

Literature, &c.

PROVINCIAL.

From the St. John Amaranth for July.
THE LOST ONE.

A TALE OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.
By Mrs B—N.

BEYOND the utmost verge of the limits which the white settlers had yet dared to encroach on the red owners of the soil, stood the humble dwelling of Kenneth Gordon, a Scotch emigrant; whom necessity had driven from the blue hills and fertile vallies of his own native land, to seek a shelter in the tangled mazes of the forests of the new world. Few only have had the courage to venture thus into the very power of the savage—but Kenneth Gordon possessed a strong arm and a hopeful heart, to give the lips he loved unborrowed bread; this nerved him against danger and 'spite of the warning of friends, Kenneth pitched his tent twelve miles from the nearest settlement. Two years passed over the family in their lonely home, and nothing had occurred to disturb their peace—when business required Kenneth's presence in the settlement up the river. One calm and dewy morning he prepared for his journey; Marion Gordon followed her husband to the wicket, and a tear, which she vainly strove to hide, with a smile, trembled in her large blue eye. She wedded Kenneth when she might have won a richer bridegroom; she chose him for his worth; their lot had been a hard one—but in all the changing scenes of life, their love remained unchanged; and Kenneth Gordon, although thirteen years a husband, was still a lover. Marion strove to rally her spirits as her husband gaily cheered her with an assurance of his return before night. 'Why so fearful Marion? See here is our ain bonny Charlie for a guard, and what better could an auld Jacobite wish for?' said Kenneth, looking fondly on his wife; while their son marched past them in his Highland dress and wooden claymore by his side. Marion smiled as her husband playfully alluded to the difference in their religion; for Kenneth was a staunch Presbyterian, and his wife a Roman Catholic; yet that difference—for which so much blood had been shed in the world—never for an instant dimmed the lustre of their peace; and Marion told her glittering beads on the same spot where her husband breathed his simple prayer. Kenneth taking advantage of the smile he had roused, waved his hand to the little group, and was soon out of sight.

The hot and sultry day was passed by Marion in a state of restless anxiety, but it was for Kenneth alone she feared, and the hours sped heavily till she might expect his return. Slowly the burning sun declined in the heavens; and poured a flood of golden radiance on the leafy trees and the bright waves of the majestic river, which rolled its graceful waters past the settler's dwelling. Marion left her infant asleep in a small shed at the back of the house, with Mary, her eldest daughter, to watch by it, and taking Charlie by the hand, went out to the gate to look for her husband's return. Kenneth's father, an old and superannuated man, sat in the doorway with two girls of Kenneth's sitting on his knees, singing their evening hymn, while he fondly bent over them. Scarcely had Marion reached the wicket, when a loud yell—the wild 'war-whoop,' of the savage—rang on her startled ear. A thousand dark figures seemed to start from the water's edge—the house was surrounded, and she beheld the gray hairs of the old man twined round in the hand of one, and the bright curls of her daughters' gleamed in that of another; while the glittering tomahawk glared like lightning in her eyes! Madly she rushed forward to shield her children: the vengeance of the Indian was glutted, and the life blood of their victims crimsoned the hearth-stone! The house was soon in flames—the war-dance was finished—and their canoes bounded lightly on the waters, bearing them far from the scene of their havoc.

As the sun set, a heavy shower of rain fell, and refreshed the parched earth; the flowers sent up a grateful fragrance on the evening air; the few singing birds of the woods poured forth their notes of melody; the blue jay screamed among the crimson buds of the maple, and the humming bird gleamed through the emerald sprays of the beach tree: the pearly moon was slowly rising in the blue ether, when Kenneth Gordon approached his home. He was weary with his journey, but the pictorial visions of his happy home—his smiling wife, and the caresses of his sunny-haired children, cheered the father's heart,

though his step was languid and his brow feverish. But oh! what a sight of horror for a loving heart, met his eyes as he came in sight of the spot that contained his earthly treasures;—the foreboding silence had surprised him—he heard not the gleeful voices of his children, as they were wont to bound forth to meet him; he saw not Marion stand at the gate to greet his return; but a thick black smoke rose heavily to the summits of the trees, and the smouldering logs of the building fell with a sullen noise to the earth. The rain had quenched the fire, and the house was not all consumed. Wild with terror, Kenneth rushed forward; his feet slipped on the bloody threshold, and he fell on the mangled bodies of his father and his children. The demoniac laceration of the stiffening victims told too plainly who had been their murderers. How that night of horror passed, Kenneth knew not. The morning sun was shining bright, when the bereaved and broken-hearted man was roused from the stupor of despair, by the sound of the word 'father,' in his ears; he raised his eyes and beheld Mary, his eldest child, on her knees beside him: For a moment Kenneth fancied he had had a dreadful dream, but the awful reality was before him. He pressed Mary wildly to his bosom, and a passionate flood of tears relieved his burning brain. Mary heard the yells of the savages, and the shrieks of her mother convinced her that the dreaded Indians had arrived. She threw open the window, and snatching the infant from its bed, flew like a wounded deer to the woods behind the house. The frightened girl heard all, remained quiet, and knowing her father would soon return, left the little Alice asleep on some dried leaves, and ventured from her hiding place. No trace of Marion or of Charles could be found—they had been reserved for a worse fate; and for months a vigilant search was kept up; parties of the settlers, led on by Kenneth, scoured the woods night and day. Many miles off a bloody battle had been fought between two hostile tribes, where a part of Marion's dress and that of her son's was found, but here all trace of the Indians ended, and Kenneth returned to his desolated home. No persuasion could induce him to leave the place where the joys of his heart had been buried; true, his remaining children yet linked him to life, but his love for them only increased his sorrow for the dead and the lost. Kenneth became a prematurely old man; his dark hair faded white as the mountain snow; his brow was wrinkled; and his tall figure bent down to the earth.

Seventeen years rolled on their returnless flight, since that night of withering sorrow.—Kenneth Gordon still lived a sad and broken spiritied man, but Time, that great tamer of the human heart, which dulls the arrows of affliction, and softens the bright tints of joy down to a sober hue, had shed its healing influence, even over his wounding heart. Mary Gordon had been some years a wife, and her children played around Kenneth's footsteps. A little Marion recalled the wife of his youth, and another Charlie—the image of his lost son—slept in his bosom. There was yet another person who was as a sunbeam in the sight of Kenneth; her light laugh sounded as music in his ears, and the joybeams of her eyes fell gladly on his soul. This gladdener of sorrow was his daughter Alice, now a young and lovely woman;—bright and beautiful was she; lovely as a rose bud with a living soul.

'No fountain from its native cave,
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She was as happy as a wave
That dances o'er the sea.'

Alice was but five months old when her mother was taken from her; but Mary, who watched over her helpless infancy with a care far beyond her years, and with love equal to a mother's, was repaid by Alice with the most unbounded affection; for to the fond love of a sister was added the veneration of a parent.

One bright and balmy Sabbath morning Kenneth Gordon and his family left their home for the house of prayer. Mary and her husband walked together, and their children gambolled on the grassy path before them. Kenneth leaned on the arm of his daughter Alice; another person walked by her side, whose eye, when it met hers deepened the tint on her fair cheek—it was William Douglas, the chosen lover of her heart, and well worthy was he to love the gentle Alice. Together they proceeded to the holy altar, and the next Sabbath was to be their bridal day. A change had taken place since Kenneth Gordon first settled on the banks of the lonely river—the white walls and graceful spire of a

church now rose were the blue smoke of the solitary log house once curled through the forest trees, and the ashes of Kenneth's children and his father reposed within its sacred precincts. A large and populous village stood wherethe red deer roved on his trackless path. The white sailed barque gleamed on the water, where'erst floated the stealthy canoe of the savage; and a pious throng offered their aspirations where the war whoop had rung on the air.

Alice was to spend the remaining days of maiden life with a young friend, a few miles from her father's, and they were to return together on her bridal eve. William Douglas accompanied Alice on her walk to the house of her friend,—they parted within a few steps of the house; William returned home and Alice gay and glad as a bird, entered a piece of woods which led directly to the house. Scarcely had she entered, when she was seized by a strong arm; her mouth was gagged and something thrown over her head, she was then borne rapidly down the bank of the river and laid in a canoe. She heard no voices, and the swift motion of the canoe rendered her unconscious;—how long the journey lasted she knew not; at length she found herself—on recovering from partial insensibility—in a rude hut, with a frightful looking Indian squaw bathing her hands, while another held a blazing pine torch over her head. Their hideous faces, frightful as the imagery of a dream, scared Alice, and she fainted again.

The injuries which Kenneth Gordon had suffered from the savages, made him shudder at the name of Indian; and neither he nor his father ever held converse with those who traded in the village. Metea, a chief of the 'Metomone Indians,' in his frequent trading expeditions to the village, had often seen Alice, and became enamoured of the village beauty. He had long watched an opportunity of stealing her and bearing her away to his tribe, where he made no doubt of winning her love. When Alice recovered, the squaws left her, and Metea entered the hut; he commenced telling her of the great honor bestowed on her in being allowed to share the hut of Metea, a brave, whose bow was always strung—whose tomahawk never missed its blow, and whose scalps were as numerous as the stars in the pathway of ghosts, and he pointed to the grisly trophies, hung in the smoke of the cabin; he concluded by giving her firs and strings of beads, with which the squaws decorated her, and the next morning the trembling girl was led from the hut and lifted into a circle of warriors formed of his tribe. Here Metea stood forth and declared his deeds of bravery, and the 'flower of the white nation' to be his bride; when he had finished, a young warrior—whose light and graceful limbs might well have been a sculptor's model—stood forth to speak.—He was dressed in the richest Indian costume, and his scalping knife and beaded moccasins glittered in the sunshine; his features bore an expression different from the others—neither malice lurked in his full dark eye—but a calm and majestic melancholy reposed on his high and smooth brow and was diffused over his whole mien, and in the clear tones of his voice, 'Brothers,' said he to the warriors, 'we have buried the hatchet with the white nation, it is very deep beneath the earth, shall we dig it because Metea scorns the women of his tribe? because he has stolen the flower of the white nation?—let her be restored to her people, lest her chiefs come to claim her, and Metea lives to disgrace the brave warriors of the woods,' he sat down, and the circle rising, said, 'Our brother speaks well, but Metea is very brave.' It was decided that Alice should remain.

Towards evening Metea entered the hut, and approaching Alice caught hold of her hand, wildest passion gleamed in his glittering eyes, and Alice shrieking ran towards the door.—Metea caught her in his arms and pressed her to his bosom; again she shrieked and a descending blow cleft Metea's skull in sunder and his blood fell on her neck. It was the young Indian who advised her liberation in the morning who dealt Metea's death blow, taking Alice in his arms, he stepped lightly from the hut. It was a still and starless night, and the sleeping Indians saw them not;—unclosing a canoe he placed Alice in it, pushed softly from the shore. Before sunset Alice was in sight of her home—her father and friends knew nothing of what had transpired—they fancied her at her friend's house, and terror at her peril and joy at her return followed in the same breath. Mary threw the timid yet kind glance on the Indian warrior who had saved her darling Alice, and Ken-

neth pressed the hand of him who restored his child. In a few minutes William Douglas joined the happy group, and she repeated her escape on his bosom. That night Kenneth Gordon's prayer was longer and more fervent than usual. The father's thanks arose to the throne of grace for the safety of his child; he prayed for her deliverer and for pardon for the hatred he had nurtured against the murderers of his children. During the prayer the Indian stood apart his arms were folded and deep thought was marked on his brow; when it was finished, Mary's children knelt and received Kenneth's blessing 'ere they retired to rest, the Indian rushed forward, and bursting into tears, threw himself at the old man's feet; he bent his feathered head to the earth—the stern warrior wept like a child. Oh! who can trace the deep workings of the human heart?—who can tell in what hidden fount the feelings have their spring? The forest chase—the bloody field—the war dance, all the pomp of savage life passed like a dream from the Indian's soul; a cloud seemed to roll its shadows from his memory; that evening's prayer and a father's blessings recalled a time faded from his recollection, yet living in the dreams of his soul. He thought of the period when he, a happy child, like those before him, and knelt and heard the same sweet words breathed o'er his head he remembered having received a father's kiss, and a mother's smile gleamed like a star in his memory;—but the fleeting visions of childhood were fading again into darkness, when Kenneth arose and clasping the Indian widely to his breast, exclaimed, 'My son! my son! my long lost Charles!' The springs of the father's love gushed forth to meet his son, and the unseemly sympathy of nature guided him to 'The Lost One.' 'Twas indeed Charles Gordon who his father held to his breast, but not as he lived in his father's fancy; he beheld him a painted savage, whose hand was yet stained with blood; but Kenneth's fondest prayer was granted, and he pressed him again to his bosom, exclaimed again 'he is my son.' A small gold cross hung suspended from the collar of Charles—Kenneth knew it well; it had belonged to Marion, who hung it round her son's neck 'ere her eyes were closed. She had sickened early in her captivity and died while her son was yet a child, but the relics she had left were prized by him as something holy. From the wampum belt he took a roll of the bark of the birch tree, on which something had been written with a pencil; the writing was effaced and the signature of Marion Gordon was alone visible. Kenneth pressed the writing to his lips, and again his bruised spirit mourned for his sainted Marion. Mary and Alice greeted their restored brother with warm affection; Kenneth lived but in the sight of his son. Charles rejoiced in their endearments, and all the joys of kindred were to him as

'New us if brought from other spheres,
Yet welcome as if known for years.'

But soon a change came over the young warrior; his eye grew dim, his step was heavy, and his brow was sad, he sought for solitude, and he seemed like a bird pining for freedom. They thought he sighed for the liberty of his savage life, but alas! it was another cause, the better feelings of the human heart all lie dormant in the Indian character, and are but seldom called into action. Charles had been the 'stern stoic of the woods,' till he saw Alice, then the first warm rush of young affection bounded like a torrent through his veins, and he loved his sister with a passion so strong, so overwhelming, that it sapped the current of his life. The marriage of Alice had been delayed on Charles' return; it would again have been delayed on his account, but he himself urged it forward. Kenneth entered the church with Charles leaning on his arm—during the ceremony he stood apart from the others, when it was finished Alice went up to him and took his hand, it was cold as marble, he was dead, his spirit fled with the bridal benediction—Kenneth's heart bled afresh for his son, and as he laid his head in the earth, he felt that it would not be long till he followed him,—nor was he mistaken, for a few mornings after, he was found dead on the grave of 'THE LOST ONE.'

From the same.

MAY YOU DIE AMONG YOUR KINDRED.

MAY you die among your kindred!
May they read your dying bed
Soothe the dissolution's awful hour,
And raise your drooping head;
May the breezes of your fatherland,
Around you lightly play,
And the smiling sun of its summer eve,
Gild your last earthly day.