and too steep — must wait till the water falls before we go up the river. We 'll see to-morrow.'

We went on for some distance, perhaps eighty yards, when a rock, rising many hundred feet directly from the river, stopped our progress. Pierre crept to the edge of the ledge, and carefully surveyed the torrent foaming through the gorge. After a while he came to me, and said, 'That point 's the worst part; if we can pass that, I think we shall do the rest to-morrow. We 'll get out a long line; we 'll want one three or four hundred feet long — tie a stick to it, throw one end into the river, and let it float down. The men in the canoe will catch it, and pull the canoe past that point. We can tie the line to this tree.'

I thought the plan proposed by Pierre excellent, and indeed our only chance of passing the gorge. We therefore returned to our tents, and, as it was still early, fished for trout, catching a dozen or so of about a pound each. There was plenty of ice or frozen snow in the woods opposite the gorge, where we camped; and feeling it rather cold as I sat upon a blanket while writing in my note-book, I examined the dead leaves on which the blanket was stretched, and found that they covered a sheet of ice.

On this cold bed we had pitched our tent, in consequence of its presenting a level surface; a thick layer of spruce boughs soon protected us from the chilling influence of the icy floor, on which we sought and found most refreshing rest after a long day's toil.

We were at supper just as the sun was setting, when a voice called out, 'A canoe! a canoe!' Looking in the direction of the gorge, we saw issuing from it, with the

speed of an arrow, a tiny birch-bark canoe. With some appearance of hesitation the canoe approached our camp, and, when a few yards from us, Louis called out in great delight, 'Domenique!' In another minute Domenique, the chief of the Montagnais of the Moisie River, as well

DOMENIQUE, CHIEF OF THE MONTAGNAIS OF LAKE ASHWANIPI.

as of Ashwanipi Lake, stepped on shore, shouting 'Quā? Quā?' — How are you? How are you? He was followed by a young Nasquapee, and then by his squaw and four children, a couple of dogs and a young beaver. After a few words and salutations, the delicate canoe was taken out of the water, and the squaw prepared the camp for the night, while Domenique came to

our fire to have a smoke, make enquiries, and answer questions. Nothing could exceed our delight at this meeting; Domenique would be able to tell us all about the upper country — what Indians we should meet, what game we should find, and perhaps he would go with us as a guide, or let the young Nasquapee show us the old Montagnais road to the interior. These and many other thoughts found expression as we were finishing our supper, while Domenique was smoking his pipe close by, every now and then stealing glances at our faces, and slowly and thoughtfully picking a bit of tobacco from a large plug I had given to him, when he expressed his intention of 'coming to our fire.'

We watched them take their worldly wealth out of the canoe. It contained the produce of their winter hunt, wrapped in a seal-skin covering. A rather worn and dirty blanket, several reindeer skins, a fox-skin robe, two or three tin kettles, some rolls of birch-bark, one or two wooden dishes, a small bag of reindeer skins containing a few fragments of dried reindeer meat, one duck, a pillow of down of the eider-duck for the baby to kick about on at the bottom of the canoe, and a snow-shovel.

'Ask him how he is off for provisions, Louis,' I said.

'Starving,' was the brief reply.

Domenique held up the duck and the few fragments of reindeer meat. 'This is what we have left; when that is gone, must hunt for more.'

'Are any more canoes coming down the river?'

'No; four canoes gone by the East Branch. I thought the river too bad, and came down the main stream. The water is very high.'

Louis acted as interpreter, Pierre not understanding the Montagnais language sufficiently well.

'Ask him, Louis,' I said, 'if we can pass up the river?'

As soon as Louis had propounded this question, Domenique turned to his squaw and said a few words. Both of them looked towards the gorge. The squaw shook her head, and said 'No.' Domenique looked at Louis, shook his head, and said 'No.' Louis looked at me, and, with a roll of his head from side to side, said emphatically 'No.'

Domenique, turning to Louis, attempted to comfort us by saying, 'When the water falls the canoes can go up.'

A cold thrill passed through me when I saw the squaw's manner, and heard Domenique's answer; but knowing well how easily Indians are deterred from any efforts involving great labour, especially if waiting a week will enable them to accomplish what they have in view without it, a few minutes' reflection convinced me that it would be very foolish to give up the hope of forcing a passage through the gorge without waiting until the waters fell. After a while I told Louis to ask him about the upper country, whether there was much snow left.

'Full of ice,' answered Louis, interpreting Domenique's reply. 'No snow, but much ice.'

'Where has Domenique been wintering?'

'On this side of Ashwanipi Lake, close to the dividing ridge where the waters flow the other way.'

'Did he kill many animals?'

'Thirty reindeer and four bears.'

'What furs did he get?'

'Very poor hunt — only eight marten, eleven foxes, one black fox, three otter.'

'Are there many fish in the lakes we are going to?'

'No; only in "Big Lake." Plenty of trout in the rivers — no big fish.'

'Any duck or geese?'

'Very few; some geese on Ashwanipi, but much ice.'

'When did Domenique leave his winter camp?'

'His tribe broke up camp seven days ago.'

'When did the ice leave the upper lakes?'

'Ice broke up seven days ago. Domenique and other Indians left same day.'

'Ask Domenique when Ashwanipi broke up.'

'Domenique says Ashwanipi still full of ice. Some of his tribe came from Ashwanipi a week ago — say it is full of ice; full, full.'

'Any other Indians on this river?'

'No; all gone down — four canoes.'

'Any Nasquapees coming down?'

'Perhaps — don't know.'

'Any Nasquapees on Ashwanipi Lake?'

'Some families near where Domenique made winter camp. Domenique think they will come down Moisie. They have never been to the coast before. Domenique say he gave them a map to show the road and the portages.'

'Are there any Indians at the other end of Ashwanipi Lake?'

'Yes, perhaps; but all Indians on Ashwanipi, who don't come down the Moisie, go to Petichikapau, or the coast of Hudson's Bay.'

'Ask him where the most Indians are to be found now?'

'Near Petichikapau, he says; near the Post of the Company.'

'How many families are there?'

'Fourteen.'

'Fourteen! and where are the rest?'

'There are no more on the level high land, in the lake country. The others are beyond, towards Esquimaux Bay (Hamilton Inlet) and North-West River; and far away beyond Petichikapau, towards Ungava, and on the other side, towards the sea' (Hudson's Bay).

'Where are all the Indians gone who hunted on Ashwanipi River?'

'Gone north, or east, or dead—many dead, he says; not many left.'

'Tell him after supper I should like to ask him more questions about his people; now, give the squaw some flour and pork.'

Louis was going to fulfill his mission, when I said, 'Stop, Louis; just ask him where the Nasquapee came from?'

'Domenique met him near Petichikapau, two winters ago, when he was hunting there: the father and mother of the lad are dead, and Domenique adopted him.'

'What are those marks cut over the cheek-bone?'

'Nasquapees always mark themselves so; it is a custom of their people.'

'How do they do it?'

'With knife or fish-bone; then they put in colour—powder, perhaps.'

'Do all Nasquapees cut themselves like this one?'

'Mostly all; once all did; but now some don't. All

old men and women are marked on the face like this lad.'

'Do you think Domenique would go back with us?'

'Think not; got children and squaw.'

'Do you think he would let the young Nasquapee go with us, to show us the portages?'

'Perhaps! better not speak about it to-night; give Domenique good supper; also Nasquapee; make them good friends, and let them sleep well. I will talk to him to-morrow about young Nasquapee; perhaps he let him go, if you make him good present.'

'You think, then, you had better not speak about it to-night?'

'No, no! Let Domenique eat and sleep; then he talk to-morrow.'

We gave the two Indians a good supper, and sent some flour and pork to his wife, who had made her camp about thirty yards from ours at the foot of a large tree. I proposed to myself the pleasure of visiting them at daylight, to see how the Montagnais made their camp in the woods.

'Where are you going to, Louis?' some one enquired, as the Indian was rolling off into the woods with a torch of birch-bark, about an hour after supper.

'Get birch-bark for map.'

'What map?'

'Domenique going to make map of portages, to show us the way. To-morrow,' continued Louis, with a knowing leer, 'I speak to Domenique about young Nasquapee; Domenique well pleased — like supper, like tobacco, like everything. Think he will let young Nasquapee go.'

When Louis returned with the sheet of fresh birch-

bark for Domenique to draw his map on, I asked the cause of the scarcity of game in this country.

Two reasons were given by the chief: the first being that the Moisie was the old Montagnais path to Ashwanipi and the table land, just as the On-na-ma-ne River—which will be described in the sequel—was the road to Hamilton Inlet from the coast below Mingan and Natisquhan. The deer, and bear, and smaller animals have been killed and frightened off this river and its tributaries. The second reason was that the country towards the dividing ridge was burned. We should have to pass for three days through a *brûlé*, or burnt country, where there was no food for animals. He also said there was much burnt country on the old Montagnais road, in consequence of the fires of the Indians having spread so rapidly through the moss.

'When your people were numerous,' I said, 'were not the deer plenty?'

'Yes; plenty.'

'When did the deer begin to diminish?'

'When the white people bought their skins, and gave us guns and ball to kill them with. Before my people had guns, they could not kill many deer; it was very hard work to shoot them with arrows, and follow them for miles. My people then only killed for food and for clothing. Since the white man gave us guns, they kill them to sell the skins, and the deer soon pass away.'

'Are your people ever starved during the winter?'

'Yes; when they cannot get deer, they must starve.'

'When deer were plentiful on Ashwanipi, were your people many?'

'Many as the trees you see on every hill; but the country was not much burnt. Indians were careful of fire, and they made much winter meat. White men came and the Indians killed deer for their skins, to get guns and other things. When the deer were gone, my people went away too; they could not live many together. Some went to the coast, some to the north-west, many died — one by one. Only my tribe left now on Ashwanipi. Give me the bark, and let me draw the map.'

The destruction of the reindeer after the introduction of fire-arms, was no doubt one of the chief causes of the decline of the Montagnais and Nasquapee Indians. Even in Upper Canada, during the early period of its settlement, we have records of the ravages committed by wolves among the deer of the country, during winters of extreme severity, having caused a famine. It is a fact which may now be received with astonishment, that, in the memory of many still living in Upper Canada, wolves created a famine in a part of the country which is now one of the oldest settled and most beautiful tracts. So marvellous are the changes which civilisation induces, and so precarious is the existence of improvident man in the woods.

'I am myself * one of the eldest born of this country, after its settlement by the loyalists, and well remember the time when, as Bishop Berkeley observes, "a man might be the owner of ten thousand acres of land in America, and want sufficient means to buy himself a breakfast!" One half of the land on the Bay of Quinté — the Garden of Canada — could, within my remem-

* Mr. Ruttan, President of the Provincial Agricultural Association, 1849.

brance, have been purchased for five pounds a two-hundred acre lot, and many a one has been sold for a *half joe*. All this cannot be matter of wonder, when I tell you that a great scarcity of provisions prevailed for two or three years consecutively, in consequence of failures in the crops, and what brought on the famine, or "scarce year" (about the year 1790, if I am not mistaken), was the almost entire destruction of the deer by the wolves for two consecutive years. The snow lay upon the ground from December until April, at the depth of from four to five feet. In the month of February of the last of these years, a near relative of mine sent all the way to Albany, in the State of New York, a distance of more than two hundred miles, for four bushels of Indian corn! and this was to be brought all that distance by two men on snow-shoes! It took them about eight weeks to accomplish this journey, and during this time about one-third of the quantity was necessarily consumed by the men; the residue of this precious cargo, pounded up in a mortar made of a maple stump, with the winter greenberry, and mucilaginous roots, latterly boiled with a little milk, constituted the principal food for two families, consisting of seven souls, for the space of four or five months! It was remarked, I have heard some of the oldest settlers assert, that the usual supply of fish even had failed. The few cattle and horses which the settlers, at great cost and trouble, had collected, were killed for food. The faithful dog was, in several instances, sacrificed to supply that food which he had so often been the means of furnishing to his then kind but starving master. The famine this year was general throughout the Bay of Quinté; and such was the distress, that, during this

winter, several persons died from starvation. In the Hay Bay settlement, one of the most heartrending occurrences took place. Some time during the month of April, the husband and father was found buried in the snow, which lay upon the ground at an average depth of five feet, whilst within the shanty was exhibited the awful spectacle of the dying mother, pressing to her bosom her dead infant, still in the position of attempting to gain that sustenance which its mother had for some time been unable any longer to afford it.'

If such a calamity as is described in the preceding paragraph could occur in the early settlement of a country like Western Canada, owing to wolves, need we be surprised that the Montagnais and Nasquapees should have diminished on account of the gradual destruction of the reindeer — their principal supply of food?

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST GORGE TO THE SEE-WAY-SINI-KOP PORTAGE.

Montagnais Map of the Country — Domenique's Camp in the Woods — Michel, Domenique's adopted Son — Domenique's Objections to the young Nasquapee going with us as Guide — His Energy and Threats — Conclusion of the Bargain — The First Gorge of the Moisie — Difficulties of the Passage — First Falls of the Moisie — The See-way-sini-kop Portage — Trout, Salmon — Salmon-spearing by Torchlight — Appearance of Indians spearing Salmon — Self-control and Skill — Scene at the Foot of the Cataract by Torchlight — The Salmon — The Light extinguished — The Darkness — The Rapid — Coolness and Intrepidity of the Indians — Excitement.

WE sat by the fire till a late hour talking to Domenique and the young Nasquapee. The lad appeared to be very intelligent, and apparently knew the upper country well. He and Domenique together constructed a map of the Moisie and the old Montagnais route, as far as the dividing ridge — showing the point where the Ashwanipi River took its rise, and began its long course of several hundred miles to Hamilton Inlet, on the Atlantic coast of Labrador.

He put in all the portages, and explained the map to Louis and Pierre. The latter took charge of the map, and before we rose went over every little detail to see if he understood it perfectly.

Just before entering my tent, one of the voyageurs,

whom we called Ignace, came to me, gleefully, and said that the water was falling fast: 'It has fallen four inches since we came here; it will have fallen eight before morning.' 'But the Indians say it must fall two feet before we can get through the gorge, Ignace,' I replied, 'and we cannot wait; we shall consume all our provisions before we reach the Big Lake, at this rate; we must start after breakfast to-morrow, and see what we can do.'

At sunrise I went to Domenique's camp. They were just waking; but I was in time to see how they had spent the night. Ranged in a semicircle before the fire, placed at the foot of a large balsam spruce, the whole family lay side by side, the mother and father occupying the outer ends of the curve with the four children, and the young Nasquapee between them. The children were covered with a blanket. The father and mother had each a sheet of birch-bark over them; the Nasquapee a couple of reindeer skins. Two dogs were lying under the birch-bark, close to the fire, at the feet of Domenique. The family bed consisted of spruce boughs laid on the wet moss, with the frozen soil beneath; their roof was the black sky, with twinkling stars coldly glittering between the motionless branches of the spruce, as silent, as lifeless, and as uncharitable as the grave.

Domenique rose as I approached, and saluted me with the customary '*bonjour*.' We lit our pipes and smoked; he said some words to me in Montagnais, but I could not understand them; so we sat and smoked in silence. Meanwhile the mother rose, put the little baby Indian in a sitting posture on the eider-down pillow, and commenced to rake the ashes together and arrange fresh wood on the

fire. I saw that the children had been lying on the rabbit-skin robe, and looked warm, fat, and comfortable, although the thermometer during the night was 3° below the freezing-point in the woods, and ice had formed on the edge of the river.

While breakfast was preparing, I called Louis and told him to ask Domenique whether he would go with us; and if not, whether he would allow his adopted son, the Nasquapee, to show us the road. Louis turned to the chief and spoke a few words, interpreting Domenique's reply shortly afterwards to the effect that he could not accompany us: he must go and see the priest; he had promised two years ago. He was sorry the other canoes had not come down this way; if they had, he would have sent one of the young men with us. But if we waited three days, he would catch them below the Forks at the Grand Rapids, and send a canoe back with one man for our guide.

'What did he say about the Nasquapee?'

'No speak to him about Nasquapee yet,' said Louis. 'Wait a bit; let Domenique get breakfast — think and speak easier after breakfast. Wait a bit.'

Although very anxious to know what he would say, I let the Indians take their own way. We had another long talk during breakfast, and when pipes were filled all round, we left Louis to broach the subject of the young Nasquapee's companionship.

I was sitting on a rock opposite the gorge, admiring the exquisite symmetry of the delicate little Montagnais canoe which lay bottom upwards at my feet, when Louis came with a desponding look and slouching gait over

a sheet of ice, which streamed like an infant glacier from the woods to within a few feet of the river's edge.

'Well, Louis, what does Domenique say?'

'No let him go; want him to hunt.'

'Tell Domenique to come here,' I said.

Louis called him. With a light and springing step he came from the fire to where we were sitting; held his hand above his eyes, and peered into the gloom of the Gorge.

'Current swift — swift!' he exclaimed; 'canoes can't get up to-day — too much water.'

'Louis, tell him I want him to let his son go with us; we will take great care of him, and not let him carry anything. We will feed him well, pay him well, and make Domenique a present when we return to the mouth of the Moisie. What is the name of the Nasquapee?'

'Domenique calls him "Michel."'

'Tell the chief what I said to you.'

After a short conversation Louis began: 'He has not got any clothes. His father say he has no shoes, and he cannot go.'

'I will give him clothes and moccasins, a coat, a shirt, and trousers; and I will give Domenique a handsome present.'

Domenique turned to his squaw, and told her to come near. They then spoke together for a while, after which Domenique said:

'White people have often deceived me on the coast down there and at Esquimaux Bay. How do I know you will bring him safe back?'

Louis said, in his careless way, 'Perhaps if you give

Domenique some tobacco now, and a coat to Michel, he no think white man tell lies.'

I took the hint, and told one of the men to give the chief a dozen pieces of tobacco, together with some flour, pork, and tea to his squaw. This little piece of diplomacy having been finished, I brought a flannel shirt, a rough blue Hudson's Bay coat with brass buttons, and a pair of buffalo moccasins. Laying them at the feet of the chief, I told Louis to tell him that these were the clothes I would give now to his son, and a complete suit when we arrived at the Moisie Bay on our return.

Domenique spoke again to his squaw, and also to Michel. Turning round and looking at me, he said, 'Who is to steer my canoe if anything happens to my son? Who is to hunt for these little ones if anything happens to me? He is my only treasure — my only son. These are little children yet; it will be many years before they can be sons like this one.'

'Tell him we will return his son safely to him; we only want him to show us the portages on the old Montagnais road to Ashwanipi.'

When this had been interpreted to Domenique, he drew himself up, raised his arm above his head, with dilated eyes looked me in the face, and in a loud voice said:

'Michel shall go with you; but if you do not bring him safe back, I follow you to the sea, to the woods, to the place where you live. You 'll remember me until you die, and you 'll die soon if you do not bring my Michel back to me safe.'

'Tell him again, Louis, that I will take care of him, and bring him safe back.'

'He says I must tell you,' spoke Louis, 'that white men often tell lies, and deceive poor Indians. He says that if you do not bring back Michel safe, he will track you, and find you wherever you go. He says Michel shall go with you, and show the old Montagnais road; but he says he is terrible when men deceive him, and Michel is his only son.'

I held out my hand to Domenique; he grasped it firmly, and putting the other hand on Michel's shoulder, looked at me with a fiendish glare, hissing out with a slow and distinct utterance sentence after sentence, while he waited for Louis to interpret, still holding me fast by the hand, and apparently working himself into a rage.

Presently, letting go my hand, he returned to his squaw and spoke some words in Montagnais, moving at the same time towards his canoe, which he lifted up and put into the water. The squaw quickly loaded the canoe, Michel standing by. Domenique came and shook hands with me and the other gentlemen, and with Louis, who since he had been called upon to act as interpreter, was getting very talkative and bumptious. They left the blanket with Michel, but, true to their Indian nature, they were not seen by any one to bid him good-bye, or take any notice of him when they embarked in their beautiful little craft. The mother handed the little girl a tiny paddle, the father cried, 'Ya-mah! ya-mah!' —Good-bye! good-bye!—and with a few strokes of the paddle they reached the middle of the stream, and were swiftly carried down towards the sea.

'Was that passion of Domenique's put on, Louis?'

'Perhaps, perhaps not; likely Dom-nick thought he would frighten you. Make you bring back Michel safe. Dom-nick great man to talk, perhaps he 'll do it; don't know.'

'Now for the Gorge; we will make my canoe light, and see if we can pass it. Mr. Gaudet will come in another canoe and help us with a line to pass the first point.'

Following these directions, two canoes started for the Gorge. A long line was thrown out into the river from the furthest point we could reach by land. The stick attached to one end floated down the stream, and was picked up in the eddy at the foot of the first point — the great difficulty in entering the Gorge. Pierre caught the stick, and began to haul in the line which

TRACKING UP THE FIRST GORGE.

was fastened to a tree. Meanwhile Joseph and I fended off, and, when opportunity offered, pushed the canoes on,