filled a horn with earth, from the grave of our father beneath my lodge, and bade him say to his chief that Natanis never sold the ashes of his ancestors!'

A slight emotion of noble feeling, such as a sentiment like this should awaken, seemed to elevate the expression of the Sagamore's countenance, as he gazed approvingly upon his brother.

'Then, brother, we are one,' he said with emphasis. 'We are not friends to the Pale-faces?' This was spoken with a searching look of inquiry.

'I am neither their friend nor their foe, brother. Our father smoked the calumet of peace with their great Sagamore at Boston, and they are not our enemies.'

'They are *mine*,' answered the Sagamore sternly and vindictively. 'Our father buried the hatchet, but I will unearth it and sharpen it! Sabatis can never sleep while the axe of the white woodman rings from afar in his ears, and he knows the forests which sheltered his fore-fathers are falling to the earth, emblems of our own fall and ruin! No, Natanis, I am the foe of the white-man, the haughty invader of our hunting-grounds! the desecrator of our forest homes!'

'Yet you say, you are the friend of the English?'

'*Dubel dock!* The English are beyond the St. Lawrence, brother. Their lodges, and their Sagamore are upon the rock of Quebec! The English have not taken our lands from us. On the contrary, they are at war with the Pale-faces—the Bostonees, who have robbed us of our inheritance and are daily making invasions upon what remains. I am not hostile to the English! They are a great and powerful nation whose lodges are far off.— We have nothing to fear from them. The Bostonees are our foes, and the English are their foes, therefore should we be the friends of the English.'

'You speak of war between them, brother! with this we have nothing to do. Whichever conquers, will be equally our foe, and equally strive to possess our lands. If the English are conquerors, and take the lands of the Bostonees, they will next want ours, like these. Let us not mingle in the quarrel, brother.'

'*Saw-got!* I have already done it. I have pledged myself to be the friend of the English Sagamore. He has sent me great presents, and has promised to give me back all my hunting grounds if he conquers the Pale-faces who hold them. Now, brother, the same offers he will make you! Behold here are some of the presents I have received!' and the chief unfolded the otter-skin to display his gifts. 'These I bring to thee as a pledge of what thou shalt hereafter receive. Behold! here are sharp spear heads of shining steel, barbed arrow-heads, glittering medals, a coronet of silver, medals of gold, and bracelets of precious stone.'

'For such trinkets as these is Sabatis bought?' cried Scarlet Feather contemptuously, glancing at them, and then turning his eyes scornfully away.

'*Ou-wa!* These are but trifles to what I have, brother,' answered Sabatis frowning darkly, and looking disappointed at the indifference of his brother to what had dazzled his more savage eye; though, as we have before said, these trinkets were not brought as a present for Scarlet Feather, but only offered to him as an after-thought to help conceal the true nature of his mission.

'You spoke to me of advantage, brother,' said Natanis. 'These gew-gaws tempt me not! They will please a woman!'

'See! These are spear-heads and arrow-heads of steel!'

'They tempt me not. What advantage didst thou speak of, a while ago?'

'Have I not told thee?—the restoration of thy hunting-grounds.'

When I want them, I and my warriors shall recover them. I would not follow the noblest deer that ever roamed in the forest, one bound upon lands made mine by the British bayonet!'

'*Saw-got!* If thou wert not my mother's son, I would quarrel with thee! but, peace be between us! know then, Natanis, I am to take sides with the British. Swear to me that you will not take part, thou and thy warriors with the Bostonees!'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenakis.

‘That I will swear most cheerfully, brother. I am not in want of gold that I should sell my warlike independence even to these, though I have towards them more friendly feelings than I have towards the English. Dost thou not remember that our father in one of his hunting expeditions beyond the mountains of the north encountered a white Hunter, an Englishman from the Canadas. He found him torn by a bear and dying for want of succor. Our father took him to his lodge, bound up his wounds, and hospitably entertained him until he recovered; and when he was once more strong he sent two of his people with him, to guide him to the white-man’s lodges on the Chaudiere. When the white man came among his own people, he invited his guides into the lodge of the Sagamore, on the pretence of refreshing and rewarding them; and taking advantage of their confidence they took them captive and sent them to Quebec bound as prisoners, whence one escaped, (the other having died) to tell the shameful tale of English treachery.’

I heard the tale. But ‘tis nothing. So would the Bostonee have done. They speak one tongue, and their fathers dwelt in the same lodge under the same great Sagamore!’

‘Haar what the Bostonee did do. Three winter’s ago, I was hunting on the lower Kennebis. The doe I was in pursuit of, leaped from a precipice, and before I could check my speed, I followed and fell many feet, and lay there insensible and bruised from the fall, I know not how long. When I came to myself, I was lying upon a bear-skin in the lodge of a white-hunter—of a Bostonee. He was watching over me with the gentleness of a maiden who watches the couch of her sleeping lover. Ten days I was his guest, and when I left to seek the lodges of my people he accompanied me, taking me in his own canoe till the smoke of my lodge was in sight. He then said to me,

‘Chief, when next you meet a white man in your hunting—grounds in distress, remember me and succor him, even though he hath slain thy brother! In me, you behold Kresley the Fish-Speaker!’

‘And who was he?’ demanded Sabatis impatiently.

‘I had the year before, with an arrow in shooting at a deer, by accident slain *his* brother!’ answered Natanis impressively. ‘Now judge you, brother,’ he added after a few moments silence, ‘between the English of Canada, and the generous Bostonee Hunter.’

‘And for this only, you are hostile to one people, and a friend to the other?’

‘I am willing my tribe should be judged by any one of my people in it,’ answered the young chief proudly.

‘At this moment Sharp Knife landed a few yards below them, with the dead stag in the boat. The Sagamore approached him, and briefly informed him of the issue of his conversation with his brother.

‘Well, Chief,’ said the Hunter, ‘if he can’t be prevailed on, and is so prejudiced, why, the only way we can do, is to let him alone and keep on our way. The moon will be up soon. He had better suspect, than know the truth, as he might possibly put some obstacle in our way; and we have not an hour to lose. I had rather have lost my rifle than fallen in with him!’

‘I am resolved, when the moon rises, to take leave of him and proceed *down* the river. After a mile or two, we can take to the forests and double so as to gain a point above him, and then take to the river again! we shall have to pass full near the lodges of Neridgewecs to do this!’

‘This will be our only course. It is quite likely he is by this time satisfied that your only object in coming here, was to get him to take part in the quarrel. I don’t think he will suspect us; for it is impossible he can yet know the truth; not the fastest runner could have got up the river in advance of us. So let us deceive him by putting back awhile, and then keep on our course again as fast as we can move forward by water and trail.’

The course here suggested, was decided on. The Sagamore approached his brother, and soon afterwards took leave of him, the parting being cold and distrustful on both sides. They then reentered their boat, Scarlet Feather accompanying them to the bank; and just as the moon appeared above the forest-line in the eastern horizon, the canoe floated into the stream, and, propelled by the strong arm of the tall Hunter, shot rapidly down the tide, and was soon lost to the gaze of the young Chieftain in the gloomy shadows of the overhanging shores.

Natanis remained standing for some moments where his brother had last parted from him, his arms folded across his breast, his face thoughtful, and his manner grave.

‘This is a strange visit of Sabatis to me!’ he said, in a slow reflecting tone. ‘There is something lies deeper than the surface I have had shown me! my brother came not thus far from his own hunting grounds to ask me what he knew before, and then to go back again as he came. Their canoe was standing up the river, and but for seeing me here, I am sure it would have kept on its upward course. There is, perhaps, treachery meant towards me. Sabatis

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

loves me not; and would readily sacrifice me to his own ambition. His visit in this quarter is not to see me, alone, else why did he make me no definite proposition? It is clear my presence here was unlooked for by both him and Sharp Knite, and their embarrassment I could read in their looks and efforts to ingratiate me. Nor could they have known my hunting lodge was here. Not one of my own warriors knows it, nor hath any one crossed my trail the three days I have been here. My presence here is known only to *one!*"

And he pronounced the last word his face assumed an expression of tenderness and gentle pride, and looking towards the moon he said, with lively emotion,

"It is time I sought again the lodge of Willewa. For *love's sake*, might I have answered the white Hunter, am I here in the huntinfi-grounds of the Norigeweas! for the sake of the beautiful Pearl of the Eye, is the huntinglodge of Natanis pitched in the sight of the smokes of a tribe hostile to his fathers!"

As he spoke he turned from the spot and advanced towards his lodge.— As he came near it, he saw standing before it a young female who, while he was gazing down the river after the departing Sagamore, had crossed the stream above, in a light bark propelled by her own hand, and landed near his cabin, which she approached with shrinking, yet anxiously hurried steps.

"Willewa!" he exclaimed, recognizing her, for the moon shed her radiance full upon the spot where she stood.

"Natanis! Pardon me! I came hither to—"

He interrupted the tremulous, musical tones with which she would have hurriedly explained her errand, by pressing her to his manly breast, and saying, smilingly,

"What need I care, fair Peal of my Eyes, what brought thee hither, so I behold thee, and know thou art present with me? Comest thou, doubtless, to chide Natanis for loitering when he should have been on his way to meet thee at the Doe's fountain beyond the river, as he promised last night when he parted from thee there!" and again he pressed the graceful Indian girl to his heart; and then holding her back, gazed by the moonlight upon her lovely olive brow, and ingenious countenance, over which grateful love, and maidenly modesty, played charmingly.

"Natanis, I bring thee strange, and weighty news!" she said withdrawing herself with sweet, native dignity from his ardent gaze.

"What, dear Willewa? Has thy pet doe escaped? or the singing bird I gave thee flown away to its fellows in the wood? or—"

"Nay, Natanis, I have more serious news than this," answered the indian maiden impressively.

"Then I will hear thee tell what makes thy warbling tones so sad to-night. Sit down in my lodge, for thy heart throbs like a fawn's that has been pursued! There is my mantle," he said taking the panther's skin from his shoulders, and throwing it down upon the floor of his lodge.

No, not in thy lodge, Natanis," she said with blushing embarrassment.— "Here, without by the door in the fair moonlight!"

"Then here in the fair moonlight, sweet Pearl of my Eyes!" said the lover playfully; and taking the skin from the lodge, he placed it for her upon the ground outside. "Now what have those little talking cherries to say?" he said touching her lips lightly with his forefinger.

But ere we listen to what the beautiful Willewa has to reveal to her noble lover, which brought her at that hour alone, to seek him at his lodge, we will tell who this maiden was. Allusion has already been made to the tribe of Norigeweas as having their national lodges not far from where Natanis had planted his own hunting cabin, and as being hostile to him and his tribe. This people were once the most warlike and imperious in all the East. Their tribe had originally, in centuries past, belonged to the Tarratine and Abanaquis races, from which all the inferior tribes in Maine had also sprung. The Norigeweas were a powerful Tarratine family which had rebelled under a younger brother of the Tarratine King, and never being subdued, had increased to become a distinct and powerful tribe. Its sway extended over the vast region between the falls of the Kennebbis, and the mountains of the northern wilderness; and its chiefs were all distinguished for their warlike courage. The feud which existed from its very origin between this tribe and the equally powerful families of the Tarratine's and Abanaquis, kept alive in all three nations a spirit of war, and an hereditary quarrel. The Tarratine and Abanaquir chiefs were by no means disposed to acknowledge the independance of a revolted tribe, though three hundred years had elapsed since the original offence; nor was the haughty rebel ceiftain disposed to yield submission to a power that was no stronger than himself.

This state of hostile feeling prevented all intercourse between the parties, and the warriors of both families

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

only met in the hunt, to convert the hunting-field into a battle plain.

It was on such an occasion as this not long before the opening of our story, thht Natanis chanced to see Willewa the beauteous daughter of the proud Nerijewca chieftain Canassa! But we have the further development of this love-passage to the next chaptor.

CHAPTER III. The Chase.

It was about two months previous to the time we have chosen for the opening of our story, that Scarlet Feather, at the head of thirty young warriors of his tribe, left his national lodges, on the beautiful lake Tuteloe, for a grand hunting expedition. As the past season the Nerigewecs had penetrated his hunting—grounds, and driven the deer from the rivers to the wilderness, Natanis resolved not only to pursue the chase towards the mountains, but also invade the territories of the Nerigewecs, by crossing their hunting grounds to the upper forest, instead of following the course of the river, which, among all the tribes, was held sacred as a common thorough—fare. The afternoon after leaving his own people, he crossed the Kennebis above the falls of the Nerigewecs, and entered upon their hunting grounds.

The young men whom Scarlet Feather had selected from his warriors for this expedition were about his own age, and among the very bravest of his followers; and in nobleness of spirit, and pride of character they were not unlike himself. After they had crossed the river and stood together upon a rock upon which they had landed, with the towering forests of their foes rising majestically around them, Natanis with a wave of his hand gathered his braves around him, and thus addressed them:

‘Warriors and brothers! we are now pressing with our feet the soil of the haughty Nerijewee! In these forests they hunt their game, and from the bosom of yonder hills ascend the smokes of their lodges. We are Abenaquies, and do not fear to stand in the sight of the lodges of our foes. We have entered their hunting grounds to pursue in them the deer and the bear and the moose, as we do in our own. Natanis would not have been the first aggressor upon their territories, for he is content with his own, and the deer loves the shade of our forests as well as that of our foes! But the proud Chief Canassa has invaded our lands, and hunted the doe before the very doors of our lodges. His warriors have driven the game from our rivers and lakes when we were hunting on the hills, and we must pursue the chase even to the mountains that we may have food and raiment for ourselves and our little ones. It is true, we can follow the river's course to where deer are plenty, but 'tis a day's journey farther, than crossing the hunting grounds of our foes. Let us enter them and pursue the chase, and at our leisure go northward to the hills; it may be the forests of our enemies will furnish game an abundance without seeking it in the wilderness of the north.— Now, my braves, you know what is the mind of Natanis. Let us go onward to the hunt, and while we pursue the game that offers, let us not forget that we are surrounded with foes, and act with wisdom and prudence. Let no warrior go alone, but keep together in parties of ten; and when danger menaces, let us give the hunting war cry of the Abenaquies, and reunite for defence! Attack none of the braves of the Nerigewecs if you cross them in your path; for we are hunters and our arrows are sharpened only for the deer and the wild beast. But if we are attacked we will let the Nerigewecs know that we are the sons of Abanaquis!’

This address of the young chief wa received with a shout of warlike enthusiasm, by the young braves around him, and the clashing of their bows and spears together manifested a disposition more for the battle than the chase. The scene presented at this moment was singularly brilliant, yet wildly savage. Natanis stood alone upon a slight elevation of the rock which overhung the dark water as it went wheeling and rushing past at its base in a hundred involving circles. Above his head towered a majestic oak, which overshadowed him and his braves. The opposite banks were high and precipitous, clothed with wood to their summits, save where here and there a bold boary rock forced its rugged brow, or shoulder through the foliage that enveloped it like a mantle. Upon the lofty spine of a lightning—blasted pine sat an eagle, who at intervals shook his immense pinions, and uttered the fierce, shrill shriek, which the Indian Warrior imitates and makes his war—cry. Around the young Chief stood his braves, a picturesque and formidable band, dressed in skins or gay mantles, with plumes nodding above their brows, spears or bows in their hands, painted quivers at their backs, and with their bronzed breasts and right arm naked. They stood around him with dark, earnest, brave countenances, and flashing eyes, their nostrils working like those of the impatient charger, and their attitudes spirited and daring.

‘Yonder eagle gazes down upon us, and his shriek is warlike; but let us not catch his spirit to—day, my braves!’ said Natanis, as he looked from the noble bird upon his followers with an air of pride. ‘We are hunters and not

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

warriors, until the war-cry of the Nerijewecs is heard in our ears.— *Then*, let us sheath the hunting-knife, and grasp the war-hatchet as become Abanaquies. Now to thee hase, brothers. He who strikes down the first stag shall have a feather from the crest of yonder eagle.'

As he spoke, he fitted an arrow to his yew-bow and sent the fatal missile flying upward and onward over the river with unerring velocity. The Eagle uttered a fierce cry as he saw the whizzing messenger of death approaching, and spread his heavy wings to soar. But the light dart pierced his majestic breast and fastened its barbs deep in his body. He nevertheless rose, and darted wildly through the air in irregular flight, now essaying to ascend, and then plunging impotently perpendicularly far downward; but recovering himself ere he struck the water soared again, madly, the while, plucking at the arrow with his strong beak, and vainly endeavoring to tear it from his body.

‘Nay! Let him soar, Ayane’, cried Natanis to a youthful Indian by his side who suddenly drew an arrow to the bead, and was about to launch it from the string, as he saw the Eagle, after nearly striking the water, rise perpendicularly upward again; ‘Let him battle with his fate, Ayane. He struggles bravely, and has a noble spirit! I would my arrow had not flown so truly, for I am sorry that I sent him his death. It is like seeing a brave warrior-chief die. Look! Behold! he has torn the dart from his bosom with his ferocious beak, and holding it in his talon rises proudly and triumphantly into the air!’

All eyes watched the Eagle as he went soaring into the skies, higher and higher, till he appeared to the eye no bigger than a sparrow. He then seemed to become stationery, when Natanis exclaimed,

‘The noble bird will live; he deserves his life. My shaft pierced not to his proud heart. No! See, my braves! he descends like the lightning from a cloud!’

There was a general murmur of surprise and savage admiration, as they saw the bird falling from the skies with the velocity of an arrow. The descent, though as rapid as the eye could follow its course, was erratic and irregular, the wings now wildly flapping, and now pressed closely to the body, and then again flaring wide. It was therefore evident that the bird was either dead, or had no control over himself. Nearer and nearer the earth came the huge body, making the air roar as it passed through it, in its swift descent, when suddenly it plunged into the current close at the feet of the hunting party, dashing over them, in its heavy plunge, a shower of spray.

Ayane, the young Indian, leaped into the flood, and bearing it to the shore, laid at the feet of Natanis the dead monarch of the mountain peaks, the arrow which the young Chief had launched at his breast, still clenched in the iron-grasp of his talon.

Natanis plucked from the crest of the war-eagle a tuft of feathers, and placing them among those of his own coronet, said,

‘Now, my braves, to the chase. He who strikes down the first stag in the hunting-grounds of the Nerijewec shall wear this Eagle’s crest in token of his rank as a hunting-chief.’

The party of hunters now formed in three divisions, and in a few moments were moving in as many lines, nearly parallel with each other, through the forest, in the direction of the river uplands, where they knew the deer would be, at that hour feeding. For the night, Natanis had appointed a rendezvous at a fountain about two leagues northward, near the river’s bank. Leaving the two hunting parties to which Natanis was not attached, to pursue the chase in their own way, we shall follow our young Chief and his hunters. Natanis kept on for about a mile without seeing any game, but crossing three trails which he knew to belong to some hunting-party of the hostile tribe, whose territories he was so boldly invading. He at length came to a small, but beautiful lake placed in the midst of the forest, like a crystal vase set in a bed of flowers. Gentle hillsides, clothed with fragrantly blooming trees, ascended from its circular brim, birds were singing in the over-hanging branches, fishes were glauzing in the sun-light beneath its surface, and the deep blue sky without a cloud, was reflected in its bosom. To add to the rare beauty of this gem in the wilderness, a small island, green as emerald, with a few old oaks growing upon it, and casting beneath an inviting shade, was anchored in the midst. On this island, the shores of which, on all sides of it, were about a quarter of a mile or a long bow’s shot from the shores of the lake, the birds were more numerous than on the main, filling the old oak grove with melody, while deer and does were grazing or reclining in the peaceful glades. The island was not large, being not two arrow-flights across, either in length or breadth.

When Natanis came suddenly upon this beautiful lake of the forests, he paused upon its shores a few moments to contemplate its quiet; for the child of nature loves to gaze on the features of the Great Parent, on whose bosom he has been nourished, and has a heart to feel and a mind to appreciate the fairer lines of her beauty.

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

While he stood there, wrapped in pleased surprise, a herd of deer was discovered by his warriors, cooling their limbs in the water, about half way round the circle of the lake. There were visible, full a score of these animals, among them three stately stags. Desirous of striking the first stag, the whole party started in excited pursuit, not even looking round to see if they were followed by their Chief, but rather emulous to outstrip him in the chase. Ayane, however, after running along the sparkling sands of the beach a few hundred yards and seeing that Natauis did not follow, turned back and rejoined him.

'Go with the hunters, Ayane;' said the Chief to him in the kind tone in which he always spoke to the youth whose eyes, looks and manner evinced the closest devotion and love for his Chieftain.

'Ayane would not leave Natanis alone, with foes around,' answered the young Abanaquis.

'Then come with me! I see on the island the antlers of a nobler stag than stands in the water among yonder herd they have gone in pursuit of. He must be the King of his species, and as such worthy to receive his death wound at the hand of Natanis!' The young chief spoke with that simple and ingenuous pride, that native dignity of character peculiar to the Indian, as if properly conscious of his power and independence as the Princely head of a warlike tribe.

'How can we react the island, my chief?' asked Ayane, his dark eyes brightening as he beheld the majestic autlers which Natanis had pointed out, peering above a group of shrubbery near the shore of the island.

'There lies a canoe of the Nerijewecs' answered Natains, pointing to a birchen *conoi* half-concealed under the drooping foliage of a willow that hung like like a vast green umbrella over the bank, leaving beneath a sort of arching shelter, within which the little bark was moored.

Ayane sprang into the canoe, and emerged in it from its covert, and the chief standing upright in its centre, the young Indian propelled it swiftly towards the island. Natanis stood up with his bow strung, and the feather of his arrow between his fore-finger and thumb, and with his eye keenly watching the moving antlers over the top of the bushes. Suddenly a dashing of water came from the lake shore and Natanis saw the whole herd of deer in motion, having discovered the approaching party of hunters, who, as they came near them, had separated so as to encircle them and enclose them with the lake in their rear. But the stags first took the alarm and tossing their branching heads high into the air, shook them, snuffed up the wind, snorted like horses when alarmed, and then dashed towards the forest coverts. Then came the wild, answering cries of the hunters, and arrows winged with death flew among the terrified fugitives, and one here and one there plunged headlong in full course and struggled in the ensanguined waters around them. The stag and a dozen of the does reached the wood and went flying down its glades, the Indian hunters in fierce pursuit.

Natanis watched this spirited scene with an excited countenance, and then turned his eyes upon the island which they were closely approaching. The majestic stag, which had allured him from the main, had taken the alarm, and unable to see, from his position, the hunters and the herd they were pursuing, on account of the intervention of trees, he stood still upon a green knoll, to which he had trotted, his antlers aloft, his head thrown back, his eyes strained and starting, and his attitude was that of flight without motion.

He was a noble animal, as large as a war-charger, with a skin the tawny hue of the lion's, and a broad, massive chest, white as snow. Natanis drew his arrow to his ear, when the stag discovered him, and tossing his head up and down several times in defiance, the arrow of the young Chief was caught upon his shield-like antlers, and shivered like glass. The next moment Natanis was upon the shore with his hunting lance in his band. He launched it as he struck the beach, but the stag was already in full flight.— Natanis recovered his lauce, and his dog, which had accompanied him, swimming along with the boat from the main, bringing him to bay, he a second time cast it, and wounded the noble animal in the shoulder. The stag again fled, and was again brought to bay by the staunch hound, and maddened by his wound, he rushed, forward and by a fierce stroke of his antler embowelled the dog, and then trampled upon him with his strong hoofs. An arrow from the bow of Natanis fastened itself in his neck, and the outraged monarch of the forest, shaking it to the ground, and made furious by the pain, dashed towards the young Chief, emitting a harsh noise from his lungs, like the angry roaring of a bull. So sudden and unexpected was the change that Natanis, who, at that moment had his hand in the quiver withdrawing a third arrow, would have been thrown down by the infuriated animal, but for an arrow from the bow of Ayane who was close behind him. The young Indian had aimed so truly that the point of the dart penetrated deep into the breast of the stag, who reared high in the air and gave utterance to a cry as shrill as the shriek of an Eagle. Ayane, seeing him stagger and bleed copiously, sprang forward, elevating his knife to strike him to the heart, when the stag,

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

lowering his head caught him upon his broad antlers, and tossed him high into the air. With the effort, the stag reeled and fell to the earth, while the sharp dagger of Scarlet Feather entered his heart. The young chief then flew to the succor of his young brave, who lay insensible upon the ground, where he had descended in his heavy fall. Raising him up in his arms he tenderly bore him to the water-side, where he bathed his temples and used other means to restore him to consciousness, while he carefully bound up a wound that was freshly bleeding in his side. At length Ayane opened his eyes and gratefully acknowledging by a glance of affection the kindness of his chief, breathed a deep sigh of pain, and again sunk into unconsciousness.

Natanis, distressed for the fate of the young warrior, to whom his soul was bound with the bonds of more than brotherly love, looked round as if seeking for assistance. None of his people were visible, and he hastened to a slight eminence in the centre of the island, where he could obtain a view of the main on the opposite side of it, where the hunters had surprised the herd of deer. But he could see only two or three wounded does dragging themselves to the water, to quench their feverish thirst but all else was without life.

‘They have penetrated the forest and are now lost to sight. I will give the hunting cry of recall, though it may bring upon me even a band of my foes. Ayane must not perish, but be borne to our lodges by some of the warriors. Poor Ayane! This thou hast suffered to save me. I had rather it had been me than thee, for thou hast the love of a gentle maiden, whose eyes will weep tears of grief for thee. But *I am alone*! ’

As he spoke he raised his fingers to his lips, and the shores of the lake and the deep forests beyond, rung and echoed with the shrill eagle-cry of the young chief. Again the wild alarm of the hunter rose upon the air, rising note after note, till the very eagles of the cliffs on the river, soared from their eyries and answered it from the sky. But no human reply reached his ears.

With a look of disappointment he hastened back to his friend whom he found in a deep, yet suffering sleep. He took him in his arms and bore him far into the grove where the coolness and shelter invited to repose. Here he laid him upon a bed of moss, softer than piled velvet; and seating himself by his side, he took his hand and gazed sadly upon him, forgetful of the chase, and of all else save the sacred offices of friendship.

The day was drawing to a close, and the long lines of alternate sun-beams and shadows that the setting sun leaves in his path, were stretching across the green sward of the island, and Natanis still remained by the stumbering youth, carefully watching each motion and anxiously regarding every sign of returning sensibility. Before him was an opening in the trees which gave him a glimpse from the island across the water into the wood on the main, and up a narrow and secluded creek that lost itself in the forest-depths. It was on the side of the island oposite to that on which the herd of deer had been started, and the inlet had not before been noticed by him, especially as its mouth was closely shielded by overhanging trees. While his eyes were absently regarding the spot, he fancied he detected a thin, blue smoke winding its way over the distant tree tops and gently curling in the sunny air. He watched the appearance more steadily and was satisfied that he was not deceived.

‘There is a lodge!’ he exclaimed with animation; ‘whether of foe or friend it matters not! Ayane must have shelter to-night! I will leave him to seek the place whence the smoke issues. Even thy haughty chief Canassa will not refuse hospitality to his enemy who craves it.

He gazed a few moments anxiously upon the wounded and insensible young hunter, and seeing that there was no change manifest in his condition, he was about to rise to depart on his errand, when he felt a tongue licking his hand. He turned and saw the large, noble stag-hound, whom he had forgotten, and supposed dead, crouching by his side. Behind him he saw a trail of blood with which he had died the grass as he slowly dragged himself over it to his master’s side.

‘Poor Keenuck!’ said Natanis sadly, laying his hand kindly upon his majestic head; ‘sorrowing for Ayane I had not a thought for thee. The fierce stag has torn thee terribly, poor dog!’

Keenuck looked gratefully and affectionately with his blood shot and heavy eyes up into the face of his friend, stretched forth his shaggy neck to lick his hand once more, and then keeping his fading eyes upon his countenance, till the slowly drooping lid shut in his sight forever, the faithful creature, with just strength enough to lay his head upon his master’s knee, sighed heavily and died.

Natanis surveyed him a few moments with a look of melancholy regret, and then, brushing a manly tear from his eyes, he hastened to the shore and cast himself into the canoe.

CHAPTER IV. The Indian Maid.

The young Chief, after reaching the water-side, had returned for Ayane, and placed him in the canoe, still sleeping. He then seized the slender paddle and propelled the light, birchen bark across the space between the island and the shore, with the speed of an arrow, the bright, orange-colored sides of the graceful canoe shining like gold as they glanced in the level beams of the sun. He soon reached the entrance of the inlet, and shot his boat forward between its green banks, stooping low as he passed into it to avoid the bending branches that arched over it, nearly meeting in the centre.

The inlet was winding and narrow, with so dense a covering of foliage suspended from vines that swung from tree to tree, that the sun-light only penetrated it here and there, through a larger opening in the verdant canopy. It was like entering, and sailing far into a cavern of foliage.

Natanis did not regard the solitude or the singular beauty of the tortuous canal up which he was moving; but with one object in view, the safety and shelter of his young friend, he steadily ascended the stream, his passage disturbing many a singing bird on its leafy branch, and startling many a fawn from its covert. He had been advancing up the inlet for about ten minutes in this way, when he saw appearing before him through the trees a bright sunny knoll rising gently from the water; and he pushed forward to reach the bright scene. In a few moments he emerged from the umbrageous inlet into the loveliest spot his eyes had ever beheld, or his fancy had ever painted. He suspended his paddle in the act of cleaving the water to gaze around him. There was, just before him a lovely basin scooped out by nature from a table of the purest marble, and into it, from the top of a dark green rock, leaped a glittering cascade. The sound of its ceaseless fall filled the place with a soothing murmur, with which was mingled the rippling of a score of mimic torrents, which, clambering over the brim of the vast marble basin which was overrunning to its edge, leaped sparkling and laughing down the rocky sides, or flowed smoothly and shining over the green sward to mingle with a deep pool in which the inlet up which he had come, lost itself. The verge of the pool was hung with the richest mosses, and around the basin, on the terrace above it, clambered vines and other creeping plants in full and brilliant flower, loading the air with clouds of perfume. Upon the summit of the white marble precipice, the dazzling surface of which was every where relieved by a net-work of foliage-laden tendrils and gorgeous bouquets of blooming shrubs planted by the tasteful hand of nature in every crevice that would nourish a green plant; upon the summit, over all, was a fringe of cedars and laurel-trees, forming against the sky a rich and beautiful outline to the lovely scene below. The whole place was sheltered by the encroaching forest, and seemed a fit abode for that Indian Fairy, called the 'Lady of the Waters and Woods.'

The scenery, however, did not alone command the surprised attention of the young Chief. His eyes had discovered in a little valley not twenty paces wide lying between the bright sun-lit knoll and the basin and carpeted with the softest green, a group of acacia-trees amid which he thought he discovered a lodge. He gave a few strokes of his paddle lightly in the water as if fearing to disturb the calm repose of the beauteous place in which he found himself, and entered the pool beneath the basin. He now saw plainly that there was a lodge half hid in the group of acacias close by the water-fall. With a sort of awe and curiosity, but with the situation of Ayane and his need of succor uppermost in his thoughts, he touched the moss-clad verge of the dark pool and landed.

He looked, and seeing that his friend continued to sleep with laboured and heavy breathing, he hastened forward to the lodge which was not twenty paces distant, up a gentle ascent of natural lawn. He went forward with the spear grasped in his hand, for he expected to meet foes in the hunting-grounds of his foes, yet was prepared to crave that hospitality which no Indian warrior ever refused to his enemy in distress. He had not gone five steps when a beautiful doe bounded from the other side of the knoll where it was quietly browsing, and darted with fear towards the lodge. He saw with surprise that its neck was encircled by a band or circlet of wampum beautifully ornamented with shells, which jingled musically as it bounded away. Softly he advanced with a watchful eye lest he should be surprized, and with a noiseless step that he might not alarm the inmates of the lodge ere he should reach its threshold. As he entered under the acacias he saw white shells strewn upon the ground, and a sort of

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

path-way leading to the basin. Every thing had an air of singular neatness. The lodge was tastefully constructed of interwoven garlands. A white deer skin elaborately embroidered with dyed threads of bark and the glazed quills of the porcupine, hung before the entrance for a door, but was now partly drawn aside. Within, the ground was laid thick with bear-skins, and the sides of the lodge were hung with dressed doe's-hides with ornaments worked upon them. On every side, as well as that which formed the door, Natanis saw conspicuous the representation of a bear's claw grasping a hunting-spear, which he knew to be the device of the Nerijewic chief, Canassa. He, therefore, knew that this was not only a lodge of this tribe, but of some one of Canassa's family; and he was too familiar with the customs of the Indian race to be told that the occupant of this lodge was a female, and perhaps a maiden; for there was upon the floor of the lodge, a pair of mocassins of delicate workmanship, and of a size, both together, not longer than the length and breadth of Scarlet Feather's hand. He saw, also, a beautiful tiara of feathers hanging upon an antler above a fawn's skin, that served as a couch for the occupant, and near it, upon another horn of the antler, a mantle of golden, orange and green colored feathers curiously woven together, and forming a magnificent mantle.

When Natanis saw the tiara and the mantle he stepped back with respectful awe; for he knew that none else than a princess of the tribe could be the tenant of that fair home. He then remembered that he had heard that Canassa had a daughter exceedingly beautiful. With an emotion of diffidence such as became a young Chief, he drew back from the door of the lodge, refusing to enter it, and looked eagerly around for the mistress of that charming habitation; for he felt not only a curiosity to behold the daughter of his foe, but he felt that in her, his young friend would find a protector and a careful nurse; for he knew the skill and gentleness of the daughters of the forest and that their benevolence acknowledged no distinction between friend and foe.

Scarlet Feather was, also, by no means unimpressed with the startling fact that the lodge of Canassa and those of his warriors could not be far from the spot where that of the Prince's was found. But Natanis knew no fear; and, so that he had his friend in safety he thought not of himself. Nevertheless, he did not intermit that caution and circumspection which was needful; for, if it were possible to find shelter for Ayane without falling in with Canassa or any of his people, Natanis would gladly have avoided meeting them; especially as he reflected that he had brought upon himself his present difficulties, by an act of hostility upon the very domains of his hereditary foe. Being, therefore, uncertain how Canassa might receive him, he was desirous of finding the princess, and securing first her favor and her protection for his young friend. He therefore turned aside from the lodge, and followed the shell-path towards the basin, for he had discovered light foot-prints leading in that direction from the door of the lodge. He was also quite confident she must be near, as the doe, which he supposed to be her pet, after skipping to the side of the marble terrace stopped and gazed wistfully behind a rocky wall by which a portion of the basin was hidden from him. He approached the doe, when the animal, with a startled look, made a sudden leap behind the rock and disappeared.

'Neta, what has alarmed you, my gentle doe?' said a soft, musical voice which distinctly reached his ear from that side of the basin which was hidden from him by the rock behind which the doe had bounded.

He stood transfixed with delightful surprise. The sound of the sweet, lute-like tones he had heard not only fell upon his ear, but thrilled across the chords of his heart as if love's invisible finger had swept them. With a richer color deepening the olive hue of his brow and cheek, he advanced softly, and lightly ascending the rock which overhung the basin a few feet above it, he looked down. As he gazed, he held his breath lest he should scare the beautiful vision away which met his eye.

Just beneath him, upon a bank of moss softer in texture than the velvets that cover the thrones of Empresses, and of a richer green than the emeralds that sparkle upon their diadems was seated, half-reeling, a young Indian girl. She could not be eighteen summers old. She sat with one little bewitching brown foot dropped to the depth of the exquisitely turned ankle, into the pellucid water, her fringed leggings of the softest doe-skin being rolled up to keep them dry. Upon her knee rested its fellow, upon which she was fastening, with the loveliest fingers in the world, a mocassin no bigger than Cinderella's slipper. Her hair was as black as the coat of a raven, and hung around her in luxuriant, wavy masses, covering her like a veil; but beneath it could be seen the folds of a robe of swan's skin, ermine with the dark azure feathers of the blue-jay. This robe was, however, now partly thrown back, leaving exposed her perfectly rounded arm naked to the shoulder. Upon the wrist were half a dozen massive silver bracelets, but upon the shapely, taper fingers of her hand there was no ring. By her side watching her, yet trembling from his recent alarm stood the doe which she still addressed.

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

'You are easily terrified of late, Neta. Even a buck showing his branching head upon the top of the cliff, only to look down upon you, and envy you your happy lot here with me, sets you scampering as if a hunter's cry had fallen on your timid ears.'

Neta moved her head to this side and that as if listening and trying to understand her young mistress' words, but still showing signs of fear and snuffing the air.

'I will soon go and see what has alarmed you. It may be my father with his warriors has returned from the lake of the Islands, and has sent for me.' While she was speaking in those soft, melodious accents of her native language which had fallen so delightfully upon the ear of Natanis, she drew the other foot from the water, dried it by folding it up as if it were a bird in the nest of her long, dark hair, and then hid it in the other fairy-like moccassin. She then rose from her seat and began to gather up the magnificent mantle of her inky locks, entwining her round, polished arm among them, and evolving their bewildering mazes through her fingers, or sweeping them over her shoulders; her figure displaying in every motion of the act an elegance, grace, and physical beauty the most perfect. Her face was now visible as she gracefully threw back her head, and turned half round in the act of binding the abundant folds of her hair together upon the back and neck.

The sight of her countenance caused Natanis to experience a sensation of the most enthusiastic delight. Its faultless beauty filled him with surprise and admiration, and as he gazed upon it, his heart throbbed with emotions he had never known before.

Her olive and delicately-rounded forehead, half-hid by, and lying deep in the shadow cast by her hair; her pencilled brows; her large, glorious eyes, black as the starless night, yet flashing with fire like the dark cloud from which the lightning darts forth: the long lashes, so long that they lay upon the soft cheek, and curved laughingly back; the exquisite finish of her narrow, strait nose; the short, upper lip carved so delicately, yet so beautifully matching its mate, which was a thought riper and fuller; the small, round chin, and exquisitely turned throat, the proud, deer-like carriage of the superb head, with the slender grace of her plant, ungirded figure presented a model for the Grecian sculptor who would create a youthful Dian in her native charms.

The expression of her face was gentle, kind and sweet-tempered, with a certain spirited tone which increased its fascination. Having bound her tresses low upon the back of her head, with a narrow band of scarlet wampum, she said to Neta in a playful, reproachful tone,

'Now, my wild one, let us see who has frightened you. I could not go with you bare-footed, and with my locks sweeping the ground, lest, instead of my tather, I should meet some one of the young braves of my own tribe.'

She then lightly bounded across a little chasm through which a stream of water gushed, and swinging herself round the rock, followed by the doe, proceeded towards the cabin, her step light as a roe's, and full of incomparable grace. Natanis remained unseen upon the rock above her, and suffered her to pass him, admiring her as she moved. He then rose, and gently followed her. The doe, with quicker instincts to detect a stranger's presence instantly saw the first movement made by the young chief, and stopping, gazed full upon him with ears erect! The maiden turned round to see what produced Neta's alarm, and her eyes fell upon the stately form of the youthful chieftain. She saw at a glance that he was not a warrior of her father's tribe; yet, instead of flying in alarm she stopped to gaze, struck with admiration at his noble and manly beauty; and perhaps equally arrested by the tenderness and gentle interest with which he fixed his eyes upon her.

Half-flying, yet fixed to the spot, Willewa stood for several seconds regarding him with curiosity and wonder. His respectful manner excluded from the first all sense of fear. At length Natanis advanced, crossing his hands upon his breast in token of amity. She moved not, but stood trembling even as her doe had done when receiving its chiding from her lips.— With her dark, Castilian eyes lowered timidly to the earth, the olive hue of her cheek becoming each moment rosier and rosier, she awaited his approach.

'Daughter of Canassa,' he said with that native courtesy of manner which in the Indian is so polished, 'Stur of the forest, Natanis, Chief of the Abanaquies craves your hospitality.'

'Natanis, the Abanaquis!' she repeated, raising her eyes and fixing them full upon him with surprise, while she drew back with a slight emotion of fear.

'Such is your suppliant, fair maiden of the Fountains!' he said involuntarily dropping before her own; 'a warrior and chief of a nation hostile to thine, yet,' he added in a tone which love modulated most musically, 'but not to *thee*!'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

'Why art thou here, Natanis!' she asked quickly and earnestly, her heart evidently interested in the stranger, foe though he was to her race.—'Knowest thou not that these are the hunting—grounds of Canassa? Why art thou here, except,' she added, resting her eyes steadily upon his face, 'except thou comest as an enemy at the head of thy braves?'

'No, fair Rose of the Woodland,' he said smiling. 'I am not here to war with Canassa! I came with the hunting—knife in my belt, not with the war—hatchet in my hand. I and a party of thirty hunters were on our way to the mountains, and I passed through these forests, hunting as we went.'

'And yet thou sayest thou dost not come for war! Will Canassa let his foe traverse his hunting—grounds and not offer him battle?'

'Nay, I sought not hostilities with thy father, fair Strawberry of the wilderness! Last year Canassa and his braves pursued my deer through the very smokes of lodges of my people when I and my warriors were absent I have now entered his territories to show the haughty Nerijewec that Natanis will not suffer an insult like this to pass without retaliation.'

'True, Natanis; I know my father was the aggressor. But why art thou here alone? why crave the hospitality of the daughter of the foe?'

'Maiden! gentle Fawn of the forest, Natanis prays thee to hear his words In our chase I came upon the beautiful lake not far distant in which is an island. Seeing upon it a stately stag, I took a boat and accompanied by a young warrior Ayane, landed upon the island. After a severe battle, the stag was slain, first slaying my faithful dog, and then grievously wounding my young brave, a youth dearer to me than a brother, nay! I love him as would love a sister! he was gored by the antlers of the enraged stag, tossed into the air and fell severely hurt. He has been, since then insensible, and seeing on the main—land in this direction the smoke of a lodge, I placed him in the canoe and found this place. I stood before your lodge, but finding from its furniture that it was that of a daughter of the chief I did not enter but sought you following your doe which I alarmed. I beheld you at the fountain, and, unseen by you, gazed upon you; and as I gazed, my heart was filled with love, and I no more remembered that thy father and I went foes.'

The Indian maiden listened with blushes and a look of sweet delight playing about her lovely mouth, and sparkling within the depth of her heavily—fringed, down—cast eyelids.

'If Natanis seeks the hospitality of Willewa for his friend, her lodged open to him!' she answered with animation, yet with a modesty which beautifully became her at such a time. 'Where is the youth?'

Natanis led the way to the canoe, and pointed in silent grief to the young brave who still lay as he had left him. The pity and compassion of her sex was at once awakened, and forgetful of all else but her hospitality, she made Natanis bear the wounded Abanaquis to her lodge, and heaping up the skins for his couch had him laid carefully upon them. She then placed her fingers upon his pulse, and as she held them there, Natanis thought he would gladly take Ayane's place to have her gentle touch thus laid upon him. Willewa, like all Indian maidens was a skilful leech, and knew not only how to dress wounds, but what was good for healing them, and also she knew how to prepare and apply the medicaments her skill extracted from the numerous plants which grew in the forests.

She saw at once that bleeding must first be resorted to, and, assisted by Natanis, who, by her direction bound up his arm with his wampum girdle, she performed the operation with a very sharp flint. The result bore honorable testimony to her skill. for in a few minutes the heavy breathing of the sleeper subsided, his pulse became calm, and the fever diminished. He soon opened his eyes, smiled on seeing Natanis, and gazed with admiring surprise upon the beauteous Indian girl. Willewa then gave him a small piece of fragrant gum to dissolve in his mouth. It was a narcotic, and under its influence Ayane again slept, but this time in a natural manner.

'He will wake with strength,' said the maiden.

'I cannot thank you, fairest Willewa,' said Natanis with grateful emotion. 'You have saved the life of my friend, and filled my bosom with joy. But lovely Willewa, Pearl of my eyes,' he said with deep passion, 'you have inflicted in the heart of Natanis a deeper wound than even Ayane has received, and you only can heal it.'

'Natanis is not hated by Willewa,' softly answered the maiden with touching naturalness of word and air.

'Can Wilewa love Natanis?'

'Scarlet Feather is the foe of our race!'

'Willewa shall be as the incense of the Calumet of Peace to both nations. In the loves of Willewa and Natanis,

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

the hatred of the Abanaquies and Nerijewecs shall be forgotten; the tribes of our people shall be one, and the Kennebis shall no longer divide our hunting—grounds; for the smokes of the council fires of Canassa and Natanis shall mingle together, and the young Ahanaquis hunter shall pursue the stag side by side with the young men of thy tribe.'

‘Willewa’s heart speaks with Natanis; but with her lips she says that the daughter of Canassa can never be the wife of Abanaquis.’

‘Canassa shall hear Natanis speak,’ answered the young chief with energy, while his eye sparkled with hope and joy. ‘If Willewa loves Natanis with her heart, Canassa shall yet take the hand of Natanis and clasp it in peace,’

An hour passed, an hour of exquisite happiness to the young lover, when they were startled by a shrill cry which rung through the forest, and reechoed from the marble cliff above their heads.

‘It is my father: he has returned from the lake!’ cried Willewa in alarm. ‘He may visit me here; fly!’

‘And leave Ayane?’

‘I will protect him, noble Natanis. Let not Canassa behold you now. I must first talk with my father. Come with me.’

Prevailed upon by her, Natanis suffered her to guide him by a steep path up the precipice, passing, as they went directly underneath, the sheet of water which formed the cascade. The day had already closed, and it was now moonlight. On reaching the top, which was eighty feet above the basin, she led him through the low wood of cedars and laurel, and stopping on the verge of a precipice on the other side bade him look down. He obeyed her, and saw by the clear light of the moon an extensive valley below varied by mound and gave and shining lakes. From the midst, the blaze of a hundred lodge—fires flashed upon his sight, and far and wide he discovered the smokes of habitations.

‘You see the danger you have exposed yourself to, Natanis,’ said the maiden earnestly. ‘Those are the national lodges of the Nerijewecs. That lodge to the right, not far distant, is that of Canassa. Remain here until I return for you; for you and my father must not meet before I have placed in your path the calumet of peace.’

As she spoke, she left him and descended the precipice by a path—way leading down into the valley at his feet. In a few moments he saw her light form in motion in the direction towards the lodge of Canassa.

CHAPTER V. The Lover's Plot.

Whatsoever was the nature of the interview between the fair and her father, the result did not answer her hopes and wishes turned to Natanis with a sad countenance, and told him that he must not linger in the hunting—grounds of his foe, for the spirit of Canassa was unyieldingly hostile towards him. She informed him that, owing to the absence of her father with his warriors, the presence of the Abanaquis ting parties in his territories had not yet been discovered, and ly urged him to leave with his parties at once, ere an people of her nation should render any reconciliation between hopeless. The maiden then bade him return to the lodge and his friend, and leave with him in the canoe in the morning, rections by which he could reach the Keunebis by water. She him to retire to a lodge she also had near her father's and him in the morning at dawn.

'You will not be interrupted to-night, Natanis,' she said, 'so remain secure in the lodge with Ayane. No warrior of our ters the glen of the Cascades after night-fall. This place is daughter of their Chief.'

The next morning the maiden appeared at dawn in the door of She was happy at finding her patient quite refreshed and strong from pain. In a few minutes Natanis took leave of the lovely leaving her his heart, and bearing hers away with him. He left by a narrower inlet than that by which he had entered it, and in launched his light canoe upon the dark waters of the swiftly nebis. At noon he had restored Ayane to the lodge of his ing him under the fond care of a maiden of his tribe, scarcely than the daughter of Canassa, he turned back to follow again party. It was not until the next day that he fell in with them dezvous he had appointed, when, joining them they pursued the mountains of the wilderness.

The passion of Natanis for the beauteous Willewa grew day, and he resolved in his heart that if Canassa refused him marriage, he would, with her consent, make her his bride by Her image filled his thoughts during all his hunting excursions, mantic was the influence of his love for her, and whatever belong upon his mind, that he forbade, for the sake of Neta, any of slaying a doe. His warriors readily obeyed him, for he had when assembled around the fires of their common hunting—lodge of his adventures, and how the fair daughter of Canassa had of Ayane who was greatly beloved by all his companions. And anis, after reciting to them, with all the eloquence of love, the hospitality, and impassionedly describing her grace, beauty and told them that he intended to make her his bride, they clashed spears together in rude acclamations, and shouted aloud the anis and Willewa.'

The idea of uniting the two tribes under their own chief was to these warriors; for they knew that when Canassa should die, would be in the hands of the Abanaquis. The union, there might be agreeable to the tribe of Natanis, would, for the same likely to be opposed by the equally haughty and ambitious braves .

now given an account of the manner in which our hero first met lovely Willewa, we will return to the thread of our story which we for this purpose, and let the Indian girl explain in her own Natanis, her object in seeking him at his lodge.

had planted his lodge there two nights before for the purpose of the object of his love, and frequently enjoying her society, which by secretly visiting her at the fountain, though running great risks very; for, as the invasion of his hunting—grounds by the young chief and his party had been discovered by Canassa, his hunters on the alert. To be thus near Willewa, Natanis had se his own warriors at their national lodges, not telling them whither going, keeping his secret even from his friend Ayane, well knowing try to dissuade him from exposing himself to the chance of falling hands of the Nerijewecs. The place he had selected was on the if his own hunting—grounds, and he chose it for its beauty and se more than for its safety; for he had boldly raised his lodge on the of the river, though the spot was shut in by lofty, wooded hills. At he is introduced to the reader standing in the door of his cabin, months had elapsed since he first beheld Willewa. During this had met six or seven times, the last time, the evening before at the .

motive which governed Natanis in fixing his abode there, so near —fires of his foes, was with the intention of inviting Canassa to see him for the purpose of making proposals for a reconciliation, union with his daughter. To bring about this end it was decided the lovers that Willewa should the next day prevail on her father her alone in his war—canoe from the valley of Lodges into the if for an excursion merely for her gratification; and that when in the river she should allure him along the banks until they came the lodge of Natanis, which she should discover

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

with an exclamation if she was not aware of its existence; that Natanis should not be tame, but concealed in the grove, and that she should propose to land and visit it. Natanis was then to approach and surprise and invite the haughty Canassa to accept his hospitality. Willewa to place herself between Natanis and her father to prevent any host should the latter show himself disposed to show battle, and as a , endeavor to make them sitdown together as host and guest, effected without weapons drawn by him, she and Natanis both would open a way to a final and permanent reconciliation. Will not, of course to let the old Chief suspect she had ever seen the before.

was the plan upon which they had the last night parted, and it was been carried into effect that day if possible; but, should Natanis her during the day it was settled that he was again to visit her at the in the evening to ascertain what obstacle had intervened. He , about to proceed to the interview, having had that day, as and Sharp Knife, instead of the fair Willewa and Canassa, discovered her standing in the moonlight in front of his lodge.

sat by his side upon the bear-skin he had placed for her outside , her small hand fluttering as as he held it in his, and her young heaving with agitation, and the speed with which she had hastened .

speak Willewa, what have those two little cherries to talk about? Had thy father discovered that an Abanaquis has dared to plant his lodge within sight of the smokes of his council fires, and do you hasten to bid me fly? I have waited all day, gentle Fawn of my breast; and my eyes have never ceased watching for thee and Canassa. Impatient, I crossed the river in my canoe an hour before sunset and followed the trail to thy lodges for a mile, and then returned disappointed. On my way, I pursued thy father's game, and slew even a bear that came upon me suddenly. But the skins of the stag and wild-beast shall be offered to Canassa to-morrow, if he comes with thee. Why has not my dark-eyed turtle-dove brought with her the chief of the Nerijewecs to be the guest of Abanaquis?"

`Natanis, the Chief Canassa has this day been holding a council of war, and he would not listen to the voice of a woman. The words of Willewa could not enter the ear of the warrior who discoursed only of hattle.'

`Ha! does the Nerijewec sharpen the war-hatchet?' cried Natanis with surprise, his eyes kindling with courage and the thoughts of battle. `Does Canassa's war face turn towards the Lodges of the Abanaquies?'

`No, Natanis. My father has no desire to war with thee for thy invasion of his hunting-grounds; for he regards it but a just retaliation for a like act of his own hunters. "Though," said he to me, "I cannot be the friend of the Abanaquis, I do not wish to go to war with him. Let the Kennebis flow ever between us, and its waters shall be as the waters of peace to our borders." Perhaps I contributed to this spirit of forbearance,' added Willewa, `for I discoursed with him of all the long existing feud between our people, and endeavored to inspire in him thoughts of peace. I even said to him,' continued the lovely maiden blushing at her own earnestness and sincerity `that he should not only seek peace with you, but try to bring together the two tribes, that by union they might gain strength.'

`And did my Singing Robin hint to him *how* that union might be brought about?' said Natanis with a smile, as he gently laid his hand upon her polished brow, and looked with eloquent love into the deep, dark fountains of her eyes.

Willewa replied by a slightly reproving look, and her eyes sought the ground.

`Who, then, fair Star of my soul? who then is Canassa to go to was with?'

`With the Bostonee.'

`The white brothers upon our borders,' cried Natanis with surprise.— `Has the English king sent Canassa a war belt filled with gold as he has done to Sahatis? How know you this, Willewa?' he asked with animation, his previously tender, playful manner suddenly changed to one of earnest and serious interest in what she said.

`The great Sachem of the English has sent one of his chiefs to my father and bade him speak fair words to Canassa. Canassa lent his ears to him, and the white chief and my father smoked together and Canassa pledged to the English himself and his warriors. This took place six weeks ago, Natanis, though I only knew it to-day through my father.'

`This is news, Willewa! what is Canassa's intention? Will he seek the habitations of the Bostonees? He cannot reach them without crossing the hunting-grounds of the Abanaquies.'

`Your speech and looks, Natanis, make me tremble, while they assure me, also, that you are not the enemy of the Bostonees. If Canassa seeks the habitations of the white settler to war with them, and he crosses your territories, I fear that there will be strife between thee and him. Whatever happen, let there be peace, Natanis. But he will not seek the Pale-face. The Pale face seeks the Indian in his homes.'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

‘For thy sake, my gentle doe, I will be at peace. But you have not told me all. What mean your words? What more is on thy tongue?’

‘To-day—this morning, when I sought my father’s lodge to allure him hither, as our plan was, I found him surrounded by his warriors, and holding council; while in their midst stood an Indian of the Damaresc nation—one of the swift runners of that sea-board tribe!’

‘Why was he in the lodge of the Nerijewec?’ demanded Natanis quickly.

‘He had come to tell my father that three days before, he had seen from a high hill, a fleet of many of the white-winged canoes of the Pale-face enter the river, even the Kennebis on whose banks we now stand! That these ships bore the scarlet-belted flag of the Bostonees, and that he counted upon the decks, as they sailed up the river, more than a thousand warriors!’

‘A thousand Bostonce warriors!’ repeated Natanis starting to his feet with surprise! ‘said the Damaresc runner this?’

‘He told this to my father; and further, that the fleet had stopped two hours journey below the falls of Cushnoc, there to build batteaux to ascend the river further. That he there left them, and hastened to Canassa us the Chief of a powerful tribe, to communicate the intelligence. My father, therefore, called a council of war, and as he believes that the Bostonees seek to possess themselves of his territories, he has unburned the war-hatchet, and is to day assembling his braves to defend his lodges and his hunting-grounds.’

Natanis listened with surprise until she had ended, and then remained thoughtful and silent. He could not realize that the Americans, with whom he and the Indian tribes had been so long at peace, could so treacherously come upon them to surprise and destroy them.

‘This expedition of war-canoe,’ he said with spirit, ‘cannot be against me, if against Canassa, as I have made no compact with their foes, the British. The great Sachem of Boston knows the Abanaquis is not his foe.—Thou tremblest for thy father! Fear thee not, Willewa; I will see the Chief of these white warriors in person, and know if danger menaces the Nerijewec. But how is it that the Damaresc tribe, who are friends, like Canassa, to the English Sagamore, how is it that it has been passed by, unmolested? The Kenuebis, up which they have ascended so far, flows past many a lodge of the Damaresc warriors. Yet said he that they had been harmed?’

‘No, Natanis; I have yet more to tell thee,’ she added, embarrassed; ‘did I but know that thou wert truly the friend of the Bostonee.’

‘I love not the white man, Willewa, as if he were of my own race. They are stronger than we, and by and by will overrun us, and we shall be as the leaves of the last year. Yet I would not war against them, because one of them has been my friend. Dost thou love the Bostonee?’

‘I do, Natanis. Listen to my words. Four years ago I went with my father to the great council of Lodges at the home of the Sachem of Boston. My father and other warriors went up to hold a council with the white Chief. There I was taken into the great Chief’s lodge, and his daughter loved me, and told me she was my white sister. She was fair as the lilly, with soft eyes, like the sky in color, and shining hair flowing upon her shoulders like the golden tresses of the water-telossa, when the autumn frost dies them with gold. Her voice was like the song of the Letel in the morning, and her laugh rung in the ears of Willewa like the wild melody of the birds of her native woods. Willewa gave the fair daughter of the great white Sachem all her heart, and loved to sit upon a silken cushion at her feet and listen to her.’

‘Could she speak thy tongue with thee, Willewa?’ asked Natanis.

‘Not all the words; but what her lips failed to say, her eyes and smiles more eloquently expressed.’

‘What said this blue eyed maiden of the Pale-faces to thee, as thou did’st sit at her feet?’

‘She asked me if I loved my father. I told her that he was dearer to me than any on eon earth,—’

‘Would’st thou answer her so now, bride of my heart?’ inquired Natanis with mingled tenderness and pride.

‘Nay, Natanis; then I did not know thee to love thee,’ she answered with artless sincerity, and lifting to his face her large, gazelle-like eyes with maidenly joy. ‘She then asked me why I loved my father; and when I told her, she said, and sweetly she said it,—

‘If you love thus your father, Willewa, because he is kind, and grants you all your wishes, should you not love more, Him who bestows upon you your father?’

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

'She alluded to the Great Spirit, Willewa,' observed Natanis, reverently laying his hand upon his heart and looking upward with awe to the deep blue sky, through which the moon was sailing in her silvery car of light, and over which were spangled a thousand stars, and where, to the eye of the simple son of the forest, God dwelt in majesty and glory!

'I answered her that I loved the Great Spirit, and that I worshipped him. She then began to tell me more than my heart could hold, of the majesty, and power, and goodness of the Great Spirit! She told me how He first made men good, with gentle hearts, and without a spirit of war and hatred. That there was no enmity then in men's hearts; only love and peace dwelt there. But man disobeyed and fell under the displeasure of the Great Spirit; and when he would have destroyed him, his Son interceded, and for his sake, the Great Spirit spared us! She told me that from that time all the blessings we have on earth, and all our hopes of dwelling in a land of peace and love beyond the setting sun, after death, we owe to the love of the Son for us. That the sun and, moon, and stars shine for us, on His account, for we have not deserved them on our own; that the seasons roll round, the fruits put forth, the forests give shade and verdure, that deer and other game are bestowed upon us for food, and that all our enjoyments came to us through this good Son of the Great Spirit! This Son, she told me, was all love and benevolence and peace, and all his desire in return for his goodness to us is, that we should be like him.'

After this manner did Willewa discourse for several minutes longer to Natanis, narrating to him in eloquent words the entire outline of the Christian atonement as it had been taught her by the daughter of the governor on her visit to Boston. Natanis listened with deep attention. When she had ended, he said,

'Did not the French Priest, father Ralle, teach some of your tribes this?'

'He did, I believe; but I had not been taught it by my father.'

'Is Willewa a Christian?'

'She believes in the Son of the Great Spirit answered the Indian maiden with touching fervor. 'Will Natanis believe?'

'Natanis knows that his father adored the Great spirit of the skies! whom *they* worshipped, *he* will worship. But I will hear thee speak more of this, Willewa. What you believe, I do not fear to believe. It is for this, then you are the friend of the Bostonee?'

'I love the daughter of the great Sachem, for she taught me that which is to make me happy here, and beyond the setting sun, and which I shall love to teach thee Natanis; it is a faith that will surely find a home in your noble bosom! For *her* sake are the Bostonees my friends! What says Natanis? Are they *his*? ' she asked, looking up into his face with gentle earnestness.

'They are *my* friends, also, Willewa.'

'If need be, will Natanis, for *my* sake, do them service as brothers?'

'I will even unbury the war-hatchet in their defence if you command me. The friends of Willewa, are the friends of the Abanaquis.'

'Then Natanis, I can trust thee with what more I have in my heart, and which my ears heard in the lodge of Canassa. The Damaresc had not been long arrived and given his message, when a second brave of the Kennebis tribe came running, and stood before the council. He said that he had been among the tents of the white-warriors as they encamped upon the river, and that their chief had told him he sought peace with all the tribes. Their object, he said, was not to make war upon the Indians, but they were only marching through their hunting-grounds, and ascending the Kennebis for the purpose of reaching the great fortress of Quebec, where the great English chief holds his councils, hoping to fall upon it by surprise.'

Natanis uttered an exclamation of astonishment. He stood a moment silent, and then said impressively,

'This is great news, Willewa!'

'So my father seemed to regard it. He has been in secret council with his warriors ever since. I waited till night only to fly hither to tell thee what events have taken place!'

'They are great events, Willewa! Thanks for this promptness in coming to me! Do you know ought of Canassa's intentions?'

'Nothing! only, as I left, there were great preparations of a war-like nature going on in the Valley of Lodges!'

'He must contemplate attacking them.'

'The Bostonees are my friends! they are *theirs*, also, Natanis! This must not be.'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

‘Willewa! Canassa is a great Chief and a brave warrior. He is the friend of the English. He will stand in the path of the Bostonee! How shall Natanis prevent it? Must the Abanaquis war with the Nerijewec? For thy sake he cannot. Yet, as thou sayest, Canassa must not cross the path of our friends. I am glad to know, Willewa, that this expedition is undertaken. I am glad that the power of the English sachem is menaced! Willewa, if I will swear not to encounter thy father in battle, will you give me permission to act as becomes the friend of the great Sagamore of Bostonee? If Canassa menaces them in their passage up the Kennebis, and sees that I am at the head of my warriors also, to befriend them, it may check him in his purposes, and thus the attack he doubtless meditates be prevented. He is bound to stop them, by his compact with the English. Yet I may restrain him by the presence of my own warriors.’

‘I consent, Natanis; only meet not face to face with my father, save in peace. Behold in Canassa’s face the features of Willewa, and spare him.’

‘I swear it, Willewa, by the Great Spirit! Now that *we* are both friends of the Bostonee, foes of the English, let us act, then, as becomes us! Come my gentle roe of the Fountain! I will accompany thee back to thy lodge, and then must I seek my warriors.’

CHAPTER VI. The Spies.

Scarlet Feather launched his canoe from the green sward, upon which it was lying, and placing the lovely Indian maiden therein, seized the carved paddle, and shot out into the arrowy current. In a few minutes he reached the opposite shore, and drawing the canoe underneath the foliage of the bank, where it would lie concealed, he prepared to accompany Willewa through the forest paths to her lodge.

'Nay, Natanis,' she said, laying her hand upon his arm. 'You are already far enough in the hunting-grounds of Canassa. The warriors of my people are in action, and their war-parties may be crossing our path at this moment. Return, Natanis! Reach speedily your own territories, arouse your warriors and prepare to defend the Pale-faces, our friends. But let not Natanis and Canassa meet in battle.'

'Never will the Abanaquis look upon the chief of the Nerijewecs, the father of Willewa, as his foe. I promise thee that I will not let my favor towards the Bostonee bring me into a war with Canassa.'

'I ask no more, Natanis! Now hasten. If anything occurs that you should know, I will send thee word. There is one Indian—a youth whom I can trust to bear a message. If one comes to thy lodges, wearing bound upon his brow this girdle of wampum, you will know he is a messenger from Willewa.'

Natanis accompanied the maiden some distance farther, and then parting from her, retraced his steps towards the river. He thought deeply, as he went, upon the news that he had received. Although not inclined to enter into this quarrel between the English and the colonists, and originally intending to remain passive, nevertheless he had a predilection in favor of the latter, and a strong prejudice against the former; sufficient motives, in combination, to lead him, under suitable inducements, to take part in the conflict, and throw his influence on the side of 'the Bostonees,' as the New Englanders were denominated. This inducement was the desire of Willewa that he should be their friend; for her deep gratitude to the lovely Christian daughter of the governor of Massachusetts, extended to the whole people, and in her heart she regarded every Bostonee as the brother of her benefactress. These were the deep feelings that led the Indian girl to seek to enlist Natanis in their cause, when she found that they were likely to be attacked by the Nerijeweens. The struggle in her heart was a painful one. It was a struggle between parental love, and gratitude to her who opened to her the knowledge of the way of life! the latter prevailed in her heart.—But then came another struggle, scarcely less painful. It was whether she should place Natanis in a hostile position to her father, that the intentions of Canassa against the ascending army might not be carried into effect. She felt, as Natanis had suggested, that if he assumed a bold stand with his eight hundred warriors on the flank of the Bostonees between their line of march and Canassa's force, that the latter would not venture the battle, and so the army might pass on securely. Nevertheless, she saw with grief, that this position would widen the breach between them, even though no battle should come of it! But her desire to befriend the people of her Christian teacher, induced her to run even the risk of a battle, trusting to Natanis's promise that he would not cross her father's path. She had, however, a hope at her heart, the realization of which, she trusted, would render all safe. With this hope, giving lightness and speed to her steps, she hurried along the gloomy glades of the forest, in the direction of the Lodge of her father.

In the meanwhile Natanis followed the path towards the river, from which he had gone half a mile in attendance upon Willewa. He had made up his mind, immediately on reaching his national Lodges, to despatch Ayane secretly to the Bostonee General to inform him of the hostile attitude assumed by Canassa, and put him on his guard against any attack. While he was forming this plan in his mind, he saw two figures before him at some distance, crossing a moonlit space in the forest, and disappearing again in its recesses. They seemed to him, to be bearing a canoe between them. Supposing them to be some of Canassa's people, he hastened forward to see whither they were going, at once suspecting them of being on their way to take the river to descend it, and spy out the movements of the enemy; or it might be the Damaresc and Kennebis messengers returning. He struck through the forest higher up than he had seen them, intending to strike their trail obliquely. In about ten minutes he fell in with it, and then followed it with that caution, and unerring certainty, characteristic of his race. He saw by the pressure of the grass, and the bent shrubs which had not yet recovered their erect from again after being pressed down by their feet, that they were but two or three minutes before him; and had these failed, the very air to his

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

keen senses had betrayed their recent passage; for as he inhaled it, he felt that it had not, many seconds before, been exhaled by human beings. He proceeded with the steady, stealthy pace of a panther following his prey, until the bright, moonlit river came in sight through the forest trees; and by the bluffs on the opposite bank, he recognized the spot to be a mile above his lodge. Wondering, if those he pursued were to descend the river in the boat they carried on their shoulders, they should have gone so high up, he carefully advanced from the wood and saw them standing upon the bank. He approached them tree by tree, concealing himself as he advanced, until he was within a few yards of them. To his surprise, he then saw that they were Sabatis and Sharp Knife. They had laid down their birchen canoe close to the water's edge, and seating themselves upon the grass, with their backs against a large sycamore, began to light their pipes and smoke while they rested.

Natanis, after hearing the news brought him by Willewa, had recalled his brother's visit and manner, and the thought that his movements might have had some connection with the appearance of the Colonial army in the wilderness, forced itself strongly upon his mind: and the more he reflected upon his brother's words to him, the more he was impressed with the belief that he not only knew the ascent of the army, but that he was acting treacherously in reference to it. Upon now seeing them here his suspicions were confirmed. He, therefore, hearing them talking together, cautiously moved forward, creeping upon the ground with noiseless advance, until he was within three length of his hunting-spear of the spot where they reclined with their backs to the forest. He listened with the deepest attention, for he hoped to discover by their words their treachery, whatever it might be, or whomsoever might be its victim.

'That canoe ar'nt the lightest one I ever did handle, sagamore,' said Sharp Knife, as he drew his first whiff of tobacco smoke deliberately through the stem of his pipe, and then blew it a yard out from his lips in a straight line, a favorite way he had of smoking. 'It is a long tramp, four miles through the woods with such a load. We have, however, completely blinded Natanis. It would'nt have done to let him know our business.'

'Natanis will soon hear that the pale-faces are below. He will then suspect our mission,' answered Sabatis, placing his tomahawk to his lips, the handle of which was perforated like a pipe tube, and the head of it hollowed to form a bowl.

'True! but we shall have gone on beyond his reach. What I was afraid of was, that if he guessed we were hurrying forward to give intelligence to Governor Carlton of the approach of the Colonists, he would try and stop us. He could easily have done it by sending a score of his braves after us.'

'It was for this reason I was not more plain in my interview with him. I was afraid the Abanaquis would possess my secret, and then use it to favor the Bostonees.'

'Well, Sagamore, we are well escaped from him. In ten minutes let us push on up stream. We have no time for delay. The sooner we reach Quebec with the news, the greater will be our service done, and the heavier the gold in our belts.'

'Sabatis does not this service for gold,' answered the Sagamore proudly. 'I am the friend of the great Sachem Carlton, and I do it to serve him, as one Chief serves another, in alliance with him. Sabatis does not this for gold! The Tarratine is a warrior, not a merchant.'

'Them may be your sentiments, Sagamore, but not mine, I can tell you! If I did'nt expect a belt full of English guineas, I would'nt take another step north. The colonists might march in silence, and come popping down out of the wilderness upon the fortress of Quebec like a flight of eagles upon a lion's lair. It's nat'r'l for white men to love gold, and I consider myself a white, though I was raised a Injun! Do you think, Sagamore, the Chief Canassa will take part in this affair? You know he has pledged his faith to the English, as well as you.'

'Canassa is an independant Sagamore, and will act as he sees fit. Though we are both allies of the English, we are not friends to each other.'

'True. I know the Tarratines and Abanaquies have little love for the Nerijewec. It is my opinion Canassa would anticipate us if he knew our mission; for he would like this opportunity of securing the good will of the English. You have done right, Sagamore, to go yourself in person. It will enable you to secure on the spot what reward you want for your services. Governor Carlton will see at a glance the great service you will have done him in giving him timely notice of the advance of a foe in this direction.'

'I shall ask only for the hunting-ground of the Nerijewecs. These were once part of the territories of the Tarratine nation, and were wrested from us by rebellion in the tribe, when the oldest forest tree upon them was a sapling.'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

‘What will you do with Canassa, and his people?’

‘The English must find other lands for them. Let Canassa drive out the Damaresc and Kennebis if he will have new hunting-grounds.’

‘Canassa will fight to the last for his lands,’ answered Sharp Knife.— ‘Come, Sagamore! It is time we pushed forward.’

‘I have been thinking, Sharp Knife, that if Natanis finds I have left orders for war-parties of my braves to molest and obstruct the passage of the Bostonees as much as they can, he may bring his warriors into their aid, and war with mine.’

‘Let him, Sagamore! It will only weaken his own power. His warriors now, are three hundred less than yours. If Natanis is slain, you are Chief of both tribes.’

‘But if Natanis and my warriors come to battle on this quarrel, Natanis and Canassa will surely be friends and unite their warriors against me and mine.’

‘The Abanaquis and the Nerijewec never can be allies, Sagamore. Their hatred is too long lived.’

‘If Natanis and I are at war, Canassa finding he is to be driven from his hunting-grounds that I may occupy them, will make proposals of union with Natanis.’

‘But he will not accept them without some deeper motive than I can now see at the bottom. The proud Scarlet Feather will never smoke the calumet of peace with Canassa. But let us move, Sagamore.’

The majestic Indian Chief rose from the ground, elevating his Herculean frame to its full height, and casting a quick, searching glance around him, followed Sharp Knife into the canoe. It soon disappeared with them in the shadows which overhung the banks of the river. Natanis listened until he could no longer hear the dip of their paddles as they propelled the little bark up the current, and then rapidly took his way down the shores of the stream towards the place where he had left his own boat on debarking with Willewa. Springing into it, he shot down the river like an arrow, and leaped on shore before his hunting-lodge. To his surprise, he was met in the door by Ayane!

‘My Chief, pardon Ayane for hunting you out in your seclusion!’ said the young Indian as he saw Natanis start back with surprise.

‘Natanis has nothing to forgive his friend. Why do you seek me?’

‘I knew that you could only seek the lodges of the Nerijewec that you might be near the footsteps of the daughter of Canassa. I waited two days for your return, and fearing for your safety amid your enemies territories, I sought you.’

‘You are welcome, Ayane! I would rather see thee now than any man. I was hastening to find you.’

‘What service can Ayane perform for his chief?’

‘Willewa has brought me intelligence to-night that a Damaresc warrior has been to Canassa’s lodge and reported that a thousand warriors of the Bostonee race are ascending the Kennebis in white-winged canoes. They are now just below the Cushnoc falls, encamped and building boats to ascend higher. You look surprised, Ayane, and grasp your spear firmly!— What think you, is their purpose?’

‘I know not, my chief, unless to invade our hunting-grounds,’ answered the young brave with animation.

‘Are we not at peace with them?’

‘And is not the Abananquis the friend of the Bostonec? What has Natanis done, that a thousand warriors should come hither so secretly?’

‘They seek not Natanis, brother. Their object is to war upon the English.’

‘The English have no lodges on the Kennebis!’

‘But they have, on the great St. Lawrence. Dost thou not know their purpose? But, come hither! see’st thou then, this dressed skin? Knowest thou what these figures I have drawn upon it mean?’

And Natanis displayed to him in the light of the moon, a white deer-skin on which was drawn with vermillion, a rude but accurate delineation of the rivers of Maine, of the situation of the Highlands, and the direction of the Chaudiere into the St. Lawrence.

‘I have seen thee make in such a manner the lines of your hunting-grounds, separating them from those around; but I have not seen this before.’

‘This is a map of the Kennebis to its source, and also of the rivers that flow north, the other side of the

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenakis.

mountains of the wilderness. I have been amusing myself while here, in drawing it, partly from my own observation, partly from the accounts of my father, and also from what the hunters who have passed along these rivers have told me. Look you, now, Ayane! You have asked me why the Bostonee seeks his English foe on the Kennebis. Here is the sea where the Kennebis loses itself after washing the lands of the tribe of Kennebis and that of the Damaresc. Now follow the point of my dagger as I trace upward along this wavy line, which is the river.— From the sea the Bostonee fleet of war—canoes came up to the falls of Cushnoc, where you see I have painted an arrow—head. There they are now encamped, building batteaus to ascend further; for their big war—canoes will not go higher. Now follow my dagger's point, and I will show you where they will follow, and whither they go. Here where I detain my dagger and you see a deer's antler represented is where my lodge now is. There opposite, where I have painted a heart, is the lodge of the fair Willewa, and beyond it the Lodges of Canassa and his people. Now I ascend the river, passing fall after fall, till you see I stop and turn aside into another stream. This is a tributary to the Kennebis. I ascend it so far—a half day's journey—and then cross this space, which is forest. If I was in a canoe, I should have to carry my boat across it eighteen miles. I thus pass the mountains here, and launch my canoe into this red space which represents the lake Megantic. It is connected, you see, with another river flowing out of it.'

'That river, I see, flows contrary to the Kennebis,' said Ayane, who, bending on one knee as Natanis held the skin unrolled upon his, was eagerly and earnestly regarding the skilfully—drawn map as his chief was pointing out to him its several parts.

'Yes, it flows northward. It is the Chaudiere. Now follow my finger down until you see it empties into a river—'

'That runs eastward toward the rising sun!' exclaimed Ayane with surprise.

'Yes. All rivers do not flow southward like our native Kennebis. This great river is the St. Lawrence. It flows through the lands of the English Sachem, and here where you see I have placed a cross is their great Lodge, Quebec.'

'Quebec!' exclaimed the youthful brave, with surprise.

'What makes Ayane wonder? speak and Natanis will listen,' he said, seeing him grave and thoughtful.

'If,' said Ayane placing one finger on the cross, and another at the mouth of the Kennebis, 'there is situated the English Sachem's lodge, and one can so easily reach it in a canoe from here, why does not the Great Sachem of Quebec come up the Chaudiere and descend the Kennebis with his warriors to attack the Bostonees? If he saw this map, Natanis, he would do it!' added the youth with sparkling eyes.

'And do you wish it, Ayane? Is the young friend of Natanis the foe of the Bostonee?'

'No, Natanis. I knew that the English Sachem was at war with them, and when I saw your rivers here, and beheld how easily he could reach his foes by passing through the wilderness, I spoke my thoughts.'

'Ayane, I am the friend of the Bostonee. Willewa is their friend. Is Ayane their foe?' said the Chief with gentle reproach.

'Ayane loves only his chief. His friends are Ayane's friends,' answered the youth warmly and sincerely.

'Then listen, Ayane. Thy thought has hit the truth, but not in reference to the English. It is the Bostonee that marches with his warriors through the wilderness by these rivers. The English Sachem comes not south to attack Boston, but the Boston Sachem goes north to attack Quebec. It is for this end that their warriors are now already so far advanced in their progress through the wilderness. The thought that came to thy mind, came to them also. Dost thou rejoice at it as much as if it were the English who were thus in motion?'

'Ayane rejoices with Natanis. If Natanis is glad, so is Ayane. The joys of his chief are his.'

'Thou knowest, then, why this band of white warriors build their batteaus? You see that it is important the English should be taken by surprise. Now there have passed up the river to-night two spies, if I may so call them, who having discovered the approach of the Bostonees, and ascertained their intention, have hastened forward to the wilderness to forewarn the English Sachem at Quebec of the approach of his foes. These spies are Sabatis, my warlike brother—chief of the Tarratines, and Sharp Knife, a Pale face who was brought up in his tribe, and whom you have heard of as a great brave and skilful hunter. Their object I have accidentally discovered from their own words. They are now on their way in a canoe, having got by this time nearly as far as the Sebasticoc rapids, five miles hence.— Remain here, Ayane, and be watchful that you are not surprised by any foe while I hasten to my Lodges and send thee seven young braves with two canoes. When they meet you, take to the river, and pursue

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

Sabatis swiftly and secretly. Overtake him, surprise him and make him and Sharp Knife prisoner. Injure neither of them, for Sabatis is the brother of Natanis.— Conduct them in safety to my council Lodge, and there guard them until you see me.'

The next moment they parted, and Natanis, entering the forest, took his way swiftly towards the beautiful lake among the hills where, clustered in numerous picturesque villages and hamlets, were congregated the lodges of his nation.

CHAPTER VII. Canassa and his Daughter.

Willewa, after parting with Searlet Feather in the forest, hastened towards the Lodge of Canassa for the purpose of seeking an interview with her father. She soon reached the lake with the island in the centre of it, upon which Natanis had slain the stag, and springing lightly into her canoe, which being covered with the shining bark of the birch tree shone like silver in the moon-beams, and shot rapidly out from the shore. Swiftly the little shell-shaped vessel flew across the water, Wilewa plying the slender paddle, displaying an elegance in the pliant motions of her body, as graceful as it was unstudied.

She entered the dark canal beneath the over-arching foliage on the farther side of the lake, and at length landed in the pool into which tumbled the Cascade of the Glen. Neta met her as her foot touched the shore, and gave dumb but eloquent signs of joy at seeing her return. Giving the doe a kind word or two she passed into her lodge, and throwing over her shoulders a rich cape of gorgeous feathers, she took the pathway up the marble precipice along the face of which she had conducted Natanis to show him the lodges of Canassa, in the valley upon the other side. On reaching the summit which rose to the height of a hundred feet, forming a sort of gigantic wall enclosing her little dell from the plain on the outside, she paused to look down. The distance to her father's lodge was not thrice a long arrow's flight from where she stood, and around it at various distances were gathered the lodges of his warriors. She discovered that the valley was alive with preparation. Fires blazed in nearly every lodge, and parties of braves were assembled in different places, preparing for an immediate war-expedition.—Warriors were bending their bows and fitting arrows to them, or fastening sharp flint-heads to arrow-shafts; others were stripping the bark from strait saplings which they had selected from the forest, and making of them lancepoles; others were painting their faces with war-paint, and others engaged in mimic battle with each other, the clashing of their tomahawks and spears mingling with the wild war-whoop filling the plain. It was evident from all this, that Canassa had not only decided to give battle to the ascending army, but at once throw himself across its path at the head of his warriors.

Casting her eye anxiously upon her father's lodge, which stood apart from the rest, and conspicuous by its superior height, she saw that the council had broken up; for she recognized, even by the moonlight which filled brightly all the valley, his commanding person standing in front of his lodge with two warriors whom he seemed to be conversing with. They soon after left him and he walked slowly up and down in thought. She was about to descend the path to go and meet him, when a youth not more than sixteen, with a face as brown as a hazel-nut, eyes very large, black and sparkling, and a countenance altogether handsome and pleasing, came up the path from the valley and stood before her. His slender and elegant figure was clad in a deerskin frock, girdled at the waist by a showy belt of wampum, and he wore leggins dyed with scarlet and fringed both around the bottom and along the seams. He carried in his hand a yew bow painted a bright blue, and at his back was slung a quiver fancifully ornamented with shells and feathers. Upon his head was fastened the beak and brown wings of a bawk, the beak resting above his brow and the wings bound on each side over his ears were secured behind his head, the whole forming a costume both novel and picturesque, and in shape not unlike an ancient Carthagorean helmet. Beneath this head-dress waved his raven black hair freely to his shoulders.

‘Neonah, what news? Thou comest hastily, cousin!’

‘The Princess Willewa is wanted in the lodge of her father,’ said the young Indian with affectionate respect. ‘Twice I have sought thee in thy lodge by his command, and now I was going a third time. Haste, Willewa, for Canassa is displeased that thou wert not found.’

‘Go, cousin Neonah, I follow thee! Does my father march from the valley to-night? I see that his warriors are in arms.’

‘I do not know the war-councils of the chief and his braves,’ answered the youth in a depressed tone. ‘I am but a child in the eyes of warriors and thy father, my chief, regards me only as he regards the maidens of the tribe. I did ask him to let me go to the battle, and what think you was his reply?’ asked the youth with indignant emotion.

‘Nay, I know not, Neonah,’ answered Willewa, smilingly, as she continued to descend the path a little behind him, he, the while, looking back over his shoulder and talking as he went; ‘I know not, unless he bade thee wait

till thou wert a man!'

'He bade me stay behind and take care of thee and thy doe Neta,' replied Neona with a look and tone of haughty disdain.

'And what more valuable charge could my father give thee, Neonah?— Whom dost thou love more than thy cousin Willewa, and Neta, I know thou lovest for Willewa's sake. Thou shouldst be proud of such a charge, methinks.'

'Nay, I love thee, cousin, and would defend thee with my life from danger. But am I not destined to be a warrior! Have I not slain as many deer as I have fingers, and three stags killed with my spear. Have I not battled with a bear and laid him dead at my feet, and do not the skins of a wolf and a panther slain by me hang up before the door of my mother's lodge?'

'Be not grieved, Neonah, at my father's words. One day thou wilt be a warrior and a chief. Stay with me, for I assure thee I would rather depend on thy arm in any danger than on that of Bokonoco, who calls himself Black Thunder, notwithstanding he is one of my father's most celebrated braves. Stay with me, for I have a service for thee to perform worthy even the best warrior of your tribe!'

'I am content to serve thee, so thou thinkest me no craven with a girl's heart,' answered Neonah, appeased.

'Hither approaches the Chief to meet thee!'

As he spoke he drew back to let Willewa advance to meet her father, she having now got into the plain and near his lodge. Canassa advanced towards her with a firm step, bearing himself like a king, as he was. There was a native majesty in his walk, as if he felt conscious of his independance and power. He was not tall and Herculean like the Sagamore Sabatis, but in height a little undersized, yet with such symmetry of limb, that the dignity and commanding carriage of his figure were not in the least diminished. He carried his head proudly like a monarch of the new world, and moved with a stately case that was singularly imposing.

'Daughter, I have thrice despatched a messenger for thee!' he said in a tone of mingled reproof and affection.

'I have been upon the lake, father,' answered the maiden blushing at the slight evasion of the whole truth.

'It is dangerous for the dove to be abroad when the hawks are on the wing,' answered Canassa, laying his hand upon his daughter's shoulder, and gently resting it there leaned upon it as together they slowly walked towards his lodge.

'Willewa has no fears!'

'The Abanaquies are near and may pounce upon the bird of Canassa, if it wander too far from its nest. Dost thou know that one of my people has discovered on the shores of the Kennebis, not two miles hence an Abanaquies hunting lodge.'

'Did he enter it?' she asked tremblingly.

'No. But he knew from its shape that it was erected by one of the hunters of Natanis. I have despatched a war-party to see who it is that dare plant his lodge so boldly within arrow-flight of our banks!'

Willewa prayed in her heart that Natanis had not lingered on his return; and this belief gave her hope of his safety. She suppressed all emotion and said,

'Father, why should not a hunter of the Abanaquis plant his lodge on the other side of the Kennebis? They are the hunting grounds of his people.'

'It is a defiance. They will again be hunting deer in my forests. Natanis is bold for a young chief, and I will in the outset check his daring and pride!'

'Hast thou ever seen Natanis, father?'

'No, save when he was a boy, when I met his father in a general council held upon the council island, in the bay of the river, below us a day's journey. I noted him then as an ambitious and imperious stripling, who even had the presumption to challenge Bokonoco, my chief warrior, to a trial of skill with his puppet bow and arrows.'

'That was the wild fancy of the boy. Natanis has the credit now of wisdom as a chief, and bravery as a warrior.'

'So men say. But what is he to thee, maiden, that thou speakest so warmly of him?' and the dark gaze of the chief seemed to penetrate her soul. 'Hast thou seen him?'

Willewa dropped her eyes, was silent for a moment, and then looking up said firmly yet in a low voice:

'I have, father!'

'Where hast thou beheld the foe of Canassa?' demanded the chief, pressing the hand he had so gently laid upon her shoulder at the first, so strongly into the flesh that she shrunk from it with pain; 'tell me, when didst thou meet

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

with the Abanaquis?'

'Hear me, father, in peace,' she said as he released his grasp, and placed himself before her while she stood in an attitude at once firm and deprecating. 'Let the words of Willewa enter your ears and fall upon your heart!'

'Speak! Canassa is ready to hear!' answered the chief sternly.

Willewa rested her hand upon the side of the door-way of the lodge, before which both were standing, the moonlight falling bright and purely upon her gentle and beauteous countenance, in which love and apprehension were touchingly mingled. Canassa with haughty surprise, his massive brow thrown into dark shadow beneath his cap of war-feathers, regarded her without removing his eyes.

'Father, Willewn speaks! Let her voice sound not to thee as an enemy's that thou shouldst listen as if thou wert listening to a foe. Whatever I have done, I am still Willewa.'

The darkness of displeasure passed from the brow of the chief, and he said in a kind tone,

'Let my child speak. The daughter of Canassa can never have done any thing unworthy!'

'Thanks, my noble father, for this confidence!'

'When sawest thou the Abanaquis, Willewa?' he said in the same parental tone.

'It was thus, my father,' and in a voice that fell like gentle music upon the ear of Canassa, though the words she uttered pleased him not, and filled him with surprise, she began relating to him her first meeting with Natanis and the wounded youth he had borne to her lodge, recounting each particular. Canassa listened to the end without a word by which she could discover how he was affected. When she concluded by telling him of the departure of Natanis and Ayane in the morning, he was for a few moments silent. He walked several times to and fro before his lodge, and then abruptly turned and addressed her:

'Hast thou met this Abanaquis since? be true, my daughter. I have not yet blamed thee for not telling me of the presence of my foe in thy lodge! I have not asked thee why thou didst not give him up to me; for I know what is due to the sacred rights of hospitality. Thou didst well in not betraying the trust reposed in thee. Thou didst act as became a daughter of Canassa; for know, that if thou hadst forgotten what was due to a guest, and had betrayed him to me, I should have let him depart safely, notwithstanding his misfortunes were caused by his invasion of my hunting grounds. Canassa knows the difference between a foe in the battle-field and a foe in distress. Thou didst so far well; yet, from thy manner and tone and looks, as thou speakest of him, I had rather thou hadst not seen him, or he thee! But thou hast not answered me?'

'I have seen him since, father,' she answered with more confidence, yet still with trembling; for, although her father had taken a view of the first meeting with Natanis which she had not dared even to anticipate, she still was doubtful how he might continue to regard the matter.

'Where!' he demanded in a grave, deep voice.

She then told him truly where and when, and fully recounted to him their interviews, saving only the last, when she had sought him at his lodge, and saving also the tender love-passages which had characterised them all.

'Why came the Abanaquis a second and third time to visit thee!' he said seriously.

'Willewa asked him not why he came,' she answered with modest embarrassment.

'Told he Willewa why he came?'

'No, father!'

'There was no need, methinks. If hospitality led thee at the first to suffer Natanis to go away in peace, what induced thee the second and subsequent times to let him depart without informing me? Came he each time to thy lodge in distress?'

'Each time, I recollect, he said he came for something he had forgotton when there last.'

'No doubt he was very forgetful. Perhaps he told thee he had lost his heart, and came to thee in distress, looking for it. Willewa, if Natanis saw thee so often, he must have been near thee. Dost thou not know who dwelt in that lodge upon the western bank of the Kennebis?'

'Scarlet Feather, my father,' she answered with downcast eyes.

'I did suspect as much. Willewa,' he said severely, yet with a tone of kindness still apparent in the deep sternness of his voice, 'thou hast proved a traitor to thy father and thy tribe! I have read all thy soul as thou wert speaking to me. Thy heart is given to the Abanaquis, and he has won thy maiden affections. I see that thou hast in thy bosom a deep interest for him—deeper than thy trembling lips would fain have kept from me! The Abanaquis

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

has also proved himself a traitor to me, as well as a foe. Like the wolf he has stolen into my lodge and robbed me of my pet-fawn! I know not,' he cried angrily, 'I know not which has proved basest, thyself or the Abanaquis. Nay, throw not thyself upon thy knees at my feet! Natanis has kneeled at thine. So kneel not thou to me! Traitor! Friend of the Abanaquis! Foe of Canassa and thy race! I forgive thee in the name of hospitality what thou didst do in the first place; I now curse thee in the name of thy nation what thou hast since done. The first time he was thy guest. Thence afterwards when he came to thee he was thy father's foe and thine! Thou shouldst have turned a deaf ear to his voice of passion, and letting the young men of thy tribe know he was with thee, have let them fall upon him, bound him and brought him before me. He would not only hunt my deer for me in my forests, but he must afterwards enter my lodges and steal away my gentle doe—the daughter of a king!'

'Father, forgive!' she faltered out clasping her hands upon her bosom.

'Nay! Hear me! Thou hast forgotten the voice of thy father, and listened to the tones of that of the Abanaquis. Henceforth thou art a traitress in the eyes of Canassa, not thy father, but thy *Chief*!'

'Father! forgive me! It is true my heart hath given itself to Natanis! Yet he was so brave, so good, so gentle and full of tenderness! He—'

'Thou hast asked to be forgiven. Wilt thou do what I command thee to earn my forgiveness?'

'I will obey thee, father. Command what thou wilt, if it is to bear the heaviest task thou canst lay upon me. I am willing to be punished by thee even as one of the humblest daughters of thy people!'

'I punish thee not as I would punish them. Hear Canassa's words. Natanis will again visit thee; receive him and let him know nothing of what has passed between thee and me to-night. When thou hast him in thy lodge, administer to him a potion such as thou didst give his wounded friend. Administer it to him subtly, and let it be so powerful that he may sleep deeply. When he sleeps then come to my lodge, and if I be not here, thou wilt find five warriors whom I shall leave behind me to do thy bidding. Guide them to the sleeping Abanaquis, that they may take him prisoner.— Then, Willewa, shalt thou have thy father's forgiveness. If thou fail and prove false thou shalt die the death of a traitress, were thou seven times my daughter!'

'Father! father!'

'No more! I have urgent affairs. Thou knowest the will of Canassa!'

Thus speaking the proud Chief passed onward towards a group of warriors whom he saw standing a short distance from him, as if awaiting the termination of his interview with his daughter.

'Are my braves all informed of my wish to commence the war-march in the morning?' he inquired of a chief upon whose black and savage features every passion of his wild race was strongly impressed; a man whose costume was a bearskin thrown about his body, and whose black hair floated fiercely about his bull-like neck; whose only weapon was a huge knotted pine club, and whose voice as he replied, sounded like the muttered roar of a lion.

'They are all at work preparing for war, my chief. There are some hunting parties yet abroad beyond the lake, but I have despatched runners to bring them in.'

'You have done well, Bockonoco! You will hear now my plans to thwart these pale-faces, and be faithful to the English Sachem. I shall follow the river down myself with five hundred braves, and take a position at the Cushnoe falls, filling the surrounding wood with my warriors. You will follow and take a position higher up so that those batteaux which escape me will fall in with you if they continue to ascend the river. It is my intention to throw myself directly in their path, and dispute the passage at the falls. At this place they will more readily fall a prey to us, as they will be troubled in working their boats to get past the rapids. This will be the moment of attack.'

Canassa's words were received by Boconoko with a savage roar of satisfaction, and by the other chiefs with demonstrations of joy. Their eyes flashed with warlike fire, and their faces lighted up with the anticipation of the excitement of battle. Canassa after going round the war-lodges, at length returned to his own where he had left Willewa, weeping and sorrowful. He did not find her there now, and supposing she had sought her own lodge, he threw himself upon his bearskin couch, and soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII. The Camp.

We now change the scene of our story from the forest solitudes in which we have so long lingered with the hunter and the warrior, to the camp of the American army, whose sudden appearance on the waters of the Kennebis had produced such a sensation among the warlike tribes upon its banks.

The brilliant successes of Montgomery in Canada, his capture of Montreal, and the subsequent capitulation of the most part of Upper Canada, had drawn from Quebec most of the British strength to act against him, and oppose his triumphant march towards that citadel. General Washington with that circumspective eye with which he regarded all the military movements of the enemy, foreseeing that the whole of the disposable force of the British army in Canada, would thus be concentrated upon Montreal, projected an expedition against Quebec. He was at the time in his camp before Boston. No sooner had he conceived this bold idea than he privately detached a large body of troops from his army, and giving the command of them to Benedict Arnold, he directed him to reach Quebec by the way of the Kennebec river, passing through the immense wilderness of forests lying between the sea board of Maine and the St. Lawrence.

The main object held in view by Washington in proposing this hardy expedition, was for the purpose of taking possession of Quebec; although he hoped also to effect by it a diversion in favor of General Montgomery, who was in the upper country with his army held in check by Carleton. Washington had obtained such information in reference to the condition of Quebec as to feel confident that it would be wholly unable to hold out against such a force as he might send to appear before it. He felt assured, not without good grounds, that it would surrender at once if attacked by an American army before the return of Governor Carleton and his forces.

The detachment which Washington sent on this hazardous enterprise consisted of about one thousand men, mostly New England militia, with a company of artillery, and three companies of riflemen. This force set sail from Newburyport in the middle of September in eleven transports, and entered the Kennebec on the third day afterwards. They ascended the river slowly in their vessels until they reached a point where it was deemed advisable by General Arnold to debark and construct batteaux for ascending the river higher; the first rapids, called by the Indians the Cushnoc Falls, being six miles above them, where a block house, called Fort Weston, had already been erected for the protection of the traders, and overawing the surrounding Indians.[†] While the batteaux, two hundred in number, were being constructed, Arnold proceeded up the river to Cushnoc rapids, and there established his head quarters in a house still standing on the east bank of the river, a mile above Augusta.

The batteaux were at length completed and being brought up the river to Fort Weston, Arnold prepared to re-embark his army. It was on the evening previous to the morning set by him for this purpose that a single canoe might have been seen descending the river close in with the shore. It contained two persons who skillfully guided the trail bark through the leaping waters of the Cushnoc rapids. The moon had already risen and guided them by her light in their dangerous voyage past many a frowning rock, and through many a narrow shute, obstructed by the trunks of fallen trees.

As the voyagers came in sight of the block-house, on the level point of land below the rapids, and discerned the hundred camp fires of the army of the Americans, the one in the stern who directed the course of the boat spake and said quickly, yet with courage,

'We are quite far enough down, Neonah. Let us turn the canoe in shore and secrete it under the overhanging branches.'

The speaker was Willewa. She was dressed almost precisely like Neonah, only her dark tresses were concealed beneath a close hunting cap of otter skins adorned with a scarlet feather, a gift from Natanis. Neonah turned the prow of the light bark shore-ward, and in a few moments afterwards both landed under the dark canopy of the trees that thickly grew upon the banks. Neonah having concealed the boat turned to his mistress and said,

'Now whither shall we go to find the great Bostonee Sachem?'

'We must follow the river side until we find a path-way between two oaks. This will lead us to the lodge in which dwells the chief I seek.— Such were the directions I got from the Kennebis whom we met this afternoon.'

'Wherever Willewa goes, Neonah attends her!' answered the young Indian with devotion.

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

They continued along the shore but a short distance before they descried two vast oaks overhanging the water, between which they discovered a path ascending from the river.

‘It is here, Neonah. The Kennebis brave did not deceive us. He would not have told me so truly had he known that we were the friends of the white-warrior. Now let us move swiftly and cautiously; for we may be surprised ere we can get into the presence of the chief!’

In front of a large square house rudely built, yet imposing in height and size for a frontier habitation, two officers were walking together up and down in the pleasant moonlight. One of them was a tall strongly framed, bold looking man, with an eagle eye, a prominent Roman nose, and a countenance expressing altogether great firmness and military courage. It was Colonel or General Arnold. He was habited in a long grey surtout, with an upright collar, a plain chapeau with a cockade, and Hessian boots. His body was loosely girded by a black, glazed belt, which held a sword and a single pistol. In his hand he held a small willow switch with which, as he perambulated up and down, he continually whipped the polished leg of his military boot. The person by his side was a stout frank looking gentlemen in a green hunting coat, lined and collared with fur, buff leathern breeches, and military boots. He wore a foraging cap, and a red sash with a sword, and a brace of pistols. His address was that of an accomplished gentleman, his air that of a daring and brave soldier. It was Captain Morgan of the Rifle Corps, who subsequently in the course of the war, so distinguished himself at the head of his riflemen. He was smoking a cigar with an easy careless air, and occasionally stopping to pat upon the head a fine Newfoundland dog, which walked with a slow and stately step, up and down by his side.

‘There can be no difficulty in taking the citadel of Quebec if we can surprise it,’ said Arnold pursuing the conversation which engaged them. ‘To take the garrison suddenly by surprise is my aim. This, however, will be prevented if by any means the chiefs of the hostile Indians in our course should send forward information. This is what I fear.’

‘There is no doubt that the Nerijewecs are in the favor of the British.— They are a powerful tribe and lay directly before us.’

‘I should like to know the feelings of the equally powerful Abanaquies,’ said Arnold thoughtfully.

‘We have been told they are friendly.’

‘It is doubtful. These Indian warriors act by impulses. If, by chance, one tribe should dispute our way, and with any success, the other tribes would rush in to assist in destroying us. But if we were conquerors, they would all stand aloof.’

‘Is there no prospect of being able to conciliate Canassa as you have done the chiefs of the Damaresc and Kennebis tribes?’

‘I fear not. I shall, however, soon learn from the party I despatched to him this morning offering peace.’

‘Have you also sent to know the feelings of Natanis, the chief of the Abanaquies?’

‘No. I was told by General Washington that we should probably find in him an ally. But, as I said, this was only a conjecture, based upon the fact that when the English proposed to him terms of alliance, he proudly refused to listen to them!’

‘There is no probability that the Indians will offer to molest us; though, if they did but know it, we should be completely in their power as we advanced deeper into the wilderness. They could attack us when we were divided in passing the rapids, and do us infinite mischief!’

‘The only thing I fear from them is that they may send messengers forward to Quebec, and so prepare them for our coming!’

‘If we do ever get there!’ said Captain Morgan. ‘The truth is I question very much if we ever see the citadel of Quebec by this route.’

‘Let such doubts be whispered only, sir,’ said Arnold. ‘I know well the difficulties of the way, but I am as confident I shall see the waters of the St. Lawrence within three weeks, as that I now behold those of the Kennebis flowing past!’

‘Do you know I mistrust that Tarratine Chief and his long-sided friend Sharp-knife, that came into our camp three nights ago and made such professions of friendship. You know that the next morning they were not to be found!’

‘Because they left on a mission of my own!’

‘Where did you send them?’

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

‘To watch Canassa, and see that he did not send forward any messenger through the wilderness to give note of our march.’

‘Will you believe it? Their sudden disappearance led me to believe they had only visited us as spies!’

‘Sabatis gave me full evidence of his friendship to General Washington.’

‘Well, it may be so. I heard an old Woodman say this afternoon that he well knew that Sabatis, the Tarratine chief, was a friend of the English.’

‘I may have been deceived. But if it is so he can do us no mischief in what I have entrusted to him.’

‘Not unless he improves your hint, and pushes forward himself to Quebec to report us.’

Arnold started with surprise and vexation. ‘If they have done so, half the fruit of our expedition will be lost!’

‘It is a great inducement for an Indian chief to be bearer of such intelligence as he could carry. The reward would be great besides the favor it would give him in the eyes of the English. Sabatis, too, can tell our foes the exact amount of our force, and our condition.’

‘If he has deceived me I cannot blame myself. Whether I trusted him or not, if he was an enemy instead of a friend, it would have been the same in the end. He came voluntarily into my tent, and offered his services. If I had mistrusted him and sent him away he would still have had the same information he has now, and made the same use of it; that is, if he has proved treacherous. This I question! Though I must confess you have aroused my suspicious. Ha, who approaches from the river?’ he exclaimed as the dog with a loud bark darted across the open space in front of the house towards the entrance of the wood, through which a path-way led to the shore. ‘Tell is a watchful sentinel, captain.’ The house having a front towards the road leading to the block-house, as well as a front facing the river, a sentry was placed only on the East, on the road front of the quarters; so that the side of the house on which the two officers were walking was left unguarded, the two gentlemen having retired here after tea to walk for its greater privacy, as well as for the beauty of the moonlit scene. Opposite rose dark and imposing a wooded height, at the base of which the black transparent waters of the romantic Kennebis flowed past with arrowy swiftness. The murmur of its passage among the rocks reaching their ears, while the silvery sparkle of its broken waves gleamed through the trees.— Farther down, nearly a mile distant, was a plain, elevated a hundred feet from the river, back of which towered a lofty hill, clad to its summit with forest trees. On this plain, then just begining to yield its gigantic oaks to the woodman’s axe, now stands the beautiful city of Augusta, its dome and towers and spires presenting to the eye a far different scene than that which now met the gaze of the two officers. It was opposite this plain or table of land that the block-house of Fort Weston stood, and the gleam of the fires of the army in camp there, were reflected upon the opposite bank with a red glare.

‘It is two persons—they are Indians!’ said Captain Morgan, taking a second glance at two figures issuing from the wood-land path. They stopped near a small ledge of rock as the dog flew bounding and barking towards them, and Neonah stepping before Willewa, presented his spear at the fierce animal.

‘Come away, Tell, come away!’ cried his master. ‘They are but two, and must be friendly,’ he added addressing General Arnold. ‘Approach, you have nothing to fear.’

Tell retired slowly before them, and the next moment Neonah and Willewa stood in the presence of the leader they had come to seek. Both officers were struck with the youth and appearance of the strangers, and instantly an interest was awakened in their breasts towards them.

‘Whence came you?’ demanded Arnold in English.

‘From the forests of our people to seek the Great Sachem chief of the Bostonees,’ answered Willewa to his surprise, in the same language, though brokenly.

‘I am the Sachem you seek?’

‘Then Great Father of the pale-faces, I am rewarded for all I have undergone, in beholding your eyes and opening my lips that my words may fall upon your ears! I have come to you, because I am the friend of the Bostonees!’

‘The friends of the Bostonees are welcome. Who has sent you, my brave youth, that you come to me?’

‘No one has sent me but a grateful memory of thy people. Love for her has sent me. For her sake I have come to warn thee of danger in thy path. Know, great warrior-chief, that I have discovered that Canassa the Nerijewec has gathered his warriors together, and has in ambush a days journey up the river waiting to cut off thy march. Whither thou wouldst proceed I know, and for what end, for spies from thee have told it in the council lodge of Canassa, and my ears heard. I have, therefore, come to tell thee that the war-hatchet of the Nerijewec is unburied

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

and that the bear prowls in thy path!"

"This is news, Morgan, indeed! Noble youth you have our thanks, and shall be rewarded. Of what tribe are you?"

"Of the tribe of Canassa," answered Willewa hesitating.

"You have risked much then in coming to tell me this!"

"I have. All I ask is that, if Canassa should ever fall into thy power, thou wilt release him for my sake!"

"It shall be done!"

"I have more to tell thee, chief. Natanis the brave chief of the Abanaquies is thy friend, even as Canassa is thy foe. He knows of the intentions of Canassa, and is now assembling his warriors to throw himself at their head between thee and Canassa, so that the former may be prevented from doing that which he contemplates. Therefore, as thou goest on thy way up the river, know that the warrior thou mayest find hovering around thy path are friends who would protect and guard thee from danger. Thou wilt know the chief of the Abanaquis by a scarlet plume in his coronet of black feathers, and his warriors by their red bows and quivers, and scarlet belt of wampum!"

"We shall not forget these tokens by which we are to recognise our friends. Now what shall be thy reward for this intelligence?"

"Nothing, only that you give your word that you harm not Canassa!"

"I give the pledge, noble Indian youth!"

"It is enough! Good night!"

"Whither do you go? you must remain till morning. You must enter and refresh yourselves, both of you," said Captain Morgan.

No. We must return as we came. The great chief has heard all our words!"

Thus speaking Willewa with a dignified yet graceful inclination of her head, turned from the officers and followed by Neonab, disappeared in the wood-land path by which they had ascended the river.

"This is surprising! two Indian lads thus acting as our friends, when their tribe are foes to us!" said Arnold as they departed.

"There is something deeper in this than meets your eye," said Captain Morgan. "If that one who spoke so well in English is not a woman, then I have no skill in detecting disguises. The truth is it is some charming Indian girl of Canassa's tribe who has a lover who is a friend to us, and so she has done this in our behalf. From the manner in which she spoke of Natanis I shouldn't wonder if he was the lover, and that she came from him."

"It may be as you say, Morgan. But let us now see to improving this news which is brought so opportunely."

"I should like to see this Natanis, who is making this diversion in our favor," said Captain Morgan, as they passed round to the East front of the house. "He must be a noble, generous fellow."

"We can lose no time in getting the army in a condition to fight their way tomorrow, if need be," said Arnold; "will you accompany me to Fort Weston? I am going there at once. I see your thoughts are upon that handsome Indian boy, you choose to call a female!" said Arnold laughing.

"In truth I can't well get her out of my mind. All the time she was talking I was watching her perfectly formed features, and the lifting and falling of her eye-lids, conscious that I was gazing upon a beautiful Indian maid, who had chosen a male attire, doubtless to shield herself from rudeness if she had met with any of the soldiers. I wish I knew all about this. There is a romantic love affair at the bottom, I am convinced."

"I see you are in love, my friend. If we fall in with Canassa, and he takes you prisoner, perhaps we may have the little drama of Captain Smith and Pocahontas acted over again!"

"I am afraid she has a lover already," said the gallant rifleman smiling and sighing; "if so I fear she would let my head go by the board. I wouldn't be willing to risk it. But here are our horses. As we can't take them in the boats, this is likely the last time we shall be in the saddle until we get into the Canadas."

The two officers accompanied by three others who came out of the house then mounted and galloping up the winding lane which led into the road, turned to the right on reaching it, and rode rapidly at spur-speed in the direction of Fort Weston. After riding about a mile they came in sight from a hill down which the road wound, of the block-house, and the square, log fort in its rear, situated on a level point of land from which the trees had been removed, leaving an extensive meadow washed by the river. In the centre of it rose the dark walls of the

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaki.

block-house, an octagonal lantern elevated eight feet from the ground upon a square basis, looking not unlike, in form, an ancient dove-cote, the resemblance to which its numerous little windows for musket firing, contributed not a little to increase. On the plain around it were encamped a thousand soldiers, some in shining tents; others in wigwams constructed of green boughs, others in the open air around a blazing fire. Upon a small green island just below the block-house white tents were also seen glimmering through the trees, adding to the picturesque beauty of the whole scene.

The party paused a moment to survey the scene. The block-house was ruddy with the numerous camp-fires; soldiers were passing to and fro in the red light; groups were preparing their arms, others cooking food; some in a merry mood were singing songs, and others stretched in their blankets with their feet to the live-coals lay wrapped in sleep. Sentinels were seen walking guard at regular intervals in the outer circle, and between them were filed stands of muskets gleaming in the moon-beams. Not far from the walls of the fort were the lodges of several friendly Indians, who were smoking their pipes in a circle around a fire. The shore was lively with men arranging a long flotilla of batteaux, lading them and getting them ready for the morrow's march. At intervals, from a group of trees on the spot where the toll-house now stands, to the ears of the horsemen rose bursts of martial music, the fife, drum and bugle mingling together in rude and wild melody.

Altogether, it was a striking and imposing scene. After surveying it a few moments, Arnold put spurs to his horse and dashed down towards the block-house closely followed by his party of officers.

CHAPTER IX. The Pursuit.

We will now return to Ayane, whom, it will be remembered, Scarlet Feather had left in his lodge on the banks of the Kennebis, with directions to await the arrival of the seven warriors he was to send to join him for the purpose of pursuing Sabatis and Sharp Knife.

The young brave, after the departure of Natanis, remained for sometime seated upon the river side in front of the lodge dressing the shafts of a quiver of arrows with the wing feathers of a hawk. While he was thus engaged he would from time to time, with habitual watchfulness, raise his eyes and take a keen, rapid survey about him, both of the river and the opposite shores; for he knew he was very near foes. He whiled the time by singing, or rather chanting in a low, musical tone of voice a song of passion. The stars into the fountain's shine, So Iska's eyes beam into mine; The Cono warbles from the hill, But Iska's voice is sweeter still; The woodland fawn hath soft, brown eyes, But timld from my footstep flies; But Iska's eyes with browner bue Lingering gate, while I pursue; The rivers to the blue sea flow, The mists from earth to heaven do go; Iska is my own blue sea! Iska is a heaven to me! Iska is my own blue sea! Iska is a heaven to me!"

While the lover was repeating the last two lines of his simple song in a tone low and melodious, his quick ear detected a sound in the water, and, looking round in the direction in which he heard it, he saw a canoe stealing along the bank, and within a few yards of him. He saw that it contained three Indians, who were standing up in the boat, one of them paddling it along, dipping his thin-bladed paddle into the water with noiseless celerity. A glance told Ayane that they were foes and Nerijewecs, for the moonlight enabled him to see them with perfect distinctness. They were armed, and watchful in their manner as they approached.

He was satisfied that he had not been seen, for a tree stood between him and them; yet he was not sure that he had not been overheard. Ayane, though young, was brave and cautious, as became a warrior of the Abanaquis race. He saw that the least movement would betray him, and it was apparent to him that their object was to surprise the occupant of the lodge, whoever he might be. He felt happy, then, at the reflection that his chief was out of the danger which menaced him. He closely observed them, while he planned for his own safety. He knew it would be yet six hours, or near dawn before the braves Natanis was to despatch, could reach him; he, therefore, had only his own arm and courage to depend upon. The three Nerijewecs were stout warriors, and he felt that tact was more called for now than valor. Grasping his spear firmly, he lay perfectly still in the shadow of the huge trunk of the tree. The canoe came up within a bow's length of the tree, and then touching the bank, the three warriors suddenly leaped to the land, and, with a wild war-shout sprang towards the lodge, their battle-axes elevated One of them rushed into it, and the others placed themselves before the door.

'No one is here! It is an Abanaquis lodge and here are the skins of the game he has killed,' said the chief warrior of the party Canassa had despatched to seize the daring Abanaquis, who had the boldness to fix his habitation in sight of his own smokes.

Ayane did not wait to hear any more that was said, for no sooner had they bounded towards the lodge, than he leaped into their canoe, and giving it a strong impetus towards the middle of the stream, he let it take the current, casting himself at full length in the bottom of the boat so as not to be seen by them. This was all the act of an instant of time. The floating canoe caught the eye of one of the Indians, and with a cry that their boat had got adrift, he ran towards the bank. He was followed by another one of them, and both at the same moment plunged into the river to swim towards it to recover it.

When Ayane, who still continued to lay quietly in the bottom of the canoe, was aware of their approach by their blowing and splashing in the water, he loosened his war-hatchet in his belt, and grasped it firmly, and awaited the appearance of the first dark hand upon the side of the little bark.— He now saw that he could effectually escape them, and also destroy them. By taking to the canoe, he had only hoped to be carried safely by the current far out of sight before they discovered the absence of their boat.

Suddenly an arm was thrown above the water, and the hand seized the side of the canoe. Ayane instantly elenched it firmly in his, and rising up, struck the warrior a heavy blow in the temples! He sunk like a stone beneath the surface, and the sharp edge of the tomahawk the next moment descended upon the hand of his

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

companion, who, with a fierce cry had taken hold of the canoe to upset it. The bleeding limb fell into the boat, while the Indian, diving deep, avoided the fatal stroke that was descending upon his head. As he rose to the surface, he directed his course towards the opposite shore, leaving a dark red track behind as he swam.

'Two of you I am at least free from,' said the young victor; 'now for the third! He is but one, and an Abanaquis is not to fly from a single warrior, and he a Nerijewec.'

With this haughty expression Ayane directed the head of the canoe towards the bank on which the remaining brave was standing, watching his approach. As he came near, the tomahawk of the Nerijewec came flying through the whizzing air, and passed harmlessly above his head as he stooped to avoid it. The next moment, the two antagonists were engaged hand to hand in the water mid-waist deep, Ayane having leaped from the canoe to attack him! Their only weapons were their hunting-knives, for Ayane had sent his war-batchet at his foe, in answer to the message of his own.— The struggle was fierce, and very equal, but at length Ayane obtained the victory over his more powerful antagonist, and his body sinking beneath the waves, was borne away by the swift tide.

The young brave now found that he was slightly wounded in the shoulder and he entered the lodge to dress it. On the floor he found a Nerijewec spear, quiver and bow, and on the outside, a bear's-skin, a coronet of feathers, and other costume which the two warriors had thrown aside, before springing into the river. These he carefully gathered and bound up as trophies of his victory.

It was just dawn of day when Ayane, rising from the ground upon which he had cast himself late the night before, went out from the lodge. The gray light of morning was just streaking the East. He turned from it to penetrate with his eyes the forests south of the lodge, from whence he expected the party Natanis was to send.

'If they come not by sunrise I shall pursue these spies, and arrest them prisoners alone,' he said with resolution. 'Each moment lessens the chance of overtaking them. They have full ten hours start! Ah! there are my braves!' he exclaimed with joy as he saw, one after another, seven Abanaquies warriors in their scarlet belts, and bows and quivers of the same bright hue, issue from the wood in single file, one after the other, and, at a swift, running trot, advance towards him. He met them half way, and, after interchanging a few words with each, he placed himself at their head, and leaving the lodge to the right, struck a trail above it near the river bank, and with his party, was soon lost to sight in the shadows of the forest glades.

He had been departed but a few minutes, when a canoe left the opposite shore, and as it emerged from the obscurity of the shadows which the gray morning still enveloped the river, it was seen to contain two persons. As they came nearer, they proved to be Neona and Willewa, the latter in the male attire, with which two evenings afterwards we have seen her appear before General Arnold. They now landed in front of the lodge and after vigilant circumspection of its vicinity, Willewa timidly advanced towards it and entered it.

'Now, Neona, hasten with the speed of the deer with thy message,' said the maiden. To night, you will find me awaiting your return at the Rock of the silver spring. Thou knowest it is two of the Bostonee leagues below. From thence we will together proceed on our mission to the great Sachem chief of the Pale faces. Fly! Say to Natanis if he loves Willewa never to approach again her lodge, nor enter the hunting-grounds of Canassa. Say to her that I will send him word by thee when we can safely meet. Tell him that Canassa with his warriors is on his march to intercept the Bostonees at the rapids of the Teton, filling the forests with eyes to await the issue of the warlike movements of Canassa. But, 'she added with emphasis, 'see that Natanis gives thee for me his promise as a warrior and a chief that he will no more seek Willewa in the lodges of her people.'

Neona then departed from her with the speed of a grey-hound, and disappeared in the direction by which the warriors of Natanis less than half an hour before had come to join Ayane.

'Only in this way can Natanis avert my fathers' anger. Were he to come, at last, rather would Willewa perish by the fire, or by the war-hatchet than to betray him. No, Natanis, noble and brave! Thou hast the heart and love of a true maiden, who, rather than harm should come to thee would forget that the blood of the Nerijewec's flowed in her veins, and join herself to the Abanaquis, heart and hand. Yet in loving Natanis so much as I do, I love not my father less! He is still my father, and as such commands my love and duty. Yet to these I cannot sacrifice Natanis! Oh! that I could love both, without doing the other a wrong! Ah! here is upon the ground a silver ring! It was worn by Ayane! Can he have been here since Natanis left? Some one has been in the lodge! If it had been those warriors my father sent, they would have destroyed it by fire. They at least have not been here. Ah! what do you here, Ustaloga?' she asked, surprised at seeing a Nerijewec warrior approach her. Her right arm was folded

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

beneath his hunting shirt of skins, and he looked pale and suffering. It was the Indian whose hand Ayane had severed, and who, having from the other shore seen his departure with the dawn, had now crossed the river by swimming, on seeing Willewa approach the lodge. In a few indignant words he told her all that had transpired. Willewa was not a little surprised at the narration; and wondered whither Ayane could have gone; for she yet knew nothing of the two spies.

‘Will Ustaloga go back to the lodges of his tribe?’ asked Willewa, who trembled lest he might inform Canassa of her presence there at the lodge of the Abanaquis. ‘Will he not rather fear the wrath of his chief, that he has let a youth thus overcome him and two braves?’ Let the warrior—with—one hand seek the tribes of the Keewods, for they are women.’

‘Ustaloga will no more see the face of Canassa! Ustaloga is now a child, a woman—and no brave. The hand of his war-hatchet is in the dark waves of the Kennebis! The blood of his war-heart hath flowed out, and his spirit is dead! Ustaloga no more can dart the hunting-spear, or bend the bow at his foe! No more will he whirl the war-hatchet at his enemy, or join in the battle cry with his braves! Ustaloga is no more than a woman in the lodges of his people! Ustaloga will die and go to the Huntinggrounds of his father! In the land of the Great Spirit will he become a warrior!’

As the maimed warrior thus gloomily, and in a solemn tone sung his death-song, he approached the banks of the river, and slowly walked out into its current. As his footsteps descended deeper and deeper upon the bottom, he continued thus chanting his lament:

‘The dark waters flow on! and as they flow, they open their bosom that Ustaloga may lie down in their embrace! Deep, deep rush the waves of Kennebis! Cold, cold are the waves of Kennebis! But deeper are the wounds in the spirit of the warrior! Colder the war-fire in his veins! Dark, dark sweep the waters of the Kennebis; but darker rush the thoughts of Ustaloga over his soul. The Hunting grounds of my tribe will soon disappear from my eyes, but they will open upon the green woods of the Spirit-land! Thus ends the death-song of Ustaloga! Thus dies the unhappy brave that no longer may live with warriors and men! Once more will I shout the war-cry of my tribe, and amid its echoes fly to the hunting grounds of the sun!’

The unhappy warrior then raised his voice in the shrill battle-cry of his war-like tribe, and while it was reverberating through the forests on either bank plunged beneath the surface!

Long, long did Willewa, awed by the sad scene she had witnessed, gaze upon the black waters. But the warrior rose no more to the surface; and she turned away and wept his fate; for Ustaloga was a brave and faithful warrior, and one whom she had known as Canassa's trusty friend and counsellor since she was a child.

In a little while afterwards she left the lodge, after taking with her a small scarlet feather as a memento of her lover, and which had probably fallen from his head. Entering her boat, she descended the river to the place appointed, to meet Neonah. Here she remained during the day. Just before sun-set the youth appeared, and reported that he had seen Natanis, and delivered her messages, and that Natanis had promised faithfully to be governed by her wishes. Neonah informed her that he saw Willewa at the head of his assembled warriors, and that as he left him, he was on the eve of his departure to throw himself between Canassa and the Bostonee army.

The same night, as soon as the light of the moon rendered it safe, Willewa embarked with her youthful cousin in the canoe, and continued down the river till day-light. They secreted themselves and their little vessel during the day, for they knew the shores were traversed by war-parties, and again embarked at evening. We have seen how, after sailing on this second evening two hours, they reached the Cushnoc rapids, and landed at the camp of the American General.

We will now return to Ayane and his brave band of seven young braves. He steadily pursued his course along the shores of the river scarcely pausing to rest, until the sun began to descend in the bosom of the western hills. They had closely examined every nook that might conceal a canoe as they passed up, and when the day closed, Ayane was satisfied that those whom they sought, were still in advance of them. It was twilight when he came in sight of a carrying-place; a spot where the framing water rendered it necessary that every ascending boat should be borne around it, on the land. On reaching this place, Ayane carefully examined the shore, and at length discovered the print of footsteps. He followed them, and saw that two persons had walked around the rapids, and he knew by the depth of the pressure in the soil that they must have borne a boat upon their shoulders’

Filled with joy at this discovery, he followed the trail, and discovered where it again was lost in the water

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

above the rocks. From its appearance he was assured that it could not have been an hour since they had passed along.

He now took his way up the shore at a swift pace, carefully watching the river; and as the shades of night fell over it, enveloping the banks in gloom, he made use of his ears instead of his eyes, stopping at frequent intervals to listen to catch the sound of a paddle. He traveled at the head of his young warriors in this way about two hours, confident of being able soon to overtake those he was pursuing, knowing he had moved much faster than they could in a canoe, when he heard, from a small island just above him, a rushing noise, followed by a plunge into the water. Then came a deer swimming towards them, but was borne by the current swiftly past, ere he reached the bank.

'That deer has flown from the presence of man,' said Ayane. 'Now, my braves, our prize is certain. Those we seek cannot be far above the island. They have disturbed this deer in passing; or else have landed upon it. Now be guided by me in all your movements. The least impetuosity will prevent their capture.'

Ayane then kept on until they came opposite the island. He then stopped to listen. A sound reached his ear like the clicking of a flint struck upon steel. His keen eye at the same moment detected amid the dark foliage of the island, sparks flying, and then he saw a deep glow like a glow-worm, emitting beams of light.

Instantly he arrested the advance of his warriors, and said, in a low tone,

'They are there upon the island! They have landed, and are smoking their pipes. They must be the spies. See, there are but two pipe fires visible. There are but two men! But we must be as cautious as if there were ten; for we must surprise them. It is the command of Natanis that no harm be done them.'

Ayane then chose three of his party by name to accompany him, leaving the others to watch the river, lest, possibly, taking alarm, the spies might escape by water. He then entered the forest, and keeping along under its covert till he had got some distance above the island, he threw aside his robe of deer skins, and noiselessly dropped from a branch into the stream. He was followed by the other three, and in silence they began to swim towards the head of the island. They soon reached it, landing under the protection of an overhanging oak. With the tread of the velvet-footed pard when he creeps upon his prey, they then moved towards the spot where he saw the pipe-fires glowing up at every whiff of the smokers. At length, guarded by trees, they came so near them that Ayane could clearly see by the glare of the light given by their pipes upon their features, that one of them was a white-hunter, and the other, the Sagamore Sabatis. The face of Sharp Knife he had never seen before, but that of the Chief he recognized.

The two spies were talking together, and Sharp Knife was congratulating his companion upon the rapid progress they had made. In the meanwhile, Ayane having addressed a few words of direction to his braves, crept with them round so as to get behind their backs. The four then laid down and drew themselves along the ground like caterpillars until within ten feet of them. Then Ayane sprang to his feet, shouted the war-cry of the Abanaquis, and with one of his braves, leaped upon Sabatis as he sat upon the ground. Sharp Knife was at the same moment in the grasp of the two others, each with a knife elevated above his heart.

Both of the spies struggled fiercely to throw off their captors, in vain.—Ayane and his friends had the advantage in the outset, and after a few moments, succeeded in subduing them, and binding them with cords of deer's hide. They were then conveyed into the canoe, and taken to the shore where the other warriors were left, and the whole party began to move down the river, part on the shore, and Ayane and one warrior in the canoe with his two sullen and ferocious prisoners; for the knowledge that they had been seized by the command of Scarlet Feather, was not calculated to lessen the chagrin with which they contemplated this unexpected termination of their mission.

CHAPTER X. The Two War Chiefs.

As Neonah and Willewa, after their departure from the head-quarters of the American General, were paddling their light skiff along under the covert of the bank on the East side of the river which lay most in shadow from the moon-beams, they were suddenly startled by the whizzing of an arrow through the air above their heads. It came from the opposite shore, and ere they could discover from whom, a second one came humming and struck in the side of the canoe, penetrating to its feathers through the thin plates of birehen bark.

'An enemy!' cried Neonah, turning the prow of the boat so as to place himself in a line between Willewa and the danger.

'No. It is an Abanaquis shaft,' said Willewa as she bent down to examine it.

'The Abanaquies are our foes!' answered Neonah with warmth.

This was true enough, thought Willewa; but she so loved their young chief that she had forgotten that the nation itself was hostile to her own.

'See, upon the bank are three warriors! One of them waves his spear. He shouts to us!'

'Foe or friend, turn your canoe hither or a flight of arrows will be shot instead of a single one!'

'It is the voice of Natanis! I thought I recognized his noble figure conspicuous above those around him!' said the maiden with joy. 'Direct the course towards them!'

'They will make you prisoner!' cried Neonah with emphasis.

'I am willing to be prisoner to Natanis,' she said smiling. 'Hast thou forgotten the tale I told thee?'

'No,' answered Neonah sullenly. 'But I like not this chief loving thee so well, cousin. If we meet in fair battle I will deal the death upon his proud head!'

'Nay, Natanis is my friend!'

'That is why he is my enemy!'

'Neonah, this is folly. See! they bend their bows again from the banks. We obey you, Natanis!' she cried waving her hand. The jealous youth made no effort to urge the boat towards the bank, on which a group of at least a score of warriors were now assembled, all distinctly visible in the moonlight, for the river here was not more than six hundred feet wide.— But Willewa plied her paddle with grace and skill, and no little power, and the canoe soon touched the bank. Natanis met the disguised Willewa as she sprang upon the green sward.

'How is this? Who are you, youth? Surely I heard a maiden's voice?'

'Come hither, chief, and I will tell thee whose it was!' she said unwilling to betray herself before his warriors.

'Art thou not a lad of Canassa's tribe?'

'I am, noble chief! Yet I know that Natanis is the friend of Canassa!'

'Dost thou? Who knows this but one!'

'Nay, stand aside with me, chief. Now,' she said, as Natanis stepped a little way after her, and they stood apart from the rest; 'will I tell thee!'

'Has the princess Willewa a brother. Art thou not a son of Canassa?'

'I am a daughter of Canassa. Dost thou not recognize the voice of Willewa?'

Natanis uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and was about to embrace her with joyful surprise when he was restrained in the impulse by a motion of her finger. She then told him why she had so disguised herself, and of her visit to the American camp. He listened, and when she had done he looked troubled and was silent.

'I have displeased thee, Natanis.'

'No; thou hast done well and nobly, Willewa. But I would thou hadst not gone to the camp.'

'My disguise was not penetrated. I was treated as a youth, even as Neonah was!'

'Thou art brave and true, Willewa. Now have I somewhat to tell thee. But first I must hold thee as my prisoner. I shall not suffer you to return to your lodge. You and your cousin I shall keep with me, for I hope soon to add to your companionship Canassa himself!'

'Take my father prisoner?'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

'Hear my words, Willewa,' he said, tenderly. I will do nothing that you will not counsel. Canassa with his warriors has thrown himself into the pass of the Sebasticook, at the point where the Bostonees have felled trees to erect a block-house; having made prisoners of the party of men the chief Arnold sent forward to build it. He there lays in wait to fall upon the Bostonee army. This ambuscade you have prepared their war-chief to watch for and guard against. But Canassa will attack him, if not there at some other point, unless I and my warriors interfere. This we cannot do without a battle!'

'Oh, let not Canassa and Natanis meet in the fight!' cried Willewa earnestly.

'For thy sake, Willewa, I will avoid the contest he would force upon me. There is only one way in which this can be prevented, and also the Bostonee army saved from ruin!'

'How, Natanis?' she tremblingly asked.

'By making Canassa prisoner!'

'My father thy prisoner?'

'Yes, Willewa. I have learned by a spy that his war lodge is planted on the extremity of the point of land formed by the Kennebis and Sebasticook, and that he has with him only eight chiefs, the party occupying three lodges. The main body of his warriors are encamped in the wood on both sides of the lesser stream, and some six hundred yards above him. Now when I heard this I resolved to make an attempt to seize the person of Canassa.—Once in my power I could induce him to order his warriors back to their lodges, and bring about also terms of reconciliation between me and him. Now that I have met you, if you will consent to my plan to save blood-shed I have no doubt that your father might also be led to give his consent to our marriage.'

'Not by first making him your foe by making him your prisoner, Natanis.'

'He is my foe now. Once in my hands I can bring him to terms of conciliation and peace. Besides I intend to be aided by the Bostonee chief.—But all my plan I cannot now detail. But will you trust to the wisdom and love of Natanis? and let me do that I think best for Canassa, for myself and for thee!'

The maiden remained silent and thoughtful for a few moments, and then taking one of his hands in hers, said:

'Natanis, it is a struggle in my heart between thee and my father. But I yield. I know that thou wilt do that which is wise and good. But how wilt thou be able to seize Canassa, surrounded by his eight warriors, without blood being shed. Alas, I tremble, Natanis.'

'Thy father's blood should be saved, though he struck down seven of my own braves.'

'Blood must not be shed, Natanis. As you say, if Canassa can be taken prisoner, the attack upon the Bostonees may be prevented, and a battle between you and him in their defence also avoided. I will prove my love to thee Natanis, as well as my tenderness for the life of Canassa; though my heart shrinks at the thought of what I dare to do to save the lives of many warriors of the Abanaquies, the Nerijeweas, and the Bostonees! From here to where Canassa encamps, is less than a league. Let me proceed on my way in the canoe with Neonah. I will visit him at his lodge. I will not tell him that it was through me, nor that I assumed this disguise, but to seek him alone. I must deceive him, Natanis, to save him from doing evil, and from meeting in arms with thee. I will walk with him along the river banks as we discourse together, and when thou shalt see a fit time, fall upon us, and make prisoners of us both. I will be to thee as a youth, and as such you must suppose me, and treat me; thus my father will not suspect my unfilial conspiracy against him; but a conspiracy undertaken in benevolence and kindness. If I err, may the Great Spirit pardon my error.'

About two hours later than this conversation took place, Canassa and an Indian youth were promenading side by side upon a level plateau of sward upon the shore of the Kennebis. Before them mingled the waters of the two rivers, and in one bright mirror, swept proudly away to the southward, losing itself among the overhanging hills.

'Chief, you are my prisoner!' cried the voice of Natanis at his ear.—Four warriors instantly threw themselves upon him and bound him, while Natanis pressed his hand upon his mouth, to prevent his giving the alarm. Willewa was then seized by the Chief, and the two prisoners were rapidly borne alone the shore a few rods, and placed in a canoe which crossed the river with them, followed by two others, containing the rest of the Abanaquis party. This prompt and successful issue of his plot, not a little gratified the young Abanaquis. During the whole time Canassa had not moved. He sat in the canoe stern and silent, a warrior standing before and behind him with uplifted knives, threatening him with instant death if he raised his voice; and finding himself completely in their power, he refused to compromit his savage dignity by making any efforts that could not be successful

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

towards freeing himself from his captors. Willewa sat near him weeping, for she grieved to see her noble father thus bound; but she was upborne in her heart by the consciousness that it was an act of duty which she had been a party to. Let those blame her who have thus a heart divided between a lover and a father, with equal love for both; and who hopes from the step, to secure peace and safety to friends, and consent for her union with him whom her heart has chosen for its mate.

Conclusion

There is, on the East bank of the Kennebee about a third of a mile above the toll-bridge a conical-shaped hill called 'Cushnoc mount.' It rises about seventy feet above the plateau or meadow. At the base of the mound, close at its foot is a private cemetery, dark and funereal with fur and cypress, whose deep shades cast at noon-day a tranquil twilight down upon its avenue a tomb! one of those quiet spots on which the living gaze with a feeling of envy, when they reflect how calmly the dead rest there.

It was on the summit of this mound, which then rose from the bosom of a forest of noble oaks, scarce one of which has been left by the ruthless axe, that the morning after the capture of Canassa, Natanis planted his council-lodge. It commanded a view of the American army below, and of the river for a long distance both north and south. The sun had been up two hours. The American army was already in motion in its fleet of batteaux. Arnold and his suite were awaiting the embarkation of the last division when a young Indian came and presented himself before him as he stood in the north door of the timber foot. It was Ayane. In his hand he carried a roll of scarlet wampum which he presented to the American leader.

'It is an Abanaquis!' said Captain Morgan. 'Send the interpreter here? He has something to say.'

A half Indian of the Kennebis tribe dressed like a hunter came up and interpreted the words of Ayane. They were as follows:

'Great War-Chief, Natanis the chief of the Abanaquis sends me to thee. He encamps with twenty of his warriors not far hence. He would see the father of the Bostonee braves, and hold council with him; for he has much in his heart to say; and Natanis is the friend of the Bostonee.'

'That is true!' said General Arnold.

After a brief consultation with his officers, they mounted their horses and galloped along the river shore towards the lodge of the Abanaquis. On seeing them, Natanis went forth to meet them, descending the hill. They were struck by the manly beauty of his person, and the dignity of his manner.

'Great war chief of the Bostonee, welcome. I have sought thy camp to hold council with thee.'

'We know Natanis is our friend!' answered Arnold alighting and taking him by the hand. 'A youth came to us and spoke of thee as such and warmly to.'

Natanis felt his face glow at this speech, and a moment after said,

'Noble Bostonee, I and my braves are thy friends! I heard that Canassa the powerful Nerijewec would have way-laid thee, and attempted to stop the progress of thy army. I marched with my warriors to prevent him; but by stratagem I have taken him prisoner! therefore, from his tribe you can fear nothing.'

'Canassa our prisoner!' exclaimed Arnold.

'Mine not thine, Bostonee! know that the daughter of Canassa is my betrothed bride. For her sake I forebore engaging him in battle, and plotted to defeat his purpose against you by seizing his person.'

'You have acted like a brave warrior and true friend, noble Natanis! where is thy prisoner?'

'I have more to say. By chance I fell in with two spies, one of them the chief Sabatis and his friend Sharp-Knife. They were, I discovered from their words, hastening on their way to carry intelligence of your advance to the English at Quebec. As I knew that such intelligence would materially affect your expedition, I despatched seven of my warriors to arrest them. They pursued them many hours, and at length came upon them, surprised, and took them prisoners. Thus, with the two chiefs of the only tribes hostile to you, in your power, you have no fear of molestation.'

'Thou art a true friend to us, as well as a brave warrior, Abanaquis! exclaimed Arnold with admiration. 'The service you have done us is incalculable.'

'Sabatis, I had my suspicions of from the first,' said Capt. Morgan after warmly expressing to Natanis his sense of his services. 'I knew he was a friend to the English.'

'How can we reward such services as these, noble Chief?'

'I ask that Canassa and Sabatis and Sharp Knife be at my disposal after you have seen them, and your eyes have told you that my words are true.'

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

'They are yours to do with as you list. Hast thou another favor?'

'I have, Chief,' answered Natanis coloring with modest embarrassment.

'Name it.'

'I have told thee that the daughter of Canassa is betrothed to me. I would have you see him, and as he speaks English well, state to him my wish to marry her. Make his freedom (as if he were your own captive) depend on his consent. Show him the advantages of a union of our tribes; and use such other arguments as you may deem wise and to the purpose.'

'Let me manage this affair, General,' said Capt. Morgan. 'It is a love-matter, and in such things I am quite at home. But, first, tell me, noble Natanis, was not the messenger lad who came to us, the maiden in question? Nay, you need not say yes, for I see it is so, in your confoundedly handsome eyes.'

Natanis smiled and conducted the American officers to one of the Lodges, upon the mound in which sat Canassa stern and majestic in his bonds. He haughtily and with a look of defiance, acknowledged the salutation of General Arnold.

'If the great war-chiefs blue-eyed brave will talk with Canassa,' said Natanis to Arnold, glancing his eyes earnestly towards Capt Morgan, 'I will now conduct thee to Sabatis.'

'Sabatis should be given up to me, Natanis,' said Arnold as he quitted the lodge, leaving Morgan alone with the captive chief of the Nerijewecs.

'Sabatis is the brother of Natanis,' answered the young warrior.

'Thy brother—dost thou mean sons of the same mother?'

'I do, chief of the Pale-faced warriors. In taking him prisoner I have thereby shown my love for the Bostonee.'

'You have, indeed,' answered General Arnold, struck with this Roman greatness of conduct. 'Sabatis and thy other prisoners are thine to do with, as seems good to you. I can confide in your honor and faith.'

'It shall be my endeavor to reconcile my brother to the Bostonee. If he refuses, he shall remain my prisoner until you are safe through the wilderness.— His person and that of Canassa I shall hold ash ostages for the good conduct o their tribes.'

Some further conversation took place beyond hearing of the two captives, who, silent and full of revenge against their chivalrous young captor stood, each apart from the other, in a corner of the lodge, Sabatis walking backward and forward, his arms pinioned behind him, looking like a native lion of the forest chafing under his bonds.

While Natanis and Arnold were thus conversing outside of the lodge, Capt. Morgan approached the former with a countenance animated with hope.

'Chief, Canassa would speak with thee.'

'Hast thou been successful, Morgan?' demanded Arnold.

'Come and see!' he replied smiling.

When Natanis entered the lodge in which Canassa was, the latter rose up and said,

'Young warrior, chief of the Abanaquis, I have heard the white, blue-eyed chief's words. They are good! Canassa will be at peace with the Bostonee.— Canassa will also seek peace with the Abanaquis. Dost thou love the daughter of Canassa?'

'As I love the light of the sun, great chief, answered Natanis.

'That she loves thee, I know. Be then united, and in your union bless our tribes long hostile. United, when I am gone reign over the Abanaquis and Nerijewecs; henceforth let us be at peace. We have sprung from one father, let us be brethren Lest thou shouldst suppose I have yielded to bribery from this blue-eyed chief, know Natanis that thou hast had an eloquent and successful pleader for thee here. Come forth, my daughter?'

As he spoke he raised a curtain that divided the back part of the lodge from an inner enclosure, and blushing and with downcast eyes, Willewa appeared before them. She was dressed in her graceful female costume, which Neonah had gone for to her lodge after she had left him in the boat to execute her stratagem upon her father.

'Willewa,' said the chief, 'I now fulfil my promise to thee, made last night, that if Natanis asked thy hand of me in marriage it should be his; for thou lovest him!'

The Chief then took her hand in his and looking at Natanis, said with dignity— 'approach Abanaquis!'

'First be thou made free, noble Canassa,' cried the surprised and happy young chief, severing at a single blow

Scarlet Feather; or The Young Chief of the Abenaquies.

the bonds which crossed the majestic chest of the noble old warrior.

Canassa then placed her trembling hand in that of her lover, and said with solemnity and tenderness,

'May the Great Spirit smile on you both, my children, and make you rulers of a mighty nation!'

Natanis gracefully embraced his bride-elect, while Captain Morgan exclaimed with warmth,

'Didn't I say that handsome Indian lad was a woman?'

'I will yield to you, Captain, after this in such matters,' said General Arnold, smiling.

'But confound the old chief! I thought all the while I had brought this happy thing about so nicely all by my own glibness of speech. And after it all it is the work of this dark gazelle-eyed little nut-brown beauty, who looks as happy as a robin on a sunny spring morning. Well, they are a noble pair, and would grace any court in Europe. But where is our Chaplain? Let us have them married on the spot!'

After some hesitation on the part of Willewa, when this was suggested to her, her consent was blushingly given, and the Chaplain was sent for. The ceremony took place on the level area upon the summit of the mound before the lodge, in which Canassa had been captive. Ayane stood by the side of his chief, and an Indian maid beside Willewa. Sabatis and Sharp Knife, were surprised witnesses of this reconciliation between the two rival chieftains, and the former felt that his power and influence were now gone among the tribes of the East. When the ceremony was concluded, Ayane took by the hand the Indian maiden who had stood up with Willewa, and being conducted before the Chaplain by Natanis, they also were united in marriage. Neonah was not present; and when Willewa looked for him to receive his congratulations, she beheld him flying along the river path towards the rapids with the wild speed of a deer. He paused an instant as he reached a rock upon the verge, then turning towards his lovely mistress, whom in the silence of his young heart he had deeply and purely loved, he waved his hand in farewell, and plunged into the vortex of waters which closed upon him forever.

In an hour after these events, the whole army commenced its ascent of the river in batteaux, and after five weeks of the greatest hardship and perseverance they at length reached and made an attack upon the citadel of Quebec. The result is matter of history; upon which, as a novelist, we shall not presume to intrude. Sabatis, subsequently released, visited Governor Carlton at Quebec; but not receiving that reward which his faithful adherence to the British cause merited, he retired to his forests in grief and disgust, and there died after having outlived nearly all his tribe, and seen the once haughty power of the Abanaquies fall before the sweeping scythe of civilization.

[We cannot take leave of our readers without acknowledging our obligations to William B. Hartwell, Esq., of the Secretary of States' Office, Augusta, Maine, for access to documents, and for many valuable facts and suggestions bearing upon the events upon which our story is founded.] *THE END.*