

# THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

*A Narrative of 1757*

"Mistlike me not, for my complexion,  
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun."  
*The Merchant of Venice*, II. i. 1-2.

## Preface

THE READER, who takes up these volumes, in expectation of finding an imaginary and romantic picture of things which never had an existence, will probably lay them aside, disappointed. The work is exactly what it professes to be in its title-page—a narrative. As it relates, however, to matters which may not be universally understood, especially by the more imaginative sex, some of whom, under the impression that it is a fiction, may be induced to read the book, it becomes the interest of the author to explain a few of the obscurities of the historical allusions. He is admonished to discharge this duty, by the bitter cup of experience, which has often proved to him, that however ignorant the public may be of any thing before it is presented to their eyes, the instant it has been subjected to that terrible ordeal, they, individually and collectively, and he may add, intuitively, know more of it than the agent of the discovery; and yet, that, in direct opposition to this incontrovertible fact, it is a very unsafe experiment either for a writer or a projector to trust to the inventive powers of any one but himself. Therefore, nothing which can well be explained, should be left a mystery. Such an expedient would only impart a peculiar pleasure to readers of that description, who find a strange gratification in spending more of their time in making books, than of their money in buying them. With this preliminary explanation of his reasons for introducing so many unintelligible words, in the very threshold of his undertaking, the author will commence his task. Of course, nothing will, or need be told, with which any one, in the smallest degree acquainted with Indian antiquities, is not already familiar.

The greatest difficulty with which the student of Indian history has to contend, is the utter confusion that pervades the names. When, however, it is recollected, that the Dutch, the English, and the French, each took a conqueror's liberty in this particular; that the natives themselves not only speak different languages, and even dialects of those languages, but that they are also fond of multiplying their appellations, the difficulty is more a matter of regret than of surprise. It is

hoped, that whatever other faults may exist in the following pages, their obscurity will be thought to arise from this fact.

The Europeans found that immense region which lies between the Penobscot and the Potomac, the Atlantic and the Mississippi, in the possession of a people who sprang from the same stock. In one or two points of this immense boundary, their limits may have been a little extended or curtailed, by the surrounding nations; but such, in general terms, was the extent of their territory. The generic name of this people was the Wapanachki. They were fond, however, of calling themselves the "Lenni Lenape," which of itself signifies, an "unmixed people." It would far exceed the information of the author, to enumerate a moiety of the communities, or tribes, into which this race of beings was subdivided. Each tribe had its name, its chiefs, its hunting grounds, and, frequently, its dialect. Like the feudal princes of the old world, they fought among themselves, and exercised most of the other privileges of sovereignty. Still, they admitted the claims of a common origin, a similar language, and of that moral interest, which was so faithfully and so wonderfully transmitted through their traditions. One branch of this numerous people was seated on a beautiful river, known as the "Lenapewithtruck," where the "long house," or Great Council Fire, of the nation was universally admitted to be established.

The tribe that possessed the country which now composes the south-western parts of New-England, and that portion of New-York that lies east of the Hudson, and the country even much farther to the south, was a mighty people, called the "Mahicanni;" or, more commonly, the "Mohicans." The latter word has since been corrupted by the English, into "Mohegan."

The Mohicans were again subdivided. In their collective capacity, they even disputed the point of antiquity with their neighbours, who possessed the "long house;" but their claim to be the "eldest son" of their "grandfather," was freely allowed. Of course, this portion of the original proprietors of the soil was the first dispossessed by the whites. The few of them that now remain, are chiefly scattered among other tribes, and retain no other memorials of their power and greatness, than their melancholy recollections.

The tribe that guarded the sacred precincts of the council house, was distinguished for ages by its flattering title of the "Lenape;" but after the English changed the appellation of their river to "Delaware," they came gradually to be known by the same name. In the use of these terms, however, great delicacy of perception was observed among themselves. These shades of expression pervade their language, tempering all their communications, and frequently imparting its pathos or energy to their eloquence.

For many hundreds of miles along the northern boundaries of the Lenape, was seated another people, similarly situated as to subdivisions, descent, and language. They were called by their neighbours the "Mengwe." These northern savages were, for a time, however, less powerful, and less united, than the Lenape. In order to obviate this disadvantage, five of the most powerful and warlike of their tribes, who lay nearest to the council house of their enemies, confederated for the purposes of mutual defence; being, in truth, the oldest United Republics of which the history of North America furnishes any evidence. These tribes were the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Senecas, the Cayugas, and the Onondagas. At a later day, a straggling band of their race, which had "gone nigher to the sun," was reclaimed, and admitted into a full communion of all their political privileges. This tribe (the Tuscarora) increased their number so far, that the English changed the appellation they had given the confederation, from the "Five" to the "Six Nations." It will be seen, in the course of the narrative, that the word nation is sometimes applied to a community, and sometimes to the people, in their most extended sense. The Mengwe were often called by their Indian neighbours, the "Maquas," and frequently, by way of contempt, "Mingoes." The French gave them the name of "Trognois," which was probably a corruption of one of their own terms.

There is a well authenticated and disgraceful history of the means by which the Dutch on one side, and the Mengwe on the other, succeeded in persuading the Lenape to lay aside their arms, trusting their defence entirely to the latter, and becoming, in short, in the figurative language of the natives, "women." The policy on the part of the Dutch was a safe

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one, however generous it may have been. From that moment may be dated the downfall of the greatest and most civilized of the Indian nations, that existed within the limits of the present United States. Robbed by the whites, and murdered and oppressed by the savages, they lingered for a time around their council-fire, but finally broke off in bands, and sought refuge in the western wilds. Like the lustre of the dying lamp, their glory shone the brightest as they were about to become extinct.

Much more might be said concerning this interesting people, especially of their later history, but it is believed not to be essential to the plan of the present work. Since the death of the pious, the venerable, and the experienced Heckewelder, a fund of information of this nature has been extinguished, which, it is feared, can never again be collected in one individual. He laboured long and ardently in their behalf, and not less to vindicate their fame, than to improve their moral condition.

With this brief introduction to his subject, then, the author commits his book to the reader. As, however, candour, if not justice, requires such a declaration at his hands, he will advise all young ladies, whose ideas are usually limited by the four walls of a comfortable drawing room; all single gentlemen, of a certain age, who are under the influence of the winds; and all clergymen, if they have the volumes in hand, with intent to read them, to abandon the design. He gives this advice to such young ladies, because, after they have read the book, they will surely pronounce it shocking; to the bachelors, as it might disturb their sleep; and to the reverend clergy, because they might be better employed.

## Introduction

IT IS BELIEVED that the scene of this tale, and most of the information necessary to understand its allusions, are rendered sufficiently obvious to the reader, in the text itself, or in the accompanying notes. Still there is so much obscurity in the Indian traditions, and so much confusion in the Indian names, as to render some explanation useful.

Few men exhibit greater diversity, or, if we may so express it, greater antithesis of character, than the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste. These are qualities, it is true, which do not distinguish all alike; but they are so far the predominating traits of these remarkable people, as to be characteristic.

It is generally believed that the Aborigines of the American continent have an Asiatic origin. There are many physical as well as moral facts which corroborate this opinion, and some few that would seem to weigh against it.

The colour of the Indian, the writer believes, is peculiar to himself; and while his cheek-bones have a very striking indication of a Tartar origin, his eyes have not. Climate may have had great influence on the former, but it is difficult to see how it can have produced the substantial difference which exists in the latter. The imagery of the Indian, both in his poetry and his oratory, is Oriental,—chastened, and perhaps improved, by the limited range of his practical knowledge. He draws his metaphors from the clouds, the seasons, the birds, the beasts, and the vegetable world. In this, perhaps, he does no more than any other energetic and imaginative race would do, being compelled to set bounds to fancy by experience; but the North American Indian clothes his ideas in a dress that is so different from that of the African, and is Oriental in itself. His language has the richness and sententious fulness of the Chinese. He will express a phrase in a word, and he will qualify the meaning of an entire sentence by a syllable; he will even convey different significations by the simplest inflexions of the voice.

Philologists have said that there are but two or three languages, properly speaking, among all the numerous tribes which formerly occupied the country that now composes the United States. They ascribe the known difficulty one people have in understanding another to corruptions and dialects. The writer remembers to have been present at an interview between two chiefs of the Great Prairies west of the Mississippi, and when an interpreter was in attendance who spoke both their languages. The warriors appeared to be on the most friendly terms, and seemingly conversed much together; yet, according to the account of the interpreter, each was absolutely ignorant of what the other said. They were of hostile tribes, brought together by the influence of the American government; and it is worthy of remark, that a common policy led them both to adopt the same subject. They mutually exhorted each other to be of use in the event of the chances of war throwing either of the parties into the hands of his enemies. Whatever may be the truth, as respects the root and the genius of the Indian tongues, it is quite certain they are now so distinct in their words as to possess most of the disadvantages of strange languages: hence much of the embarrassment that has arisen in learning their histories, and most of the uncertainty which exists in their traditions.

Like nations of higher pretensions, the American Indian gives a very different account of his own tribe or race from that which is given by other people. He is much addicted to over-estimating his own perfections, and to undervaluing those of his rival or his enemy; a trait which may possibly be thought corroborative of the Mosaic account of the creation. The Whites have assisted greatly in rendering the traditions of the Aborigines more obscure by their own manner of corrupting names. Thus, the term used in the title of this book has undergone the changes of Mahicanni, Mohicans, and Mohagans; the latter being the word commonly used by the Whites. When it is remembered that the Dutch (who first settled New York), the English, and the French, all gave appellations to the tribes that dwell within the country which is the scene of this story, and that the Indians not only gave different names to their enemies, but frequently to themselves, the cause of the confusion will be understood.

In these pages, Lenni-Lenape, Lenape, Delawares, Wapanacki, and Mohicans, all mean the same people, or tribes of the same stock. The Mengwe, the Maguas, the Mingoes, and the Iroquois, though not all strictly the same, are identified frequently by the speakers, being politically confederated and opposed to those just named. Mingo was a term of peculiar reproach, as were Mengwe and Magua in a less degree.

The Mohicans were the possessors of the country first occupied by the Europeans in this portion of the continent. They were, consequently, the first dispossessed; and the seemingly inevitable fate of all these people, who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the invasions of civilisation, as the verdure of their native forests falls before the nipping frost, is represented as having already befallen them. There is sufficient historical truth in the picture to justify the use that has been made of it.

Before closing this introduction, it will not be improper to say a word of an important character of this legend, who is also a conspicuous actor in two other tales of the same writer. To portray an individual as a scout in the wars in which England and France contended for the possession of the American continent, a hunter in that season of activity which so immediately succeeded the peace of 1783, and a lone trapper in the Prairies after the policy of the republic threw open those interminable wastes to the enterprise of the half wild beings who hang between society and the wilderness, is poetically to furnish a witness to the truth of those wonderful alterations which distinguish the progress of the American nation, to a degree that has been hitherto unknown, and to which hundreds of living men might equally speak. In this particular the fiction has no merit as an invention.

Of the character in question, the writer has no more to say, than that he represents a man of native goodness, removed from the temptations of civilised life, though not entirely forgetful of its prejudices and lessons, exposed to the customs of barbarity, and yet perhaps more improved than injured by the association, and betraying the weaknesses as well as the virtues both of his situation and of his birth. It would, perhaps, have been more observant of reality to have drawn him of less moral elevation, but it would have also been less attractive;

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and the business of a writer of fiction is to approach, as near as his powers will allow, to poetry. After this avowal, it is scarcely necessary to add, that individual character had little to do with either the conception or the filling up of this fanciful personage. It was believed that enough had been sacrificed to truth in preserving the language and the dramatic keeping necessary to the part.

In point of fact, the country which is the scene of the following tale has undergone as little change, since the historical events alluded to had place, as almost any other district of equal extent within the whole limits of the United States. There are fashionable and well-attended watering-places at and near the spring where Hawk-eye halted to drink, and roads traverse the forests where he and his friends were compelled to journey without even a path. Glenn's has a large village, and while William Henry, and even a fortress of later date, are only to be traced as ruins, there is another village on the shores of the Horican. But, beyond this, the enterprise and energy of a people who have done so much in other places have done little here. The whole of that wilderness, in which the latter incidents of the legend occurred is nearly a wilderness still, though the red man has entirely deserted this part of the state. Of all the tribes named in these pages, there exist only a few half-civilised beings of the Oneidas, on the reservations of their people in New York. The rest have disappeared, either from the regions in which their fathers dwelt, or altogether from the earth.

There is one point on which we would wish to say a word before closing this preface. Hawk-eye calls the *Lac du Saint Sacrement*, the "Horican." As we believe this to be an appropriation of the name that has its origin with ourselves, the time has arrived, perhaps, when the fact should be frankly admitted. While writing this book, fully a quarter of a century since, it occurred to us that the French name of this lake was too complicated, the American too commonplace, and the Indian too unpronounceable, for either to be used familiarly in a work of fiction. Looking over an ancient map, it was ascertained that a tribe of Indians, called "Les Horicans" by the

French, existed in the neighborhood of this beautiful sheet of water. As every word uttered by Natty Bumppo was not to be received as rigid truth, we took the liberty of putting the "Horican" into his mouth, as the substitute for "Lake George." The name has appeared to find favor, and all things considered, it may possibly be quite as well to let it stand, instead of going back to the House of Hanover for the appellation of our finest sheet of water. We relieve our conscience by the confession, at all events, leaving it to exercise its authority as it may see fit.

*as pointed out by Natty Bumppo*

## Chapter XVI

"Edg.—Before you fight the battle, ope this letter."

*King Lear*, Vi.40.

MAJOR HEYWARD found Munro attended only by his daughters. Alice sat upon his knee, parting the gray hairs on the forehead of the old man, with her delicate fingers; and whenever he affected to frown on her trifling, appeasing his assumed anger, by pressing her ruby lips fondly on his wrinkled brow. Cora was seated nigh them, a calm and amused looker-on; regarding the wayward movements of her more youthful sister, with that species of maternal fondness, which characterised her love for Alice. Not only the dangers through which they had passed, but those which still impended above them, appeared to be momentarily forgotten, in the soothing indulgence of such a family meeting. It seemed as if they had profited by the short truce, to devote an instant to the purest and best affections: the daughters forgetting their fears, and the veteran his cares, in the security of the moment. Of this scene, Duncan, who, in his eagerness to report his arrival, had entered unannounced, stood many moments an unobserved and a delighted spectator. But the quick and dancing eyes of Alice soon caught a glimpse of his figure, reflected from a glass, and she sprang blushing from her father's knee, exclaiming aloud—

"Major Heyward!"

"What of the lad?" demanded her father; "I have sent him to crack a little with the Frenchman. Hal! sir, you are young, and your're nimble! Away with you, ye baggage; as if there were not troubles enough for a soldier, without having his camp filled with such prattling hussies as yourself!"

Alice laughingly followed her sister, who instantly led the way from an apartment, where she perceived their presence was no longer desirable. Munro, instead of demanding the result of the young man's mission, paced the room for a few moments, with his hands behind his back, and his head inclined towards the floor, like a man lost in thought. At

length, he raised his eyes, glistening with a father's fondness, and exclaimed—

"They are a pair of excellent girls, Heyward, and such as any one may boast of!"

"You are not now to learn my opinion of your daughters, Colonel Munro."

"True, lad, true," interrupted the impatient old man; "you were about opening your mind more fully on that matter the day you got in; but I did not think it becoming an old soldier to be talking of nuptial blessings, and wedding jokes, when the enemies of his king were likely to be unbidden guests at the feast! But I was wrong, Duncan, boy, I was wrong there; and I am now ready to hear what you have to say."

"Notwithstanding the pleasure your assurance gives me, dear sir, I have, just now, a message from Montcalm—"

"Let the Frenchman, and all his host, go to the devil, sir!" exclaimed the hasty veteran. "He is not yet master of William Henry, nor shall he ever be, provided Webb proves himself the man he should. No, sir! thank heaven, we are not yet in such a strait, that it can be said, Munro is too much pressed to discharge the little domestic duties of his own family! Your mother was the only child of my bosom friend, Duncan; and I'll just give you a hearing, though all the knights of St. Louis were in a body at the sally-port, with the French saint at their head, craving to speak a word, under favour. A pretty degree of knighthood, sir, is that which can be bought with sugar-hogsheds! and then your two-penny marquessates! The Title is the order for dignity and antiquity; the veritable 'nemo me impune lacessit' of chivalry! Ye had ancestors in that degree, Duncan, and they were an ornament to the nobles of Scotland."

Heyward, who perceived that his superior took a malicious pleasure in exhibiting his contempt for the message of the French general, was fain to humour a spleen that he knew would be short lived; he, therefore, replied with as much indifference as he could assume on such a subject—

"My request, as you know, sir, went so far as to presume to the honour of being your son."

"Ay, boy, you found words to make yourself very plainly

comprehended! But, let me ask ye, sir; have you been as intelligible to the girl?"

"On my honour, no," exclaimed Duncan, warmly; "there would have been an abuse of a confided trust, had I taken advantage of my situation, for such a purpose!"

"Your notions are those of a gentleman, Major Heyward, and well enough in their place. But Cora Munro is a maiden too discreet, and of a mind too elevated and improved, to need the guardianship, even of a father."

"Cora!"

"Ay—Cora! we are talking of your pretensions to Miss Munro, are we not, sir?"

"I—I—I, was not conscious of having mentioned her name," said Duncan, stammering.

"And, to marry whom, then, did you wish my consent, Major Heyward," demanded the old soldier, erecting himself in the dignity of offended feeling.

"You have another, and not less lovely child."

"Alice!" exclaimed the father, in an astonishment equal to that with which Duncan had just repeated the name of her sister.

"Such was the direction of my wishes, sir."

The young man awaited in silence, the result of the extraordinary effect produced by a communication which, as it now appeared, was so unexpected. For several minutes, Munro paced the chamber with long and rapid strides, his rigid features working convulsively, and every faculty seemingly absorbed in the musings of his own mind. At length, he paused directly in front of Heyward, and riveting his eyes upon those of the other, he said, with a lip that quivered violently—

"Duncan Heyward, I have loved you for the sake of him whose blood is in your veins; I have loved you for your own good qualities; and I have loved you, because I thought you would contribute to the happiness of my child. But all this love would turn to hatred, were I assured, that what I so much apprehend is true!"

"God forbid that any act or thought of mine should lead to such a change!" exclaimed the young man, whose eye never quailed under the penetrating look it encountered. Without adverting to the impossibility of the other's comprehending

those feelings which were hid in his own bosom, Munro suffered himself to be appeased by the unaltered countenance he met, and with a voice sensibly softened, he continued—

"You would be my son, Duncan, and you're ignorant of the history of the man you wish to call your father. Sit ye down, young man, and I will open to you the wounds of a scarred heart, in as few words as may be suitable."

By this time, the message of Montcalm was as much forgotten by him who bore it, as by the man for whose ears it was intended. Each drew a chair, and while the veteran communed a few moments with his own thoughts, apparently in sadness, the youth suppressed his impatience in a look and attitude of respectful attention. At length, the former spoke—

"You'll know, already, Major Heyward, that my family was both ancient and honourable," commenced the Scotsman, "though it might not altogether be endowed with that amount of wealth, that should correspond with its degree. I was, may be, such an one: as yourself, when I plighted my faith to Alice Graham; the only child of a neighbouring laird of some estate. But the connexion was disagreeable to her father, on more accounts than my poverty. I did, therefore, what an honest man should; restored the maiden her troth, and departed the country, in the service of my king. I had seen many regions, and had shed much blood in different lands, before duty called me to the islands of the West Indies. There it was my lot to form a connexion with one who in time became my wife, and the mother of Cora. She was the daughter of a gentleman of those isles, by a lady, whose misfortune it was, if you will," said the old man, proudly, "to be descended, remotely, from that unfortunate class, who are so basely enslaved to administer to the wants of a luxurious people! Ay, sir, that is a curse entailed on Scotland, by her unnatural union with a foreign and trading people. But could I find a man among them, who would dare to reflect on my child, he should feel the weight of a father's anger! Hal! Major Heyward, you are yourself born at the south, where these unfortunate beings are considered of a race inferior to your own!"

"'Tis most unfortunately true, sir," said Duncan, unable any longer to prevent his eyes from sinking to the floor in embarrassment.

"And you cast it on my child as a reproach! You scorn to mingle the blood of the Heywards, with one so degraded—lovely and virtuous though she be?" fiercely demanded the jealous parent.

"Heaven protect me from a prejudice so unworthy of my reason!" returned Duncan, at the same time conscious of such a feeling, and that as deeply rooted as if it had been engrafted in his nature. "The sweetness, the beauty, the witchery of your younger daughter, Colonel Munro, might explain my motives, without imputing to me this injustice."

"Ye are right, sir," returned the old man, again changing his tones to those of gentleness, or rather softness; "the girl is the image of what her mother was at her years, and before she had become acquainted with grief. When death deprived me of my wife, I returned to Scotland, enriched by the marriage; and would you think it, Duncan! the suffering angel had remained in the heartless state of celibacy twenty long years, and that for the sake of a man who could forget her! She did more, sir; she overlooked my want of faith, and all difficulties being now removed, she took me for her husband."

"And became the mother of Alice!" exclaimed Duncan, with an eagerness, that might have proved dangerous, at a moment when the thoughts of Munro were less occupied than at present.

"She did, indeed," said the old man, "and dearly did she pay for the blessing she bestowed. But she is a saint in heaven, sir; and it ill becomes one whose foot rests on the grave, to mourn a lot so blessed. I had her but a single year; though, a short term of happiness, for one who had seen her youth fade in hopeless pining!"

There was something so commanding in the distress of the old man, that Heyward did not dare to venture a syllable of consolation. Munro sat utterly unconscious of the other's presence, his features exposed and working with the anguish of his regrets, while heavy tears fell from his eyes, and rolled unheeded from his cheeks to the floor. At length he moved, as if suddenly recovering his recollection; when he arose, and taking a single turn across the room, he approached his companion with an air of military grandeur, and demanded—

"Have you not, Major Heyward, some communication, that I should hear, from the Marguis de Montcalm?"

Duncan started, in his turn, and immediately commenced, in an embarrassed voice, the half-forgotten message. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the evasive, though polite manner, with which the French general had eluded every attempt of Heyward to worm from him the purport of the communication he had proposed making; or on the decided, though still polished message, by which he now gave his enemy to understand, that unless he chose to receive it in person, he should not receive it at all. As Munro listened to the detail of Duncan, the excited feelings of the father gradually gave way before the obligations of his station, and when the other was done, he saw before him nothing but the veteran, swelling with the wounded feelings of a soldier.

"You have said enough, Major Heyward!" exclaimed the angry old man; "enough to make a volume of commentary on French civility! Here has this gentleman invited me to a conference, and when I send him a capable substitute, for ye're all that Duncan, though your years are but few, he answers me with a riddle!"

"He may have thought less favourably of the substitute, my dear sir; and you will remember that the invitation, which he now repeats, was to the commandant of the works, and not to his second."

"Well, sir, is not a substitute clothed with all the power and dignity of him who grants the commission! He wishes to confer with Munro! Faith, sir, I have much inclination to indulge the man, if it should only be to let him behold the firm countenance we maintain, in spite of his numbers and his summons! There might be no bad policy in such a stroke, young man."

Duncan, who believed it of the last importance, that they should speedily come at the contents of the letter borne by the scout, gladly encouraged this idea.

"Without doubt, he could gather no confidence by witnessing our indifference," he said.

"You never said truer word. I could wish, sir, that he would visit the works in open day, and in the form of a storming party: that is the least failing method of proving the coun-



nance of an enemy, and would be far preferable to the battering system he has chosen. The beauty and manliness of warfare has been much deformed, Major Heyward, by the arts of your Monsieur Vauban. Our ancestors were far above such scientific cowardice!"

"It may be very true, sir; but we are, now, obliged to repel art by art. What is your pleasure in the matter of the interview?"

"I will meet the Frenchman, and that without fear or delay; promptly, sir, as becomes a servant of my royal master. Go, Major Heyward, and give them a flourish of the music, and send out a messenger to let them know who is coming. We will follow with a small guard, for such respect is due to one who holds the honour of his king in keeping; and, hark'ee, Duncan," he added, in a half whisper, though they were alone, "it may be prudent to have some aid at hand, in case there should be treachery at the bottom of it all."

The young man availed himself of this order, to quit the apartment; and, as the day was fast coming to a close, he hastened, without delay, to make the necessary arrangements. A very few minutes only were necessary to parade a few files, and to despatch an orderly with a flag, to announce the approach of the commandant of the fort. When Duncan had done both these, he led the guard to the sally-port, near which he found his superior ready, waiting his appearance. As soon as the usual ceremonies of a military departure were observed, the veteran, and his more youthful companion, left the fortress, attended by the escort.

They had proceeded only a hundred yards from the works, when the little array which attended the French general to the conference, was seen issuing from the hollow way, which formed the bed of a brook, that ran between the batteries of the besiegers and the fort. From the moment that Munro left his own works, to appear in front of his enemies, his air had been grand, and his step and countenance highly military. The instant he caught a glimpse of the white plume that waved in the hat of Montcalm, his eye lighted, and age no longer appeared to possess any influence over his vast and still muscular person.

"Speak to the boys to be watchful, sir," he said, in an under

tone, to Duncan; "and to look well to their flints and steel, for one is never safe with a servant of these Louis; at the same time, we will show them the front of men in deep security. Ye'll understand me, Major Heyward!"

He was interrupted by the clamour of a drum from the approaching Frenchmen, which was immediately answered, when each party pushed an orderly in advance, bearing a white flag, and the wary Scotsman halted, with his guard close at his back. As soon as this slight salutation had passed, Montcalm moved towards them with a quick but graceful step, baring his head to the veteran, and dropping his spotless plume nearly to the earth, in courtesy. If the air of Munro was more commanding and manly, it wanted both the ease and insinuating polish of that of the Frenchman. Neither spoke for a few moments, each regarding the other with curious and interested eyes. Then, as became his superior rank, and the nature of the interview, Montcalm broke the silence. After uttering the usual words of greeting, he turned to Duncan, and continued, with a smile of recognition, speaking always in French—

"I am rejoiced, monsieur, that you have given us the pleasure of your company on this occasion. There will be no necessity to employ an ordinary interpreter, for in your hands I feel the same security, as if I spoke your language myself."

Duncan acknowledged the compliment, when Montcalm, turning to his guard, which, in imitation of that of their enemies, pressed close upon him, continued—

"En arrière, mes enfans—il fait chaud; retirez-vous un peu."

Before Major Heyward would imitate this proof of confidence, he glanced his eyes around the plain, and beheld, with uneasiness, the numerous dusky groupes of savages, who looked out from the margin of the surrounding woods, curious spectators of the interview.

"Monsieur de Montcalm will readily acknowledge the difference in our situation," he said, with some embarrassment, pointing, at the same time, towards those dangerous foes, who were to be seen in almost every direction. "Were we to dismiss our guard, we should stand here at the mercy of our enemies."

"Monsieur, you have the plighted faith of 'un gentil-homme Français,' for your safety," returned Montcalm, laying his hand impressively on his heart; "it should suffice."

"It shall. Fall back," Duncan added to the officer who led the escort; "fall back, sir, beyond hearing, and wait for orders."

Munro witnessed this movement with manifest uneasiness; nor did he fail to demand an instant explanation.

"Is it not our interest, sir, to betray no distrust?" retorted Duncan. "Monsieur de Montcalm pledges his word for our safety, and I have ordered the men to withdraw a little, in order to prove how much we depend on his assurance."

"It may be all right, sir, but I have no overweening reliance on the faith of these marquesses, or marquis, as they call themselves. Their patents of nobility are too common, to be certain that they bear the seal of true honour."

"You forget, dear sir, that we confer with an officer, distinguished alike in Europe and America, for his deeds. From a soldier of his reputation we can have nothing to apprehend."

The old man made a gesture of resignation, though his rigid features still betrayed his obstinate adherence to a distrust, which he derived from a sort of hereditary contempt of his enemy, rather than from any present signs, which might warrant so uncharitable a feeling. Montcalm waited, patiently, until this little dialogue in demi-voice was ended, when he drew nigher, and opened the subject of their conference.

"I have solicited this interview from your superior, monsieur," he said, "because I believe he will allow himself to be persuaded, that he has already done every thing which is necessary for the honour of his prince, and will now listen to the admonitions of humanity. I will forever bear testimony that his resistance has been gallant, and was continued, as long as there was hope."

When this opening was translated to Munro, he answered with dignity, but with sufficient courtesy,

"However I may prize such testimony from Monsieur Montcalm, it will be more valuable when it shall be better merited."

The French general smiled, as Duncan gave him the purport of this reply, and observed—

"What is now so freely accorded to approved courage, may be refused to useless obstinacy. Monsieur would wish to see my camp, and witness, for himself, our numbers, and the impossibility of his resisting them with success?"

"I know that the king of France is well served," returned the unmoved Scotsman, as soon as Duncan ended his translation; "but my own royal master has as many and as faithful troops."

"Though not at hand, fortunately for us," said Montcalm, without waiting, in his ardour, for the interpreter. "There is a destiny in war, to which a brave man knows how to submit, with the same courage that he faces his foes."

"Had I been conscious that Monsieur Montcalm was master of the English, I should have spared myself the trouble of so awkward a translation," said the vexed Duncan, dryly; "remembering instantly his recent by-play with Munro."

"Your pardon, monsieur," rejoined the Frenchman, suffering a slight colour to appear on his dark cheek. "There is a vast difference between understanding and speaking a foreign tongue; you will, therefore, please to assist me still." Then after a short pause, he added, "These hills afford us every opportunity of reconnoitring your works, messieurs, and I am possibly as well acquainted with their weak condition as you can be yourselves."

"Ask the French general if his glasses can reach to the Hudson," said Munro, proudly; "and if he knows when and where to expect the army of Webb."

"Let général Webb be his own interpreter," returned the politic Montcalm, suddenly extending an open letter towards Munro, as he spoke; "you will there learn, monsieur, that his movements are not likely to prove embarrassing to my army."

The veteran seized the offered paper without waiting for Duncan to translate the speech, and with an eagerness that betrayed how important he deemed its contents. As his eye passed hastily over the words, his countenance changed from its look of military pride, to one of deep chagrin; his lip began to quiver; and, suffering the paper to fall from his hand, his head dropped upon his chest, like that of a man whose hopes were withered at a single blow. Duncan caught the letter from the ground, and without apology for the liberty he

took, he read, at a glance, its cruel purport. Their common superior, so far from encouraging them to resist, advised a speedy surrender, urging, in the plainest language, as a reason, the utter impossibility of his sending a single man to their rescue.

"Here is no deception!" exclaimed Duncan, examining the billet both inside and out; "this is the signature of Webb, and must be the captured letter!"

"The man has betrayed me!" Munro at length bitterly exclaimed; "he has brought dishonour to the door of one, where disgrace was never before known to dwell, and shame has he heaped heavily on my gray hairs!"

"Say not so!" cried Duncan; "we are yet masters of the fort, and of our honour! Let us then sell our lives at such a rate, as shall make our enemies believe the purchase too dear!"

"Boy, I thank thee!" exclaimed the old man, rousing himself from his stupor; "you have, for once, reminded Munro of his duty. We will go back, and dig our graves behind those ramparts!"

"Messieurs," said Montcalm, advancing towards them a step, in generous interest; "you little know Louis de St. Véran, if you believe him capable of profiting by this letter, to humble brave men, or to build up a dishonest reputation for himself. Listen to my terms before you leave me."

"What says the Frenchman," demanded the veteran, sternly; "does he make a merit of having captured a scout, with a note from head-quarters? Sir, he had better raise this siege, to go and sit down before Edward, if he wishes to frighten his enemy with words!"

Duncan explained the other's meaning.

"Monsieur de Montcalm, we will hear you," the veteran added, more calmly, as Duncan ended.

"To retain the fort is now impossible," said his liberal enemy; "it is necessary to the interests of my master, that it should be destroyed; but, as for yourselves, and your brave comrades, there is no privilege dear to a soldier that shall be denied."

"Our colours?" demanded Heyward.

"Carry them to England, and show them to your king."

"Our arms!"

"Keep them; none can use them better!"

"Our march; the surrender of the place?"

"Shall all be done in a way most honourable to yourselves."

Duncan now turned to explain these proposals to his commander, who heard him with amazement, and a sensibility that was deeply touched by so unusual and unexpected generosity.

"Go you, Duncan," he said; "go with this marquess, as indeed marquess he should be; go to his marquee, and arrange it all. I have lived to see two things in my old age, that never did I expect to behold. An Englishman afraid to support a friend, and a Frenchman too honest to profit by his advantage!"

So saying, the veteran again dropped his head to his chest, and returned slowly towards the fort, exhibiting, by the dejection of his air, to the anxious garrison, a harbinger of evil tidings.

From the shock of this unexpected blow the haughty feelings of Munro never recovered; but from that moment there commenced a change in his determined character, which accompanied him to a speedy grave. Duncan remained to settle the terms of the capitulation. He was seen to re-enter the works during the first watches of the night, and immediately after a private conference with the commandant, to leave them again. It was then openly announced, that hostilities must cease—Munro having signed a treaty, by which the place was to be yielded to the enemy, with the morning; the garrison to retain their arms, their colours, and their baggage, and consequently, according to military opinion, their honour.