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What spirit darkens the bloom of day?
The clovered meadow no sweetness yields;
A silence rests on the waveless fields;
The world is haggard and gaunt and gray.
The clouds drift wearily over the sky;
The grain is yellow, the hills are bare;
A heaviness broods in the quiet air;
The streamlet sobb as it passes by.
But yesterday morn the flowers were sweet,
The day was bright and the world was young;
And in the even the thrush sang,
And his song was glad and the hours were fleet.
But a misty darkness glimmers athwart
The fields today, and the hours are long;
And I hear a dirge in the thrush's song;
For the gloom is the shadow of thee, my heart.
—Chambers' Journal.

IN NORTHERN WILDS.

I was one of ten, five boys and five
girls. My father, a clergyman of the
English church, was grateful to Provi-
dence for having filled his quiver with
ten, but I think that in reality he was
more grateful they were not eleven.
The problem of his life, the worry of at-
tempting to solve which helped to bring
him to his grave, was how to provide a
living for us all. As he died before a
single one of us was provided for, he
might have saved himself much anxiety.
I was not the eldest of the family, but
the second son. The oldest had been
sent to one of the universities, and had
followed the very glorious but impecunious
profession of his father, without a
"living" and without definite hope of
obtaining one. I was intended for the
Indian civil service; possibly the viceroy-
ship, but the examiners at Burlington
house failed to recognize my fitness for
such great possibilities, therefore I de-
termined to emigrate, and a friend of
my mother's hearing of my determina-
tion secured for me, by personal interest,
a berth in the Hudson's Bay company.
I was duly engaged and signed a docu-
ment as long as a deed of transfer, by
which I bound myself to serve the com-
pany, even to the extent of defending
their property with my life.

I sailed to Montreal and presenting my
credentials there was soon informed that
my services would be required at a post
in the far north in charge of one John
McIvor. There was also entrusted to my
care a pair of fowls, Plymouth Rocks,
with the request that I would deliver
them safely into the hands of Mr. McIvor.
I mention this fact seeing that these
fowls played an important part in the
events which I am about to relate.

On my arrival at my destination, after
sleeping about forty nights under canvas,
I was glad of the comfort which reigned
at Fort Trial, due chiefly to the domestic
energy of Mrs. McIvor, a bright, pleas-
ant little woman, who seemed out of
place in the heart of this "great lone
land."

Mr. McIvor was Scotch, as his name
would imply, a rough-and-ready man,
with a heart of steel, but which on occa-
sion could be as soft as a woman's. After
reading the dispatches which I handed
him he said:

"Weel, young mon, I dinna see what
the likes o' you can do in a country like
this. Had na ye better gae back before
it is too late?"

"I won't go back, sir, unless you send
me back," I answered.

"Ah, weel, boy, stay where you are.
It's no always the coarsest twine that
stands the biggest strain."

So I entered into my duties without
another discouraging word from Mr.
McIvor, who, though a perfect martinet
in the matter of duty, was kindness it-
self in the privacy of his own house.
There were two other clerks beside my-
self, who stayed there only during the
summer, but who in the fall took charge
of small trading establishments, out-
posts as they are called, returning to
Fort Trial after the winter's hunt was
over.

Like most young Englishmen I had
formed my ideas of Indians on a Fen-
more Cooper basis, but the noble red
man fell far short of my ideal. I found
him to be a selfish, ungrateful, treacher-
ous savage, whose power for evil was
luckily curtailed by his cowardice. I do
not say that there are no good points in
an Indian's character; we find good
points in the character of a dog or a
horse, but we do not set the horse or
dog on a pedestal and proclaim him all
that is perfect; rather we keep clear of
his heels and teeth respectively until we
know something of the brute's idiosyn-
crasies. One has to do the same with
Indians. Be thoroughly on your guard
until you have proved that they can be
trusted, and don't trust them then. Mr.
McIvor had the most supreme contempt
for them—a contempt which he never
tried to hide. He used to say:

"They are cowards, arrant cowards,
and are afraid o' you, e'en like a dog."

It was not long after my arrival that I
had a sort of adventure which gave
great sport to the other clerks, and even
Mr. McIvor himself would occasionally
make joking allusions to it.

yards from the store; it was deep and
fairly swift. One day as I was working
in the store I heard a scream which ap-
peared to come from the river. I ran
out and down to the bank from where I
saw an old woman struggling in the
water; she had been fishing and her
canoe had upset. There were about a
dozen Indians looking on, but they only
laughed and made not the slightest
movement toward helping her. Indians,
as a rule, are cruel to the old. They
look upon them as incumbrances from
which they are not sorry if an accident
relieves them. I saw that this poor old
thing was in distress and likely to be
drowned, so I jumped into the river and
swam out to her assistance, not before,
however, relieving my mind by abusing
soundly the men who would cheerfully
have let her sink before their eyes. It
was no difficult task to bring the poor
old thing ashore, and when I had done
so the poor creature followed me as I
walked toward the house, crying in
earnest tones:

"Meegwitch! meegwitch!" meaning
"Thank you, thank you." But I found
this very annoying, for the Indians all
laughed at me in my wet clothes and at
the old woman, whose clothes were also
wet and very thin, as she clung to me,
with her incessant "Meegwitch, meeg-
witch."

The chaff that I suffered from my com-
panions was merciless. I was dubbed
"The Knight Errant," "The Heroic
Preserver," etc., until I grew sick of it;
but to have lost my temper would only
have made it worse, so I suffered in si-
lence, and to aggravate my suffering the
old woman thought it her duty to pre-
sent me with every extra large fish that
she caught, or if her son-in-law threw
her a beaver tail or a moose nose, or any
other delicacy especially prized by In-
dians, they were sure to find their way
to my room, and each demonstration of
the kind only added to the fun. After a
time I began to pick up the Indian lan-
guage, and as I always had a sneaking
regard for the old woman, I often made
use of her assistance in acquiring it. In
fact we became fast friends, I cementing
the friendship by gifts of a little flour,
sugar or tea.

I received less chaffing in the winter,
for the other clerks had long since taken
their departure for their respective out-
posts, and I was left sole occupant of
the clerks' quarters, or "clerks' house," as
it was called.

It was coming on to the end of March
when an event occurred which made me
glad that I had pulled the old woman
out of the river and treated her with
some consideration, if not kindness. The
two fowls which I had brought safely to
their destination had fairly survived the
rigor of the winter. In fact Mrs. McIvor
announced one day at dinner that she
had found one egg which the hen had
laid. But shortly afterward there was
consternation in that household. The
two fowls had been found dead, and an
Indian dog was quietly making a meal
of one of them. The hole whereby he
had effected an entrance was stopped up
before he could escape, and Mr. McIvor,
using his revolver, had the satisfaction
of shooting the brute and pitching his
body down on the frozen river.

Now it happened that this dog belong-
ed to Match-ee-ninie, an old Indian
claiming to be chief of the band, and
who had the reputation of being a con-
juror and a cannibal, in consequence of
which the Indians all feared him and
obeyed him.

He came into the store that evening
and spoke to Mr. McIvor thus:

"You pay me for my dog."

"How much?" asked Mr. McIvor.

"Twenty weeg." The Hudson Bay
company use at inland posts a standard
for value, the name differing in different
localities. A weeg equals about fifty
cents.

"All right," said McIvor, "I will pay
you for your dog if you pay me for my
fowls."

"How much?"

"Twenty weeg."

The Indian saw that he was caught,
and walked out with a muttered "Kish,"
meaning, "Hold on, we shall see." Next
evening he again came to the store, and
said: "There are bad people about; I
have seen a wendigo. You pay me for
my dog." (Wendigo: a spirit, a ghost,
giant, something uncanny.)

"Get the wendigo to pay you," said
Mr. McIvor, laughing, and again the
man slunk off. Mr. McIvor knew the
Indian nature well, and he said to me:

"That old fellow is up to some devil-
ment. That's what they always do when
they want to do an evil trick themselves:
pretend that some one else is going to do
it. We had better keep a watch on the
place; he might set fire to it."

We watched that night, but nothing
unusual occurred. After dinner next
day, as I was endeavoring to recuperate
a bit from night watching by a short
snoodle, I became aware of a presence,
and opening my eyes saw my old woman
standing over me, with her finger on her

I was awake she whispered hurriedly:
"Run! Indians going to kill trader, kill
all white people in the store. Match-ee-
ninie keep trader's wife. You good to old
woman. Run!"

And the old woman, casting an anxious
look at the door, hobbled away as fast as
she could.

I did run, but it was to Mr. McIvor,
who was at that moment walking down
to the store with his wife.

I breathlessly related to Mr. McIvor as
nearly as I could remember them the
words of the old woman.

"There's something in it," he said,
"and we must be prepared for them.
Let us look for our guns. The loons
mean business."

His wife, who had heard all, looked
frightened, and he turned to her saying:
"Which is it, Maggie? Wi' us, or at
the house?"

"With you, John, till the death," she
answered boldly.

He gave her a look of admiration and
affection, and hastily rose to collect and
load our arms.
But we were too late; while we were
talking in the office the store had silently
filled with Indians, their faces sinister
and threatening as they stood ranged up
against the high counter. So intent had
we been on the discussion that we had
not heard the soft tread of their moccas-
ined feet, and there we stood, fairly
caught, face to face with death.

It is hard to remember what passed
through my mind at that moment. I
think that my feelings were more those
of indignation than of fear. It vexed me
to think of death at the hands of those
brutes; an inglorious death, of which but
a passing notice might appear in some
newspaper, or what was more likely, no
notice at all, for the Hudson's Bay com-
pany have never cared to publish abroad
such little mishaps as these. How dif-
ferent, I thought, would it have been if
I were in the army. Then if I had to die
my name would be mentioned with pride
by my family as well as with regret, and
possibly my portrait might appear in The
Illustrated London News. So dear to
humanity is the praise it receives when
no longer alive to hear it, when the plea-
sure of the praise is but in the anticipa-
tion alone.

I watched Mr. McIvor with a certain
amount of curiosity, not unmixed with
hope, to see what he would do. He did
not hesitate a moment, but drawing his

wife to his side and putting his arm
around her waist he said:

"You have come, I believe, to kill me?"

"Yes," answered Match-ee-ninie, "to
kill you as you killed my dog."

"All right," answered Mr. McIvor
coolly; "but surely we may as well take
a smoke before you kill."

Whether the Indians were awayed by
the force of a superior will, or whether
they were themselves glad to put off a
tragedy which they had pledged them-
selves to perform, I cannot say; but they
cheerfully complied with the request,
and each producing his pipe leisurely
filled it and commenced to smoke, as if
they had come there for nothing else.
In the meanwhile, Mr. McIvor had quiet-
ly drawn toward him a small keg of
gunpowder containing about twenty-five
pounds. He deftly removed the head;
then taking a candle and lighting it with
the same match with which he lit his
pipe he thrust it down into the powder
to within two inches of the flame. So
quietly had he done this that the In-
dians, who were at the moment engaged
in lighting their pipes, did not notice it.
It was a solemn kind of a smoke. Not
another word was spoken on either side.
The only thing that woke the dead si-
lence was the occasional "puff, puff" of
a pipe that would not draw. I watched
the candle with a kind of fascination
and saw an inch burn away. I was fear-
ful lest a spark should drop from it, and
thus rob us of our full two inches of
life; but the candle burned steadily on.
There was but half an inch left.

I remember that I wondered if the
plover had begun to make their nests
in the marshes at home; if my brother
Charley had come home for the Easter
holidays, and if he would know where
the angle thrush always built her nest
in the big elm tree; but my reveries
were broken by a movement among
the Indians and a muttered "non-gom,"
meaning now.

Match-ee-ninie arose and with him all
the rest of the Indians, with their guns
in their hands. Mr. McIvor, who was
watching them, made a movement
toward the candle in the gunpowder.
The movement attracted the attention
of the Indians, and they now for the
first time comprehended the situation.
A minute later there was not an Indian
in the store. They had gone out as
silently and suddenly as they had come
in, leaving us in sole possession, but
with the candle burning dangerously
near the powder. Mr. McIvor now care-
fully approached the keg, and with a
steady hand raised the candle from its
dangerous candlestick. Not one moment
too soon, for scarcely had he lifted it

powder which had adhered to it came in
contact with the flame and were ignited,
but we were saved.

The sudden revulsion of feeling took
the strength completely out of my legs,
and I sat down helplessly on a box, until
the voice of Mr. McIvor ordering me to
shut the door and lock it recalled me
to my senses. Mrs. McIvor clasped her
husband around the neck and kissed
him passionately. He was not unmoved
for the moment, but suddenly he burst
out laughing, and said in his broadest
Scotch:

"Did ye see the look o' the auld diel
when he caught sight o' the candle i' the
pothier, Maggie?" But Maggie did not
hear him; she had fainted, and the man
who had been cheerfully looking death
in the face for the last half hour now
became as frightened as a child when
he saw his wife in a fainting fit. "Will
she come around, dy'e think?" he asked
in a tone of intense anxiety. There was
no need to answer him, for Mrs. McIvor
answered the question herself by sitting
up and bursting into tears.

For some time afterward we lived pre-
pared for a siege, but the Indians never
made sign again of attempting to injure
us; in fact they became mighty civil,
and in the spring, when communication
by water had been re-established, we
had no difficulty in securing our friend
Match-ee-ninie, who was safely trans-
ported to the far west, where he soon
pined away and died. Of the old woman
who had done us such service I could
gather but little information. I never
saw her again; she had completely dis-
appeared. It was whispered that Match-
ee-ninie, having found out that she had
warned us, quietly made away with her,
so that practically she gave her life for
mine. Can it therefore be wondered at
that I prize her memory, especially as in
her I have found through long experi-
ence the one solitary exception to the
treacherous ingratitude of the North
American Indians!

Shortly after these events Mr. McIvor
received charge of a district on the bor-
ders of civilization. Nothing would do
but that I should accompany him to his
new charge, and so favorably did he re-
port of me to headquarters that I rose
rapidly in the service, and ere many years
had passed was in charge of a district of
my own.—C. C. Carr, Buffalo Express.

A Newspaper Kleptomaniac.

There is an old, gray haired, venerable
appearing gentleman who is often seen
about the corridors of the Hoffman
house and the Fifth Avenue hotel. He
is a newspaper kleptomaniac. Just leave
a paper lying on a seat and watch him.
He gets up, looks about unconcernedly
and soon sits down next to the paper.
Carelessly he picks it up and glances
through it.

After a few minutes, if no one observes
him, he folds the paper carefully, puts it
in his pocket, then calls for an imported
Henry Clay and pays for it from a good
sized wallet at the cigar stand. In the
course of the evening he usually gets all
the papers, then disappears.—New York
Journal.

A Literary Romance.

Winks—I understand the woman you
are going to marry has been engaged to
you for ten years.

Jinks—Yes. You see I am a newspa-
per writer by profession, and her proud
father said I could not have his daugh-
ter until I could show him my name at
the head of an article in some great
magazine. Well, I went to work, and
soon got an article accepted, but it was
ten years before it was published.—Good
News.

Pleasant Humor.

"I heard a queer story about that
mountain over yonder from our native
driver today."

"What was that?"

"A young lady and gentleman went
out for a walk on that hill. They went
up higher and higher and—never came
back again."

"Dear me! What became of the un-
happy pair?"

"They went down on the other side."

—Chatter.

A Female Nihilist.

There is a real, live Nihilist in New
York. It is Mme. Ratner, and she has
just been released from a Siberian prison
three months ago. Her husband is there
still, with two more years to serve. The
government confiscated his property,
and when he remonstrated shipped him
to Siberia. Mme. Ratner will live in
Wichita, Kan., where her husband will
join her when he is released.—Exchange.

How Maine Men Keep Young.

We recently noticed several leading
citizens of this town flying kites on the
common, among them being a promi-
nent physician and a justice of the su-
preme bench. It has often been before
remarked that Maine men seldom grow
old, in the sense of being worn out.—
Cor. Oxford County Advertiser.