**The Last of the Mohicans** James Fenimore Cooper

# Introduction

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It is believed that the scene of this tale, and most of the information necessary to understand its  
 allusions, are rendered sufficiently obvious to the reader in the text itself, or in the accompanying  
 notes. Still there is so much obscurity in the Indian traditions, and so much confusion in the Indian  
 names, as to render some explanation useful.

Few men exhibit greater diversity, or, if we may so express it, greater antithesis of character, than  
 the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying,  
 and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and  
 commonly chaste. These are qualities, it is true, which do not distinguish all alike; but they are so  
 far the predominating traits of these remarkable people as to be characteristic.

It is generally believed that the Aborigines of the American continent have an Asiatic origin. There  
 are many physical as well as moral facts which corroborate this opinion, and some few that would  
 seem to weigh against it.

The color of the Indian, the writer believes, is peculiar to himself, and while his cheek-bones have  
 a very striking indication of a Tartar origin, his eyes have not. Climate may have had great  
 influence on the former, but it is difficult to see how it can have produced the substantial difference  
 which exists in the latter. The imagery of the Indian, both in his poetry and in his oratory, is  
 oriental; chastened, and perhaps improved, by the limited range of his practical knowledge. He  
 draws his metaphors from the clouds, the seasons, the birds, the beasts, and the vegetable world.  
 In this, perhaps, he does no more than any other energetic and imaginative race would do, being  
 compelled to set bounds to fancy by experience; but the North American Indian clothes his ideas  
 in a dress which is different from that of the African, and is oriental in itself. His language has the  
 richness and sententious fullness of the Chinese. He will express a phrase in a word, and he will  
 qualify the meaning of an entire sentence by a syllable; he will even convey different significations  
 by the simplest inflections of the voice.

Philologists have said that there are but two or three languages, properly speaking, among all the  
 numerous tribes which formerly occupied the country that now composes the United States. They  
 ascribe the known difficulty one people have to understand another to corruptions and dialects.  
 The writer remembers to have been present at an interview between two chiefs of the Great  
 Prairies west of the Mississippi, and when an interpreter was in attendance who spoke both their  
 languages. The warriors appeared to be on the most friendly terms, and seemingly conversed much  
 together; yet, according to the account of the interpreter, each was absolutely ignorant of what the  
 other said. They were of hostile tribes, brought together by the influence of the American  
 government; and it is worthy of remark, that a common policy led them both to adopt the same  
 subject. They mutually exhorted each other to be of use in the event of the chances of war throwing  
 either of the parties into the hands of his enemies. Whatever may be the truth, as respects the root  
 and the genius of the Indian tongues, it is quite certain they are now so distinct in their words as  
 to possess most of the disadvantages of strange languages; hence much of the embarrassment that  
 has arisen in learning their histories, and most of the uncertainty which exists in their traditions.

Like nations of higher pretensions, the American Indian gives a very different account of his own  
 tribe or race from that which is given by other people. He is much addicted to overestimating his  
 own perfections, and to undervaluing those of his rival or his enemy; a trait which may possibly  
 be thought corroborative of the Mosaic account of the creation.

The whites have assisted greatly in rendering the traditions of the Aborigines more obscure by  
 their own manner of corrupting names. Thus, the term used in the title of this book has undergone  
 the changes of Mahicanni, Mohicans, and Mohegans; the latter being the word commonly used  
 by the whites. When it is remembered that the Dutch (who first settled New York), the English,  
 and the French, all gave appellations to the tribes that dwelt within the country which is the scene  
 of this story, and that the Indians not only gave different names to their enemies, but frequently to  
 themselves, the cause of the confusion will be understood.

In these pages, Lenni-Lenape, Lenope, Delawares, Wapanachki, and Mohicans, all mean the same  
 people, or tribes of the same stock. The Mengwe, the Maquas, the Mingoes, and the Iroquois,  
 though not all strictly the same, are identified frequently by the speakers, being politically  
 confederated and opposed to those just named. Mingo was a term of peculiar reproach, as were  
 Mengwe and Maqua in a less degree.

The Mohicans were the possessors of the country first occupied by the Europeans in this portion  
 of the continent. They were, consequently, the first dispossessed; and the seemingly inevitable  
 fate of all these people, who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the inroads, o

civilization, as the verdure of their native forests falls before the nipping frosts, is represented as  
 having already befallen them. There is sufficient historical truth in the picture to justify the use  
 that has been made of it.

In point of fact, the country which is the scene of the following tale has undergone as little change,  
 since the historical events alluded to had place, as almost any other district of equal extent within  
 the whole limits of the United States. There are fashionable and well-attended watering-places at  
 and near the spring where Hawkeye halted to drink, and roads traverse the forests where he and  
 his friends were compelled to journey without even a path. Glen’s has a large village; and while  
 William Henry, and even a fortress of later date, are only to be traced as ruins, there is another  
 village on the shores of the Horican. But, beyond this, the enterprise and energy of a people who  
 have done so much in other places have done little here. The whole of that wilderness, in which  
 the latter incidents of the legend occurred, is nearly a wilderness still, though the red man has  
 entirely deserted this part of the state. Of all the tribes named in these pages, there exist only a few  
 half-civilized beings of the Oneidas, on the reservations of their people in New York. The rest  
 have disappeared, either from the regions in which their fathers dwelt, or altogether from the earth.

There is one point on which we would wish to say a word before closing this preface. Hawkeye  
 calls the Lac du Saint Sacrement, the ‘Horican.’ As we believe this to be an appropriation of the  
 name that has its origin with ourselves, the time has arrived, perhaps, when the fact should be  
 frankly admitted. While writing this book, fully a quarter of a century since, it occurred to us that  
 the French name of this lake was too complicated, the American too commonplace, and the Indian  
 too unpronounceable, for either to be used familiarly in a work of fiction. Looking over an ancient  
 map, it was ascertained that a tribe of Indians, called ‘Les Horicans’ by the French, existed in the  
 neighborhood of this beautiful sheet of water. As every word uttered by Natty Bumppo was not  
 to be received as rigid truth, we took the liberty of putting the ‘Horican’ into his mouth, as the  
 substitute for ‘Lake George.’ The name has appeared to find favor, and all things considered, it  
 may possibly be quite as well to let it stand, instead of going back to the House of Hanover for the  
 appellation of our finest sheet of water. We relieve our conscience by the confession, at all events  
 leaving it to exercise its authority as it may see fit

## Chapter 1

‘Mine ear is open, and my heart prepared: The worst is wordly loss thou canst unfold:—Say, is  
 my kingdom lost?’ —Shakespeare

It was a feature peculiar to the colonial wars of North America, that the toils and dangers of the  
 wilderness were to be encountered before the adverse hosts could meet. A wide and apparently an  
 impervious boundary of forests severed the possessions of the hostile provinces of France and  
 England. The hardy colonist, and the trained European who fought at his side, frequently expended  
 months in struggling against the rapids of the streams, or in effecting the rugged passes of the  
 mountains, in quest of an opportunity to exhibit their courage in a more martial conflict. But,  
 emulating the patience and self-denial of the practiced native warriors, they learned to overcome  
 every difficulty; and it would seem that, in time, there was no recess of the woods so dark, nor  
 any secret place so lovely, that it might claim exemption from the inroads of those who had  
 pledged their blood to satiate their vengeance, or to uphold the cold and selfish policy of the distant  
 monarchs of Europe.

Perhaps no district throughout the wide extent of the intermediate frontiers can furnish a livelier  
 picture of the cruelty and fierceness of the savage warfare of those periods than the country which  
 lies between the head waters of the Hudson and the adjacent lakes.

The facilities which nature had there offered to the march of the combatants were too obvious  
 to be neglected. The lengthened sheet of the Champlain stretched from the frontiers of Canada,  
 deep within the borders of the neighboring province of New York, forming a natural passage  
 across half the distance that the French were compelled to master in order to strike their enemies.  
 Near its southern termination, it received the contributions of another lake, whose waters were so  
 limpid as to have been exclusively selected by the Jesuit missionaries to perform the typical  
 purification of baptism, and to obtain for it the title of lake ‘du Saint Sacrement.’ The less zealous  
 English thought they conferred a sufficient honor on its unsullied fountains, when they bestowed  
 the name of their reigning prince, the second of the house of Hanover. The two united to rob the  
 untutored possessors of its wooded scenery of their native right to perpetuate its original  
 appellation of ‘Horican.’\*

\* As each nation of the Indians had its language or its dialect, they usually gave different names  
 to the same places, though nearly all of their appellations were descriptive of the object. Thus a  
 literal translation of the name of this beautiful sheet of water, used by the tribe that dwelt on its  
 banks, would be ‘The Tail of the Lake.’ Lake George, as it is vulgarly, and now, indeed, legally,  
 called, forms a sort of tail to Lake Champlain, when viewed on the map. Hence, the name.

Winding its way among countless islands, and imbedded in mountains, the ‘holy lake’ extended  
 a dozen leagues still further to the south. With the high plain that there interposed itself to the  
 further passage of the water, commenced a portage of as many miles, which conducted the  
 adventurer to the banks of the Hudson, at a point where, with the usual obstructions of the rapids,  
 or rifts, as they were then termed in the language of the country, the river became navigable to the  
 tide.

While, in the pursuit of their daring plans of annoyance, the restless enterprise of the French  
 even attempted the distant and difficult gorges of the Alleghany, it may easily be imagined that  
 their proverbial acuteness would not overlook the natural advantages of the district we have just  
 described. It became, emphatically, the bloody arena, in which most of the battles for the mastery  
 of the colonies were contested. Forts were erected at the different points that commanded the  
 facilities of the route, and were taken and retaken, razed and rebuilt, as victory alighted on the  
 hostile banners. While the husbandman shrank back from the dangerous passes, within the safer  
 boundaries of the more ancient settlements, armies larger than those that had often disposed of the  
 scepters of the mother countries, were seen to bury themselves in these forests, whence they rarely  
 returned but in skeleton bands, that were haggard with care or dejected by defeat. Though the arts  
 of peace were unknown to this fatal region, its forests were alive with men; its shades and glens  
 rang with the sounds of martial music, and the echoes of its mountains threw back the laugh, or  
 repeated the wanton cry, of many a gallant and reckless youth, as he hurried by them, in the  
 noontide of his spirits, to slumber in a long night of forgetfulness.

It was in this scene of strife and bloodshed that the incidents we shall attempt to relate occurred,  
 during the third year of the war which England and France last waged for the possession of a  
 country that neither was destined to retain.

The imbecility of her military leaders abroad, and the fatal want of energy in her councils at  
 home, had lowered the character of Great Britain from the proud elevation on which it had been  
 placed by the talents and enterprise of her former warriors and statesmen. No longer dreaded by  
 her enemies, her servants were fast losing the confidence of self-respect. In this mortifying  
 abasement, the colonists, though innocent of her imbecility, and too humble to be the agents of  
 her blunders, were but the natural participators. They had recently seen a chosen army from that  
 country, which, reverencing as a mother, they had blindly believed invincible—an army led by a  
 chief who had been selected from a crowd of trained warriors, for his rare military endowments,  
 disgracefully routed by a handful of French and Indians, and only saved from annihilation by the  
 coolness and spirit of a Virginian boy, whose riper fame has since diffused itself, with the steady  
 influence of moral truth, to the uttermost confines of Christendom.\* A wide frontier had been laid  
 naked by this unexpected disaster, and more substantial evils were preceded by a thousand fanciful  
 and imaginary dangers. The alarmed colonists believed that the yells of the savages mingled with  
 every fitful gust of wind that issued from the interminable forests of the west. The terrific character  
 of their merciless enemies increased immeasurably the natural horrors of warfare. Numberless  
 recent massacres were still vivid in their recollections; nor was there any ear in the provinces so  
 deaf as not to have drunk in with avidity the narrative of some fearful tale of midnight murder, in  
 which the natives of the forests were the principal and barbarous actors. As the credulous and  
 excited traveler related the hazardous chances of the wilderness, the blood of the timid curdled  
 with terror, and mothers cast anxious glances even at those children which slumbered within the  
 security of the largest towns. In short, the magnifying influence of fear began to set at naught the  
 calculations of reason, and to render those who should have remembered their manhood, the slaves  
 of the basest passions. Even the most confident and the stoutest hearts began to think the issue of  
 the contest was becoming doubtful; and that abject class was hourly increasing in numbers, who  
 thought they foresaw all the possessions of the English crown in America subdued by their  
 Christian foes, or laid waste by the inroads of their relentless allies.

\* Washington, who, after uselessly admonishing the European general of the danger into which  
 he was heedlessly running, saved the remnants of the British army, on this occasion, by his  
 decision and courage. The reputation earned by Washington in this battle was the principal cause  
 of his being selected to command the American armies at a later day. It is a circumstance worthy  
 of observation, that while all America rang with his wellmerited reputation, his name does not  
 occur in any European account of the battle; at least the author has searched for it without success.  
 In this manner does the mother country absorb even the fame, under that system of rule.

When, therefore, intelligence was received at the fort which covered the southern termination  
 of the portage between the Hudson and the lakes, that Montcalm had been seen moving up the  
 Champlain, with an army ‘numerous as the leaves on the trees,’ its truth was admitted with more  
 of the craven reluctance of fear than with the stern joy that a warrior should feel, in finding an  
 enemy within reach of his blow. The news had been brought, toward the decline of a day in  
 midsummer, by an Indian runner, who also bore an urgent request from Munro, the commander  
 of a work on the shore of the ‘holy lake,’ for a speedy and powerful reinforcement. It has already  
 been mentioned that the distance between these two posts was less than five leagues. The rude  
 path, which originally formed their line of communication, had been widened for the passage of  
 wagons; so that the distance which had been traveled by the son of the forest in two hours, might  
 easily be effected by a detachment of troops, with their necessary baggage, between the rising and  
 setting of a summer sun. The loyal servants of the British crown had given to one of these forest-  
fastnesses the name of William Henry, and to the other that of Fort Edward, calling each after a  
 favorite prince of the reigning family. The veteran Scotchman just named held the first, with a  
 regiment of regulars and a few provincials; a force really by far too small to make head against  
 the formidable power that Montcalm was leading to the foot of his earthen mounds. At the latter,  
 however, lay General Webb, who commanded the armies of the king in the northern provinces,  
 with a body of more than five thousand men. By uniting the several detachments of his command,  
 this officer might have arrayed nearly double that number of combatants against the enterprising  
 Frenchman, who had ventured so far from his reinforcements, with an army but little superior in  
 numbers.

But under the influence of their degraded fortunes, both officers and men appeared better  
 disposed to await the approach of their formidable antagonists, within their works, than to resist  
 the progress of their march, by emulating the successful example of the French at Fort du Quesne,  
 and striking a blow on their advance.

After the first surprise of the intelligence had a little abated, a rumor was spread through the  
 entrenched camp, which stretched along the margin of the Hudson, forming a chain of outworks  
 to the body of the fort itself, that a chosen detachment of fifteen hundred men was to depart, with  
 the dawn, for William Henry, the post at the northern extremity of the portage. That which at first  
 was only rumor, soon became certainty, as orders passed from the quarters of the commander-in-  
chief to the several corps he had selected for this service, to prepare for their speedy departure. All  
 doubts as to the intention of Webb now vanished, and an hour or two of hurried footsteps and  
 anxious faces succeeded. The novice in the military art flew from point to point, retarding his own  
 preparations by the excess of his violent and somewhat distempered zeal; while the more practiced  
 veteran made his arrangements with a deliberation that scorned every appearance of haste; though  
 his sober lineaments and anxious eye sufficiently betrayed that he had no very strong professional  
 relish for the, as yet, untried and dreaded warfare of the wilderness. At length the sun set in a flood  
 of glory, behind the distant western hills, and as darkness drew its veil around the secluded spot  
 the sounds of preparation diminished; the last light finally disappeared from the log cabin of some  
 officer; the trees cast their deeper shadows over the mounds and the rippling stream, and a silence  
 soon pervaded the camp, as deep as that which reigned in the vast forest by which it was environed.

According to the orders of the preceding night, the heavy sleep of the army was broken by the  
 rolling of the warning drums, whose rattling echoes were heard issuing, on the damp morning air,  
 out of every vista of the woods, just as day began to draw the shaggy outlines of some tall pines  
 of the vicinity, on the opening brightness of a soft and cloudless eastern sky. In an instant the  
 whole camp was in motion; the meanest soldier arousing from his lair to witness the departure of  
 his comrades, and to share in the excitement and incidents of the hour. The simple array of the  
 chosen band was soon completed. While the regular and trained hirelings of the king marched  
 with haughtiness to the right of the line, the less pretending colonists took their humbler position  
 on its left, with a docility that long practice had rendered easy. The scouts departed; strong guards  
 preceded and followed the lumbering vehicles that bore the baggage; and before the gray light of  
 the morning was mellowed by the rays of the sun, the main body of the combatants wheeled into  
 column, and left the encampment with a show of high military bearing, that served to drown the  
 slumbering apprehensions of many a novice, who was now about to make his first essay in arms.  
 While in view of their admiring comrades, the same proud front and ordered array was observed,  
 until the notes of their fifes growing fainter in distance, the forest at length appeared to swallow  
 up the living mass which had slowly entered its bosom.

The deepest sounds of the retiring and invisible column had ceased to be borne on the breeze to  
 the listeners, and the latest straggler had already disappeared in pursuit; but there still remained  
 the signs of another departure, before a log cabin of unusual size and accommodations, in front of  
 which those sentinels paced their rounds, who were known to guard the person of the English  
 general. At this spot were gathered some half dozen horses, caparisoned in a manner which  
 showed that two, at least, were destined to bear the persons of females, of a rank that it was not  
 usual to meet so far in the wilds of the country. A third wore trappings and arms of an officer of  
 the staff; while the rest, from the plainness of the housings, and the traveling mails with which  
 they were encumbered, were evidently fitted for the reception of as many menials, who were,  
 seemingly, already waiting the pleasure of those they served. At a respectful distance from this  
 unusual show, were gathered divers groups of curious idlers; some admiring the blood and bone  
 of the high-mettled military charger, and others gazing at the preparations, with the dull wonder  
 of vulgar curiosity. There was one man, however, who, by his countenance and actions, formed a  
 marked exception to those who composed the latter class of spectators, being neither idle, nor  
 seemingly very ignorant.

The person of this individual was to the last degree ungainly, without being in any particular  
 manner deformed. He had all the bones and joints of other men, without any of their proportions.  
 Erect, his stature surpassed that of his fellows; though seated, he appeared reduced within the  
 ordinary limits of the race. The same contrariety in his members seemed to exist throughout the  
 whole man. His head was large; his shoulders narrow; his arms long and dangling; while his hands  
 were small, if not delicate. His legs and thighs were thin, nearly to emaciation, but of extraordinary  
 length; and his knees would have been considered tremendous, had they not been outdone by the  
 broader foundations on which this false superstructure of blended human orders was so profanely  
 reared. The ill-assorted and injudicious attire of the individual only served to render his  
 awkwardness more conspicuous. A sky-blue coat, with short and broad skirts and low cape,  
 exposed a long, thin neck, and longer and thinner legs, to the worst animadversions of the  
 evildisposed. His nether garment was a yellow nankeen, closely fitted to the shape, and tied at his  
 bunches of knees by large knots of white ribbon, a good deal sullied by use. Clouded cotton  
 stockings, and shoes, on one of the latter of which was a plated spur, completed the costume of  
 the lower extremity of this figure, no curve or angle of which was concealed, but, on the other  
 hand, studiously exhibited, through the vanity or simplicity of its owner.

From beneath the flap of an enormous pocket of a soiled vest of embossed silk, heavily  
 ornamented with tarnished silver lace, projected an instrument, which, from being seen in such  
 martial company, might have been easily mistaken for some mischievous and unknown implement  
 of war. Small as it was, this uncommon engine had excited the curiosity of most of the Europeans  
 in the camp, though several of the provincials were seen to handle it, not only without fear, but  
 with the utmost familiarity. A large, civil cocked hat, like those worn by clergymen within the last  
 thirty years, surmounted the whole, furnishing dignity to a good-natured and somewhat vacant  
 countenance, that apparently needed such artificial aid, to support the gravity of some high and  
 extraordinary trust.

While the common herd stood aloof, in deference to the quarters of Webb, the figure we have  
 described stalked into the center of the domestics, freely expressing his censures or  
 commendations on the merits of the horses, as by chance they displeased or satisfied his judgment.

‘This beast, I rather conclude, friend, is not of home raising, but is from foreign lands, or perhaps  
 from the little island itself over the blue water?’ he said, in a voice as remarkable for the softness  
 and sweetness of its tones, as was his person for its rare proportions; ‘I may speak of these things,  
 and be no braggart; for I have been down at both havens; that which is situate at the mouth of  
 Thames, and is named after the capital of Old England, and that which is called ‘Haven’, with the  
 addition of the word ‘New’; and have seen the scows and brigantines collecting their droves, like  
 the gathering to the ark, being outward bound to the Island of Jamaica, for the purpose of barter  
 and traffic in four-footed animals; but never before have I beheld a beast which verified the true  
 scripture war-horse like this: ‘He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on  
 to meet the armed men. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off,  
 the thunder of the captains, and the shouting’ It would seem that the stock of the horse of Israel  
 had descended to our own time; would it not, friend?’

Receiving no reply to this extraordinary appeal, which in truth, as it was delivered with the vigor  
 of full and sonorous tones, merited some sort of notice, he who had thus sung forth the language  
 of the holy book turned to the silent figure to whom he had unwittingly addressed himself, and  
 found a new and more powerful subject of admiration in the object that encountered his gaze. His  
 eyes fell on the still, upright, and rigid form of the ‘Indian runner,’ who had borne to the camp the  
 unwelcome tidings of the preceding evening. Although in a state of perfect repose, and apparently  
 disregarding, with characteristic stoicism, the excitement and bustle around him, there was a sullen  
 fierceness mingled with the quiet of the savage, that was likely to arrest the attention of much  
 more experienced eyes than those which now scanned him, in unconcealed amazement. The native  
 bore both the tomahawk and knife of his tribe; and yet his appearance was not altogether that of a  
 warrior. On the contrary, there was an air of neglect about his person, like that which might have  
 proceeded from great and recent exertion, which he had not yet found leisure to repair. The colors  
 of the war-paint had blended in dark confusion about his fierce countenance, and rendered his  
 swarthy lineaments still more savage and repulsive than if art had attempted an effect which had  
 been thus produced by chance. His eye, alone, which glistened like a fiery star amid lowering  
 clouds, was to be seen in its state of native wildness. For a single instant his searching and yet  
 wary glance met the wondering look of the other, and then changing its direction, partly in  
 cunning, and partly in disdain, it remained fixed, as if penetrating the distant air.

It is impossible to say what unlooked-for remark this short and silent communication, between  
 two such singular men, might have elicited from the white man, had not his active curiosity been  
 again drawn to other objects. A general movement among the domestics, and a low sound of gentle  
 voices, announced the approach of those whose presence alone was wanted to enable the cavalcade  
 to move. The simple admirer of the war-horse instantly fell back to a low, gaunt, switch-tailed  
 mare, that was unconsciously gleaning the faded herbage of the camp nigh by; where, leaning with  
 one elbow on the blanket that concealed an apology for a saddle, he became a spectator of the  
 departure, while a foal was quietly making its morning repast, on the opposite side of the same  
 animal.

A young man, in the dress of an officer, conducted to their steeds two females, who, as it was  
 apparent by their dresses, were prepared to encounter the fatigues of a journey in the woods. One,  
 and she was the more juvenile in her appearance, though both were young, permitted glimpses of  
 her dazzling complexion, fair golden hair, and bright blue eyes, to be caught, as she artlessly  
 suffered the morning air to blow aside the green veil which descended low from her beaver.

The flush which still lingered above the pines in the western sky was not more bright nor delicate  
 than the bloom on her cheek; nor was the opening day more cheering than the animated smile  
 which she bestowed on the youth, as he assisted her into the saddle. The other, who appeared to  
 share equally in the attention of the young officer, concealed her charms from the gaze of the  
 soldiery with a care that seemed better fitted to the experience of four or five additional years. It  
 could be seen, however, that her person, though molded with the same exquisite proportions, of  
 which none of the graces were lost by the traveling dress she wore, was rather fuller and more  
 mature than that of her companion.

No sooner were these females seated, than their attendant sprang lightly into the saddle of the  
 war-horse, when the whole three bowed to Webb, who in courtesy, awaited their parting on the  
 threshold of his cabin and turning their horses’ heads, they proceeded at a slow amble, followed  
 by their train, toward the northern entrance of the encampment. As they traversed that short  
 distance, not a voice was heard among them; but a slight exclamation proceeded from the younger  
 of the females, as the Indian runner glided by her, unexpectedly, and led the way along the military  
 road in her front. Though this sudden and startling movement of the Indian produced no sound  
 from the other, in the surprise her veil also was allowed to open its folds, and betrayed an  
 indescribable look of pity, admiration, and horror, as her dark eye followed the easy motions of  
 the savage. The tresses of this lady were shining and black, like the plumage of the raven. Her  
 complexion was not brown, but it rather appeared charged with the color of the rich blood, that  
 seemed ready to burst its bounds. And yet there was neither coarseness nor want of shadowing in  
 a countenance that was exquisitely regular, and dignified and surpassingly beautiful. She smiled,  
 as if in pity at her own momentary forgetfulness, discovering by the act a row of teeth that would  
 have shamed the purest ivory; when, replacing the veil, she bowed her face, and rode in silence,  
 like one whose thoughts were abstracted from the scene around her.