

and in his turn put his adversary under. In the struggle both were carried out in the current, beyond their depth, and each was compelled to relax his hold and swim for his life. There was still one loaded rifle upon the shore, and each swam hard in order to obtain it; but the Indian proved the more expert swimmer, and Adam, seeing that he should be too late, turned and swam out into the stream, intending to dive, and thus frustrate his enemy's intention. At this instant, Andrew, having heard that his brother was alone, in a struggle with two Indians, and in great danger, ran up hastily to the edge of the bank above, in order to assist him. Another white man followed him closely, and seeing Adam in the river covered with blood, and swimming rapidly from shore, mistook him for an Indian, and fired upon him, wounding him dangerously in the shoulder. Adam turned and seeing his brother, called loudly upon him to "shoot the big Indian upon the shore." Andrew's gun, however, was empty, having just been discharged.

Fortunately, Big Foot had also seized the gun with which Adam had shot the lesser Indian, so they were both on an equality. The contest now was who should load first. Big Foot poured in his powder first, and drawing his ramrod out of its sheath in too great a hurry, threw it in the river, and while he ran to recover it, Andrew gained an advantage. Still the Indian was but a second too late, for his gun was at his shoulder when Andrew's ball entered his breast. The gun dropped from his hands, and he fell forward on his face, on the very margin of the river.

Andrew, now alarmed for his brother, who was scarcely able to swim, threw down his gun, and rushed into the river, in order to bring him ashore; but Adam, more intent upon securing the scalp of Big Foot as a trophy than upon his own safety, called loudly upon his brother to leave him alone and scalp the big Indian, who was now endeavoring to roll himself in the water, from a romantic desire, peculiar to the Indian warrior, of securing his scalp from the enemy. Andrew however, refused to obey, and insisted upon saving the living before attending to the dead. Big Foot, in the meantime, had succeeded in reaching the deep water before he expired, and his body was borne off by the waves, without being stripped of the ornament and pride of an Indian warrior.

Not a man of the Indians had escaped. Five of Big Foot's brothers, the flower of the Wyandott nation, had accompanied him in the expedition, and all perished. It is said that the news of this calamity threw the whole tribe into mourning. Their remarkable size, their courage, and their superior intelligence, gave them immense influence, which, greatly to their credit, was generally exerted on the side of humanity. Their powerful interposition had saved many prisoners from the stake, and had given a milder character to the warfare of the Indians in that part of the country. A chief of the same name was alive in that part of the country so late as 1792; but

whether a brother or son of Big Foot is not known.

Adam Poe recovered of his wounds, and lived many years after his memorable conflict; but never forgot the tremendous "hug" which he sustained in the arms of Big Foot. He was the grandfather of Adam Poe, present Assistant Agent of the Book Concern.

The great loss sustained by the Wyandott nation in the death of the Big Foot brothers created an implacable hatred in every heart toward their destroyers. Many an Indian malediction had been poured out upon the head of Adam Poe, and many a prize had been offered for his scalp. His place of residence, which was on the west bank of the Ohio river, at the mouth of Yellow creek, was known to the Wyandotts. It seemed, however, that none of the nation possessed sufficient courage to encounter, single handed, this foe of the Redman, whose strength was considered equal to that of Big Foot himself. At length, having determined to wait no longer in seeking to be revenged of the death of their Goliath, the nation made choice of their bravest warrior, in the person of Rhon-yan-ness, one of their chiefs. Having made all the preparations necessary for the accomplishment of the fearful mission intrusted to him by his nation, he started out on foot for the residence of Poe.

After passing through the then wilderness of Ohio, he at length reached the creek, which emptied into the Ohio, on the bank of which his intended victim lived. No sooner, however, had he placed his foot within the door of the brave backwoods hunter than he was received with the utmost cordiality and friendship, while every hospitality that the cabin afforded was, with true pioneer generosity, tendered to the Indian guest. When the time for retiring to rest had come, there being but one room and one bed, Poe made a comfortable pallet for the Indian on the floor by the fire, after which he and his wife retired to rest, without any suspicion whatever in regard to the designs of the Indian. It was now a time of peace, and the Indians, particularly the Wyandotts, were regarded as friendly. It was not long till they both fell asleep, when Rhon-yan-ness rose stealthily from his couch, and proceeded cautiously, with his tomahawk and scalping-knife, to the bedside of the unconscious sleepers. Scarcely had he arrived at the spot than the kindness of his host flashed upon his mind. "How," thought he, "can I perpetrate an act of so much cruelty upon one who has taken me into his wig-wam, and treated me with so much friendship?"

The better feelings of his nature overcame him and finding it impossible to commit an act which, though it might bring honor to him from his nation as the avenger of the death of Big Foot, he could not nerve himself up to such a pitch of desperation as to obliterate all the gratitude of his heart. Enemy as Poe had been to his nation, yet he could not think of imbruing his hands in his blood, and with these thoughts, he crept back

softly to his bed. He had not lain long till the question came up before him in a somewhat different aspect, and his thoughts took a turn something like the following: "Have you not been solemnly set apart by the nation to avenge the death of its bravest warrior? and will not the ghost of the departed haunt you in your chase in the wilderness, and in your midnight slumbers, till it is appeased by the death of Poe? Does not your religion require you to execute vengeance as the agent of the Great Spirit? and will he not frown upon you if you fail to do the work of death?"

At this, Rhon-yan-ness again seized his deadly instruments, and sprang to his feet. It was now past midnight, and all was still. No sound could be heard but the gloomy hoot of an owl, which had nestled in some tree in the surrounding forest. The light of the fire had gone out, and there were only a few burning coals left upon the hearth, from which was emitted a kind of twilight glare that enabled him to gaze upon the features of his victim. Summoning all his courage, he raised the fearful tomahawk, and was about to bury it in the head of his host, when something whispered, "Shame on the Indian that can strike a friend. Mean and cowardly is the warrior who would kill even an enemy that has treated him kindly."

His heart faltered, his hand trembled, and the tomahawk fell by his side. Without disturbing the family he returned to his pallet, and, dismissing all thoughts of revenge, he slept soundly until morning.

Poe rose early and made his fire, without disturbing his guest, who was in a heavy slumber. When it was fully day, and the bright fire blazed around, he had an opportunity of gazing upon the broad, open features of the manly Indian whose giant form was before him. There he lay, with his tomahawk and scalping-knife by his side. Poe understood enough of the Indian character to know that in the days of peace they were capable of the most sincere and lasting friendship; and though he had measured arms with them in deadly strife, they were more sinned against than sinning, and whatever cruelties they may have committed were excited by the deprivations of the white man: hence he loved the Indian, and had often bewailed the unhappy fate of Big Foot and his brothers. Anxious to enjoy the society of his Indian guest, he approached him, and gently touching him, said softly, "Wake, brother, wake; the morning has come." The Indian sprang to his feet instantly, and, seizing him by the hand, bestowed his Indian blessings. After again partaking of the humble but bounteous fare of the cabin, he made ready for departure. As he was leaving, Poe furnished him with provisions for his journey, and taking him by the hand, said, "Once we were at war, and were enemies; but now we are at peace, and friends. We have buried the hatchet, and are brothers. Let us live in peace and brotherhood." Rhon-yan-ness was too much overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude for the goodness of his heart to make any reply; but the big tear which rolled down his bronze cheek told the sincerity of grateful emotion, and he left to join his nation on the plains of Sandusky.

He often told us that was a happy day in his life, and the more he thought and reasoned about the course he had pursued, the more he was convinced that he had acted right. Not long after his return to his nation, he became interested in the missionary labors among his people; and the wonderful story of the white man's God, as he came to earth and suffered and died for sinners, deeply affected his heart. Soon this bold, intrepid chief renounced his Indian religion and forms of worship and embraced Christianity. He felt uprising in his heart that love which worketh no ill to its neighbor, but makes its possessor kind and gentle and forgiving; and which teaches that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," in the eye of the holy law, as effectually as if he had plunged the fatal knife into his heart. He took a bold stand in religion, and as a class-leader and steward he rendered efficient service to the mission. Three years after his conversion, he realized a maturity of Christian grace, which enabled him to rejoice in that perfect love which casts out all tormenting fear. His whole life was unblamable, and his character as a Christian irreproachable; and we never knew a Christian in any nation, or among any people, more innocent and guileless, and happy than Rhon-yan-ness. Rooted and grounded in love he was steadfast in his profession, and labored hard to elevate and improve his nation. His powerful influence as a chief was brought to bear upon the heartless trader, who would come among the Indians with his fire-water, and rob them of their brains and furs.



Hearing a murmur below he peered cautiously over.