"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal."

**BYRON**, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, IV.clxxviii.

On the human imagination, events produce the effects of time. Thus, he who has travelled far and seen much, is apt to fancy that he has lived long; and the history that most abounds in important incidents, soonest assumes the aspect of antiquity. In no other way can we account for the venerable air that is already gathering around American annals. When the mind reverts to the earliest days of colonial history, the period seems remote and obscure, the thousand changes that thicken along the links of recollections, throwing back the origin of the nation to a day so distant as seemingly to reach the mists of time; and yet four lives of ordinary duration would
suffice to transmit, from mouth to mouth, in the form of tradition, all that civilized man has achieved within the limits of the republic. Although New-York, alone, possesses a population materially exceeding that of either of the four smallest kingdoms of Europe, or materially exceeding that of the entire Swiss Confederation, it is little more than two centuries since the Dutch commenced their settlement, rescuing the region from the savage state. Thus, what seems venerable by an accumulation of changes, is reduced to familiarity when we come seriously to consider it solely in connection with time.

This glance into the perspective of the past, will prepare the reader to look at the pictures we are about to sketch, with less surprise than he might otherwise feel, and a few additional explanations may carry him back in imagination, to the precise condition of society that we desire to delineate. It is matter of history that the settlements on the eastern shores of the Hudson, such as Claverack, Kinderhook, and even Poughkeepsie, were not regarded as safe from Indian incursions a century since, and there is still standing on the banks of the same river, and within musket shot of the wharves of Albany, a residence of a younger branch* of the van Rensselaers, that has loopholes constructed for defence against the same crafty enemy, although it dates from a period scarcely so distant. Other similar memorials of the infancy of the country are to be found, scattered through what is now deemed the very centre of American civilization, affording the plainest proofs that all we possess of security from invasion and hostile violence, is the growth of but little more than the time that is frequently filled by a single human life.

The incidents of this tale occurred between the years 1740 and 1745, when the settled portions of the Colony of New-York were confined

* It is no more than justice to say that the Greenbush Van Rensselaers claim to be the oldest branch of that ancient and respectable family. [1850]
to the four Atlantic counties, a narrow belt of country on each side of the Hudson, extending from its mouth to the falls near its head, and to a few advanced “neighborhoods” on the Mohawk and the Schoharie. Broad belts of the virgin wilderness, not only reached the shores of the first river, but they even crossed it, stretching away into New England, and affording forest cover to the noiseless moccasin of the native warrior, as he trod the secret and bloody war-path. A bird’s eye view of the whole region east of the Mississippi, must then have offered one vast expanse of woods, relieved by a comparatively narrow fringe of cultivation along the sea, dotted by the glittering surfaces of lakes, and intersected by the waving lines of rivers. In such a vast picture of solemn solitude, the district of country we design to paint, sinks into insignificance, though we feel encouraged to proceed by the conviction that, with slight and immaterial distinctions, he who succeeds in giving an accurate idea of any portion of this wild region, must necessarily convey a tolerably correct notion of the whole.

Whatever may be the changes produced by man, the eternal round of the seasons is unbroken. Summer and winter, seed time and harvest, return in their stated order, with a sublime precision, affording to man one of the noblest of all the occasions he enjoys of proving the high powers of his far reaching mind, in compassing the laws that control their exact uniformity, and in calculating their never ending revolutions. Centuries of summer suns had warmed the tops of the same noble oaks and pines, sending their heats even to the tenacious roots, when voices were heard calling to each other, in the depths of a forest, of which the leafy surface lay bathed in the brilliant light of a cloudless day in June, while the trunks of the trees rose in gloomy grandeur in the shades beneath. The calls were in different tones, evidently proceeding from two men who had lost their way, and were searching in different directions for their path. At length a shout proclaimed success, and presently a man of gigantic mould broke out of
the tangled labyrinth of a small swamp, emerging into an opening that appeared to have been formed partly by the ravages of the wind, and partly by those of fire. This little area, which afforded a good view of the sky, although it was pretty well filled with dead trees, lay on the side of one of the high hills, or low mountains, into which nearly the whole surface of the adjacent country was broken.

“Here is room to breathe in!” exclaimed the liberated forester, as soon as he found himself under a clear sky, shaking his huge frame like a mastiff that has just escaped from a snow bank; “Hurrah! Deerslayer; here is day-light, at last, and yonder is the lake, itself.”

These words were scarcely uttered when the second forester dashed aside the bushes of the swamp, and appeared in the area. After making a hurried adjustment of his arms and disordered dress, he joined his companion, who had already begun his dispositions for a halt.

“Do you know this spot?” demanded the one called Deerslayer, “or do you shout at the sight of the sun?”

“Both, lad, both; I know the spot, and am not sorry to see so useful a friend as the sun. Now we have got the p’ints of the compass in our minds, once more, and ’twill be our own faults if we let any thing turn them topsy turvy, ag’in, as has just happened. My name is not Hurry Harry, if this be not the very spot where the land-hunters ’camped the last summer, and passed a week. See, yonder are the dead bushes of their bower, and here is the spring. Much as I like the sun, boy, I’ve no occasion for it to tell me it is noon; this stomach of mine is as good a timepiece as is to be found in the colony, and it already p’ints to half past twelve. So open the wallet, lad, and let us wind up for another six hours’ run.”

At this suggestion both set themselves about making the preparations necessary for their usual frugal, but hearty, meal. We will profit by this pause in the discourse to give the reader some idea of the ap-
pearance of the men, each of whom is destined to enact no insignifi-
cant part in our legend. It would not have been easy to find a more
noble specimen of vigorous manhood, than was offered in the person
of him who called himself Hurry Harry. His real name was Henry
March, but the frontiersmen having caught the practice of giving sob-
riquets, from the Indians, the appellation of Hurry was far oftener
applied to him than his proper designation, and not unfrequently he
was termed Hurry Skurry, a nick-name he had obtained from a dash-
ing, reckless, off-hand manner, and a physical restlessness that kept
him so constantly on the move, as to cause him to be known along
the whole line of scattered habitations that lay between the province
and the Canadas. The stature of Hurry Harry exceeded six feet four,
and being unusually well proportioned, his strength fully realized the
idea created by his gigantic frame. The face did no discredit to the rest
of the man, for it was both good-humoured and handsome. His air
was free, and though his manner necessarily partook of the rudeness
of a border life, the grandeur that pervaded so noble a physique pre-
vented it from becoming altogether vulgar.

Deerslayer, as Hurry called his companion, was a very different
person in appearance, as well as in character. In stature, he stood
about six feet in his moccasins, but his frame was comparatively light
and slender, showing muscles, however, that promised unusual agil-
ity, if not unusual strength. His face would have had little to recom-
 mend it except youth, were it not for an expression that seldom failed
to win upon those who had leisure to examine it, and to yield to the
feeling of confidence it created. This expression was simply that of
guileless truth, sustained by an earnestness of purpose, and a sincer-
ity of feeling, that rendered it remarkable. At times this air of integrity
seemed to be so simple as to awaken the suspicion of a want of the
usual means to discriminate between artifice and truth, but few came
in serious contact with the man, without losing this distrust in respect for his opinions and motives.

Both these frontiermen were still young, Hurry having reached the age of six or eight and twenty, while Deerslayer was several years his junior. Their attire needs no particular description, though it may be well to add that it was composed in no small degree of dressed deer skin, and had the usual signs of belonging to those who passed their time between the skirts of civilized society and the boundless forests. There was, notwithstanding, some attention to smartness and the picturesque in the arrangements of Deerslayer’s dress, more particularly to the part connected with his arms and accoutrements. His rifle was in perfect condition, the handle of his hunting knife was neatly carved, his powder horn was ornamented with suitable devices lightly cut into the material, and his shot-pouch was decorated with wampum. On the other hand, Hurry Harry, either from constitutional recklessness, or from a secret consciousness how little his appearance required artificial aids, wore every thing in a careless, slovenly manner, as if he felt a noble scorn for the trifling accessories of dress and ornaments. Perhaps the peculiar effect of his fine form and great stature was increased, rather than lessened, by this unstudied and disdainful air of indifference.

“Come, Deerslayer, fall to, and prove that you have a Delaware stomach, as you say you have had a Delaware education,” cried Hurry, setting the example, by opening his mouth to receive a slice of cold venison steak, that would have made an entire meal for a European peasant. “Fall to, lad, and prove your manhood, on this poor devil of a doe, with your teeth, as you’ve already done with your rifle.”

“Nay—nay, Hurry, there’s little manhood in killing a doe, and that, too, out of season; though there might be some, in bringing down a painter, or a catamount,” returned the other disposing himself to
comply. “The Delawares have given me my name, not so much on account of a bold heart, as on account of a quick eye, and an actyve foot. There may not be any cowardyce, in overcoming a deer, but sartain it is, there’s no great valour.”

“The Delawares, themselves, are no heroes,” muttered Hurry through his teeth, the mouth being too full to permit it to be fairly opened, “or, they would never have allowed them loping vagabonds, the Mingos, to make them women.”

“That matter is not rightly understood—has never been rightly explained,” said Deerslayer earnestly, for he was as zealous a friend, as his companion was dangerous as an enemy. “The Mengwe fill the woods with their lies, and misconstrukt words and treaties. I have now lived ten years with the Delawares, and know them to be as manful as any other nation, when the proper time to strike comes.”

“Harkee, Master Deerslayer, since we are on the subject, we may as well open our minds to each other in a man to man way; answer me one question; you have had so much luck among the game as to have gotten a title, it would seem, but did you ever hit any thing human, or intelligible: did you ever pull trigger on an inimy that was capable of pulling one upon you?”

This question produced a singular collision between mortification and correct feeling, in the bosom of the youth, that was easily to be traced in the workings of his ingenuous countenance. The struggle was short, however, uprightness of heart soon getting the better of false pride, and frontier boastfulness.

“To own the truth, I never did,” answered Deerslayer, “seeing that a fitting occasion never offered. The Delawares have been peaceable since my sojourn with ’em, and I hold it to be onlawful to take the life of man, except in open and ginerous warfare.”

“What!—Did you never find a fellow thieving among your traps
and skins, and do the law on him, with your own hands, by way of saving the magistrates trouble, in the settlements, and the rogue himself the costs of the suit?”

“I am no trapper, Hurry,” returned the young man proudly. “I live by the rifle, a we’pon at which I will not turn my back on any man of my years, atween the Hudson and the St. Lawrence. I never offer a skin, that has not a hole in its head, besides them which natur’ made to see with, or to breathe through.”

“Ay—ay—this is all very well, in the animal way, though it makes but a poor figure along side of scalps and and-bushes. Shooting an Indian from an and-bush is acting up to his own principles, and now we have what you call a lawful war, on our hands, the sooner you wipe that disgrace off your character, the sounder will be your sleep; if it only come from knowing there is one inimy the less prowling in the woods. I shall not frequent your society long, friend Natty, unless you look higher than four footed beasts to practyse your rifle on.”

“Our journey is nearly ended you say, Master March, and we can part to-night, if you see occasion. I have a fri’nd waiting for me, who will think it no disgrace to consart with a fellow creatur’ that has never yet slain his kind.”

“I wish I knew what has brought that skulking Delaware into this part of the country, so early in the season”—muttered Hurry to himself, in a way to show equally distrust, and a recklessness of its betrayal. “Where did you say, the young chief was to give you the meeting?”

“At a small round rock, near the foot of the lake, where they tell me the tribes are given to resorting to make their treaties, and to bury their hatchets. This rock have I often heard the Delawares mention, though lake and rock are equally strangers to me. The country is claimed by both Mingos and Mohicans, and is a sort of common ter-
ritory to fish and hunt through, in times of peace, though what it may become in wartime, the Lord only knows!”

“Common territory!” exclaimed Hurry, laughing aloud. “I should like to know what Floating Tom Hutter would say to that? He claims the lake as his own property, in vartue of fifteen years’ possession, and will not be likely to give it up to either Mingo or Delaware, without a battle for it.”

“And what will the Colony say to such a quarrel—all this country must have some owner, the gentry pushing their cravings into the wilderness, even where they never dare to ventur’e in their own parsons to look at the land they own.”

“That may do in other quarters of the colony, Deerslayer, but it will not do here. Not a human being, the Lord excepted, owns a foot of s’ile, in this part of the country. Pen was never put to paper, consarning either hill or valley, hereway, as I’ve heard old Tom say, time and ag’in, and so he claims the best right to it of any man breathing; and what Tom claims, he’ll be very likely to maintain.”

“By what I’ve heard you say, Hurry, this Floating Tom must be an oncommon mortal; neither Mingo, Delaware, nor Pale Face. His possession, too, has been long, by your tell, and altogether beyond frontier endurance. What’s the man’s history and human natur’?”

“Why as to old Tom’s human natur’ it is not much like other men’s human natur’, but more like a muskrat’s human natur’, seeing that he takes more to the ways of that animal than to the ways of any other fellow creatur’. Some think he was a free liver on the salt-water in his youth, and a companion of a sartain Kidd, who was hanged for piracy, long afore you and I were born, or acquainted, and that he came up into these regions, thinking that the King’s cruisers could never cross the mountains, and that he might enjoy the plunder peaceably in the woods.”
“There he was wrong, Hurry; very wrong. A man can enjoy plunder peaceably no where.”

“That’s much as his turn of mind may happen to be. I’ve known them that never could enjoy it at all, unless it was in the midst of a jollification, and them ag’in that enjoyed it best in a corner. Some men have no peace if they don’t find plunder, and some if they do. Human natur’ is crooked in these matters. Old Tom seems to belong to neither set, as he enjoys his, if plunder he has really got, with his darters, in a very quiet and comfortable way, and wishes for no more.”

“Ay, he has darters, too; I’ve heard the Delawares, who’ve hunted this-a-way, tell their histories of these young women. Is there no mother, Hurry?”

“There was once, as in reason; but she has now been dead and sunk these two good years.”

“Anan?” said Deerslayer, looking up at his companion in a little surprise.

“Dead and sunk, I say, and I hope that’s good English. The old fellow lowered his wife into the lake, by way of seeing the last of her, as I can testify, being an eye-witness of the ceremony; but whether Tom did it to save digging, which is no easy job among roots, or out of a consait that water washes away sin sooner than ’arth, is more than I can say.”

“Was the poor woman oncommon wicked, that her husband should take so much pains with her body?”

“Not unreasonable; though she had her faults. I consider Judith Hutter to have been as graceful, and about as likely to make a good ind, as any woman who had lived so long beyond the sound of church bells, and I conclude old Tom sunk her as much by way of saving pains, as by way of taking it. There was a little steel in her temper, it’s true, and as old Hutter is pretty much flint, they struck out sparks
once and awhile, but, on the whole, they might be said to live amicable like. When they did kindle, the listeners got some such insights into their past lives, as one gets into the darker parts of the woods, when a stray gleam of sunshine finds its way down to the roots of the trees. But Judith I shall always esteem, as it’s recommend enough to one woman to be the mother of such a creatur’ as her darter, Judith Hutter!”

“Ay, Judith was the name the Delawares mentioned, though it was pronounced after a fashion of their own. From their discourse I do not think the girl would much please my fancy.”

“Thy fancy!” exclaimed March, taking fire equally at the indifference and at the presumption of his companion, “what the devil have you to do with a fancy, and that too consarning one like Judith? You are but a boy—a sapling that has scarce got root—Judith has had men among her suitors, ever since she was fifteen; which is now near five years; and will not be apt to cast even a look upon a half grown creatur’ like you!”

“It is June, and there is not a cloud atween us and the sun, Hurry, so all this heat is not wanted,” answered the other, altogether undisturbed; “any one may have a fancy, and a squirrel has a right to make up his mind touching a catamount.”

“Ay, but it might not be wise, always, to let the catamount know it,” growled March. “But you’re young and thoughtless, and I’ll overlook your ignorance. Come, Deerslayer,” he added, with a good-natured laugh, after pausing a moment to reflect, “come, Deerslayer, we are sworn fri’nds, and will not quarrel about a light-minded, jilting jade, just because she happens to be handsome; more especially as you have never seen her. Judith is only for a man whose teeth show the full marks, and it’s foolish to be afeard of a boy. What did the Delawares say of the hussy; for, an Indian, after all, has his notions of woman-kind, as well as a white man?”
“They said she was fair to look on, and pleasant of speech; but over-given to admirers, and light-minded.”

“They are devils incarnate! After all, what schoolmaster is a match for an Indian, in looking into natur’? Some people think they are only good on a trail, or the war-path, but I say that they are philosophers, and understand a man, as well as they understand a beaver, and a woman as well as they understand either. Now that’s Judith’s character to a riband! To own the truth to you, Deerslayer, I should have married the gal two years since, if it had not been for two particular things, one of which was this very light-mindedness.”

“And what may have been the other?” demanded the hunter, who continued to eat like one that took very little interest in the subject.

“T’ other was an insartainty about her having me. The hussy is handsome, and she knows it. Boy, not a tree that is growing in these hills is straighter, or waves in the wind with an easier bend, nor did you ever see the doe that bounded with a more nat’ral motion. If that was all, every tongue would sound her praises; but she has such failings that I find it hard to overlook them, and sometimes I swear I’ll never visit the lake ag’in.”

“Which is the reason that you always come back? Nothing is ever made more sure by swearing about it.”

“Ah, Deerslayer, you are a novelty in these partic’lars; keeping as true to edication as if you had never left the settlements. With me the case is different, and I never want to clinch an idee, that I do not feel a wish to swear about it. If you know’d all that I know consarning Judith, you’d find a justification for a little cussing. Now, the officers sometimes stray over to the lake, from the forts on the Mohawk, to fish and hunt, and then the creatur’ seems beside herself! You can see it in the manner in which she wears her finery, and the airs she gives herself with the gallants.”

“That is unseemly in a poor man’s darter,” returned Deerslayer
gravely, “the officers are all gentry, and can only look on such as Ju-
dith with evil intentions.”

“There’s the unsartainty, and the damper! I have my misgivings
about a particular captain, and Jude has no one to blame but her own
folly, if I’m wrong. On the whole, I wish to look upon her as modest
and becoming, and yet the clouds that drive among these hills are not
more unsartain. Not a dozen white men have ever laid eyes upon her,
since she was a child, and yet her airs, with two or three of these offi-
cers, are extinguishers!”

“I would think no more of such a woman, but turn my mind alto-
tgether to the forest; that will not deceive you, being ordered and ruled
by a hand that never wavers.”

“If you know’d Judith, you would see how much easier it is to say
this, than it would be to do it. Could I bring my mind to be easy about
the officers, I would carry the gal off to the Mohawk by force, make
her marry me in spite of her whiffling, and leave old Tom to the care
of Hetty, his other child, who, if she be not as handsome, or as quick-
witted as her sister, is much the most dutiful.”

“Is there another bird in the same nest?” asked Deerslayer, raising
his eyes with a species of half-awakened curiosity—“The Delawares
spoke to me only of one.”

“That’s nat’ral enough, when Judith Hutter and Hetty Hutter are
in question. Hetty is only comely, while her sister, I tell thee, boy, is
such another as is not to be found atween this and the sea; Judith is as
full of wit, and talk, and cunning, as an old Indian orator, while poor
Hetty, is at the best but ‘compass meant us.’”

“Anan?” inquired, again, the Deerslayer.

“Why, what the officers call, ‘compass meant us,’ which I under-
stand to signify that she means always to go in the right direction, but
sometimes does’nt know how. ‘Compass’ for the p’int, and ‘meant us’
for the intention. No, poor Hetty, is what I call on the varge of igno-
rance, and sometimes she stumbles on one side of the line, and sometimes on t’other.”

“Them are beings that the Lord has in his ’special care,” said Deerslayer, solemnly, “for he looks carefully to all who fall short of their proper share of reason. The Redskins honor and respect them who are so gifted, knowing that the Evil Spirit delights more to dwell in an artful body, than in one that has no cunning to work upon.”

“I’ll answer for it, then, that he will not remain long with poor Hetty—for the child is just ‘compass meant us,’ as I have told you. Old Tom has a feeling for the gal, and so has Judith, quick witted and glorious as she is herself; else would I not answer for her being altogether safe among the sort of men that sometimes meet on the lake shore.”

“I thought this water an onknown and little frequented sheet,” observed the Deerslayer, evidently uneasy at the idea of being too near the world.

“It’s all that, lad, the eyes of twenty white men never having been laid on it; still, twenty true bred frontiermen—hunters, and trappers, and scouts, and the like,—can do a deal of mischief if they try. ’Twould be an awful thing to me, Deerslayer, did I find Judith married, after an absence of six months!”

“Have you the gal’s faith, to incourage you to hope otherwise.”

“Not at all. I know not how it is—I’m good-looking, boy; that much I can see in any spring on which the sun shines—and yet I could never get the hussy to a promise, or even a cordial willing smile, though she will laugh by the hour. If she has dared to marry in my absence, she’ll be like to know the pleasures of widowhood, afore she is twenty!”

“You would not harm the man she had chosen, Hurry, simply because she found him more to her liking than yourself?”

“Why not? If an inimy crosses my path, will I not beat him out of
it! Look at me—am I a man like to let any sneaking, crawling, skin-trader, get the better of me in a matter that touches me as near as the kindness of Judith Hutter? Besides, when we live beyond law, we must be our own judges and executioners. And if a man should be found dead in the woods, who is there to say who slew him, even admitting that the Colony took the matter in hand, and made a stir about it?”

“If that man should be Judith Hutter’s husband, after what has passed, I might tell enough, at least, to put the Colony on the trail.”

“You!—Half-grown, venison hunting bantling! You, dare to think of informing against Hurry-Harry in so much as a matter touching a mink, or a woodchuck!”

“I would dare to speak truth, Hurry, consarning you, or any man that ever lived.”

March looked at his companion, for a moment, in silent amazement; then seizing him by the throat, with both hands, he shook his comparatively slight frame, with a violence that menaced the dislocation of some of the bones. Nor was this done jocularly, for anger flashed from the giant’s eyes, and there were certain signs, that seemed to threaten much more earnestness than the occasion would appear to call for. Whatever might be the real intention of March, and it is probable there was none settled in his mind, it is certain that he was unusually aroused, and most men who found themselves throttled by one of a mould so gigantic, in such a mood, and in a solitude so deep and helpless, would have felt intimidated, and tempted to yield even the right. Not so, however, with Deerslayer. His countenance remained unmoved; his hand did not shake, and his answer was given in a voice that did not resort to the artifice of louder tones, even, by way of proving its owner’s resolution.

“You may shake, Hurry, until you bring down the mountain,” he said quietly, “but nothing beside truth will you shake from me. It is
probable that Judith Hutter has no husband to slay, and you may never have a chance to waylay one, else would I tell her of your threat, in the first conversation I held with the gal.”

March released his gripe, and sat regarding the other, in silent astonishment.

“I thought we had been friends,” he at length added—“but you’ve got the last secret of mine, that will ever enter your ears.”

“I want none, if they are to be like this. I know we live in the woods, Hurry, and are thought to be beyond human laws—and perhaps we are so, in fact, whatever it may be in right—but there is a law, and a law maker, that rule across the whole continent. He that flies in the face of either, need not call me fri’nd.”

“Damme, Deerslayer, if I do not believe you are, at heart, a Moravian, and no fair minded, plain dealing hunter, as you’ve pretended to be!”

“Fair minded or not, Hurry, you will find me as plain-dealing in deeds, as I am in words. But this giving way to sudden anger is foolish, and proves how little you have sojourned with the red men. Judith Hutter no doubt is still single, and you spoke but as the tongue ran, and not as the heart felt. There’s my hand, and we will say and think no more about it.”

Hurry seemed more surprised than ever; then he burst forth in a loud good-natured laugh, which brought tears to his eyes. After this, he accepted the offered hand, and the parties became friends.

“’Twould have been foolish to quarrel about an idee,” March cried, as he resumed his meal, “and more like lawyers in the towns, than like sensible men in the woods. They tell me, Deerslayer, much ill blood grows out of idees, among the people in the lower counties, and that they sometimes get to extremities upon them.”

“That do they—that do they, and about other matters that might better be left to take care of themselves. I have heard the Moravians
say that there are lands in which men quarrel even conserning their religion, and if they can get their tempers up on such a subject, Hurry, the Lord have marcy on ’em. Howsever, there is no occasion for our following their example, and more especially about a husband that this Judith Hutter may never see, or never wish to see. For my part, I feel more cur’osity about the feeble-witted sister, than about your beauty. There’s something that comes close to a man’s feelin’s, when he meets with a fellow creatur’ that has all the outward show of an accountable mortal, and who fails of being what he seems, only through a lack of reason. This is bad enough in a man, but when it comes to a woman, and she a young, and may-be a winning creatur’, it touches all the pitiful thoughts his natur’ has. God knows, Hurry, that such poor things be defenceless enough with all their wits about ’em; but it’s a cruel fortun’ when that great protector and guide fails ’em.”

“Harkee, Deerslayer, you know what the hunters, and trappers, and peltry-men in general be, and their best friends will not deny that they are head-strong and given to having their own way without much bethinking ’em of other people’s rights, or feelin’s, and yet I don’t think the man is to be found, in all this region, who would harm Hetty Hutter, if he could; no, not even a red skin.”

“Therein, fri’nd Hurry, you do the Delawares at least, and all their allied tribes only justice, for a red skin looks upon a being thus struck by God’s power, as especially under his care. I rejoice to hear what you say, howsever, I rejoice to hear it, but as the sun is beginning to turn towards the a’ternoon’s sky, had we not better strike the trail ag’in, and make forward that we may get an opportunity of seeing these wonderful sisters.”

Harry March giving a cheerful assent, the remnants of the meal were soon collected; then the travellers shouldered their packs, resumed their arms, and quitting the little area of light, they again plunged into the deep shadows of the forest.