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EDITED BY "BOZ," AUTHOR OF "WATKINS TOTTLE" AND OTHER SKETCHES.

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EAST AND WEST.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "CLINTON BRADSHAW."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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EAST AND WEST.

CHAPTER I.

We must shift the scene of our story like those of the drama, to the whereabout of our different characters. Not long after the Lormans had settled in their new home, Mr. Bennington, senior, left Perryville, to attend the sitting of Congress. Mr. Taylor Davidson, a south-western planter, who had land claims that required his presence in Washington city, and who was a friend of Mr. Bennington, had been spending some weeks with him at Perryville, on his way up the Ohio, awaiting Mr. Bennington's departure, that they might proceed together. During Mr. Davidson's stay in Perryville, he had made the acquaintance of the Lormans, and had heard Ruth talk a great deal about Helen Murray, from whom she had received several letters, portions of which she had read to him. Mr. Davidson was a single man, and would be pronounced by a *very* young lady, one for instance just "coming out," as most decidedly on the list of old bachelors; a lady of Miss

Judson's age might not think so. Mr. Davidson was a high-minded, chivalrous southerner, who in his youth had been in the army, and had served with honour in our late war with Great Britain. On the death of his brother, who had left him a handsome fortune, he had travelled extensively in Europe, and on his return, purchased a plantation and slaves on the banks of the Mississippi, where he had resided since, and accumulated an immense fortune. He wore his age well, and was a fine-looking man, with a gentlemanly and distinguished bearing. He was forcibly impressed with the wit, vivacity, friendliness, and worldly knowledge of those portions of Helen's letters, which Ruth read to him, and he laughing said to her:

"Miss Lorman, you must give me a letter of introduction to your friend Miss Murray. I am fascinated by her letters. As I can tell her all about you and your family, she will give me a kind reception, and who knows but what I may improve upon it, and induce her to come west. She is not a *very* young lady you tell me, and I, you discover, am not a *very* young gentleman. Upon my word, if she is so bewitching as these letters indicate, and your account of her proclaims, I fear I shall be no longer heart-whole. What say you?"

"Helen is said to have great powers of conquest in that respect," replied Ruth gaily, "and I have no doubt, when she sees you, that she will have the

will. But remember, her motto is conquest, not exchange."

When Mr. Bennington left Perryville, Mr. Davidson accompanied him as far as the city, from which Ruth had emigrated, with the intention of spending some weeks there, and then proceeding to Washington. In a splendid equipage with liveried slaves, he called at Helen Murray's, and presented his letter of introduction from Ruth. He was received by Helen with every attention, and long and earnest were her inquiries concerning the Lormans. The fact that Mr. Davidson had seen Ruth Lorman, and spoke of her in terms of exalted praise, established an intimate intercourse between Helen and Mr. Davidson, almost on their first interview, and he soon became her daily visiter.

After the Lormans emigrated, Henry Beckford was, if possible, still more attentive than ever to Helen, who had succeeded in the determination expressed to Ruth Lorman. Henry had addressed her, and she had half consentingly rejected him, uttering the no, which is said in most instances to mean yes. In this instance, it was but to allure farther, that the no might be more decided, after deeper protestations, and burning, recorded, written vows. Her first hesitating rejection, after a coolness on Henry's part of a few days, drew from him, for his vanity whispered it was all that was wanted, more eager and abundant proofs of his attachment, among which were no small quantity of gilt-edged notes, on various colour-

ed satin paper, where green was avoided, and blue most used. The lady's replies were as non-committal, as any politician's in answer to a committee of his fellow-citizens, asking for his opinions, could possibly be. At last Henry, suspecting that she might show the correspondence, alluded, in one of his letters, to certain passages between them, which he coloured in such a way, that if she should show it, it would appear that she had given him great encouragement, which he thought would prevent the exposure. She returned the letter, with a few cold lines written crossways on the part, saying, she did not know what he could possibly mean in writing to her in that way—that he had applied to his imagination instead of his memory—and that she desired their correspondence might drop. This brought Henry to seek a personal interview with her. Burning with rage, which he determined to suppress, that he might win her, and vent it, he proceeded to Mr. Murray's, not without many conflicting feelings as to whether he ought to go, and what he should say if he went. Henry found Helen in the midst of a fascinating tête-à-tête with Mr. Davidson, that gentleman's splendid equipage standing before the door, and in full view from the window. Helen introduced the gentlemen to each other, and with her accustomed courtesy, which did not bate a jot in self-possession, after hoping that Mr. Beckford was well, and requesting him to be seated, she resumed the thread of her conversation with Mr. Davidson.

"And so you think I would like the far south, Mr. Davidson?" she said.

"Indeed I do, Miss Murray," Mr. Davidson replied, "and I know the far south would like you. What could persuade you to visit us?"

"An eloquent tongue, perhaps, sir."

"Ah, me! I have now the deep regret, that I am not eloquent. Could I persuade you, it would be with me as the eloquent Irish barrister said it was with him when the audience applauded him—'not the advocate—but the theme.' Does not Miss Lorman give you glowing pictures of the west? we of the south beat them in every thing but hills."

"Yes, Ruth does give me a glowing account of Perryville. But she sighs for home, I have no doubt," and Helen ran her fingers over the piano that stood near her, and warbled a verse of 'sweet home.' "There must be all sorts of folks there, to use one of their expressions. But remind me of it, I will show you one of Ruth's letters some of these days."

"Show letters, Miss Murray," exclaimed Henry, in a tone of reprehension.

"Yes, Mr. Beckford, show letters when they come from a guileless girl, for there can be no harm in them. And I hold, though perhaps it may startle a gentleman of your plain dealing, that though it might, at first blush, seem like a breach of confidence, that one may show the letters of an artful or a foolish man, to prevent others from being the tools of his artifice, or his folly. As for love-letters, there is no-

thing new in them—and perhaps I could prove it—they are stereotyped stuff, for which there is no copy-right secured, and any one may publish them. There, Mr. Davidson, have I not spoken like a blue-stocking?"

Mr. Davidson bowed and smiled.

"But do you approve the sentiment, Mr. Davidson?" asked Henry, as if struck with horror.

"I must not condemn it, if Miss Murray utters it," replied Mr. Davidson, "for I am practising, sir, all the powers of which I am master, to induce Miss Murray to wend westward, and see Miss Lorman. By-the-by, Miss Murray wonders that some one has not persuaded the fair Ruth to say to him, what her namesake said on a certain occasion in the good book."

"I opine, sir, that has been done," said Helen.

"Are you in earnest?" asked Mr. Davidson. "I hope he is a clever fellow, for our broad land does not contain a lovelier or worthier lady."

"In earnest, sir, downright earnest," replied Helen. "And he is a clever fellow—I know him well, and can vouch for him."

Henry Beckford believed that Ruth was pleased with himself, from what her mother had told him at their last interview; and feeling that he had acted unjustifiably towards her, though he fed his vanity upon the idea that he had outrivalled Ralph and won her regard, he was careful never to speak of her to Helen Murray. Helen, who felt deep indignation against Henry for his conduct towards Ruth, never spoke of her to him, while she was

winding her meshes round him; for she felt that if she did there would be a fire in her eye not at all consistent with her purposes.

Henry looked foolish at first, as if he thought himself was meant; but when Helen concluded her remark in a tone of evident earnestness, he inquired, in great surprise,

"Who is he, Miss Helen, if it is a fair question?"

"Fair as the lady herself, sir," replied Helen, "or the gentleman to whose fairness you must be a willing witness—your cousin, Mr. Ralph Beckford."

"Ralph Beckford!" exclaimed Henry, with a doubting laugh. "Miss Murray, I assure you from my own *personal* knowledge, you never were so much mistaken in your life. You know I used to be very intimate there—"

"Master Henry, let me assure you, sir, that the flattering unction that has fed your vanity is all mere moonshine, sir. You thought you had obtained Ruth's heart, Master Henry Beckford, and that, like an idle, vicious boy, when tired of his toy, you had cast it from you, not caring if you broke it; but it was garnered up by another, and never gave you one throb except of indignation and of pity."

"Miss Murray, you use strange language," exclaimed Henry, in unfeigned astonishment and chagrin.

"You provoke it, Master Henry; but I'll drop it, but with this assurance to you, that Ruth Lorman is now engaged to your cousin Ralph Beckford, and

that when he leaves college they will be married. You never gave Ruth the least heartache, except for the effect of your deception upon her mother."

"I thought that you claimed Ralph," said Henry, starting at the latter part of the sentence, and speaking quickly, so as to exclude it, as it were, from his own ears.

"No, sir, you are mistaken again. I never had any claims upon your cousin—he has no vanity in that way. In this regard, cousins though you be, there is no relationship between you. I assure you, Master Henry, I never had, I repeat, any claims upon your cousin, except upon his friendship, and that I would not resign for the love of any man in Christendom. So you observe, sir, I have no idea of love or matrimony."

Mr. Davidson, anxious to turn a conversation, of which he did not know well what to make, and which he saw was giving increasing chagrin and passion to Henry, said:

"Ah! is that your determination; then of what avail, Miss Murray, would be the powerful eloquence of which we have been speaking?"

"You must remember, Mr. Davidson, that I have not yet listened to that powerful eloquence. But come, I see your horses prancing in the street—you invited me to ride, I believe, sir?"

"I did," replied Mr. Davidson; "allow me, Miss Murray—Mr. Beckford, will you not accompany us?"

Ere Henry could reply, Helen said,

"No, Mr. Davidson, Master Henry is too fond of proverbs and too mindful of their injunctions not to remember what makes bad company. I quoted the proverb to him before, when he, Ralph, and I used to visit Ruth."

So saying, she took Mr. Davidson's arm, and bowing to Henry, said,

"Mr. Beckford, you see I do not stand on ceremony with you."

"I have been made fully aware of that fact, to-day, Miss Murray, and allow me to say, that it has been so much in contrast with previous occasions, that I know not how to take it. To a gentleman, I could have replied—to a lady, I must be silent."

"There, sir, you do me and my sex injustice; with the tongue you are aware we are said to be matchless—it is our peculiar weapon. Upon my word, sir, I attributed your silence to a fear of the odds. Good morning, sir."

Helen and her gallant had by this time reached the carriage, and ere Henry could reply, for he had left the room with them, Helen had entered it, and was addressing some remark to Mr. Davidson, as if totally unconscious of Henry's existence.

"Upon my word, you are a strange lady," said Mr. Davidson to Helen, as the carriage drove off, alluding of course to the conversation between her and Henry.

"Things often seem strange to lookers-on, Mr. Davidson, because they do not know the reasons therefor. I understand all the depths and shallows of Master Henry; and when he provokes me, I let him see that I do—that's all."

CHAPTER II.

With no enviable feelings Henry Beckford glanced after the carriage as it drove off. "By heaven," he muttered to himself, through his teeth, pulling at the same moment his hat over his brows, "she has brought me to this pass to laugh at and scorn me. Now, when the whole town knows how long I have been her servant, almost her slave—they will say her very slave—she treats me in this manner. I boasted to our set at our last supper of my success with her, and now, damnation! I shall have their taunts—I must bear all this—her scorn and their laughter, as well as—as—yes, yes, I love her as well as hate her. And, if my love brings nothing but this wormwood, I'll make that wormwood a bitter drug for her. I will, I must be revenged. Her conduct is insufferable—'Master Henry,'—I'll master her yet. She has, with the most cold-blooded malice, coquetted me, and now this dashing southerner has come, she spurns me as though I were a dog, whose fawning molested her. Her devilish spirit and her unbridled, unlicensed tongue unman me. The miser's son, my virtuous cousin! she 'would rather have his friendship, than the love of any man in Christendom,' and therefore I could see she 'had no

idea of love or matrimony'—a most gentle hint that I am flung. And that puritanical little Ruth, she received my attentions all the while so demurely, and was engaged to Mr. Ralph—how she deceived her mother!—this pink of all the virtues!—I am fooled, bamboozled, deceived at every point—and nothing accursed ever happens to me, but the name of this cousin of mine comes in like the evil word—damn him.

"I'll see Helen Murray again, alone,—I'll see her and know what she means. It may be that she is provoked at my letter—'Master Henry!'—oh, that I were her master!"

With these reflections presenting themselves to his mind in a thousand different hues, Henry Beckford betook himself to the house of a frail, fair, false one, whom he flattered himself with the belief he had himself betrayed—a belief which she was at no pains to contradict—and over whom he was in the habit of tyrannizing whenever he felt in an ill humour, and dared not vent his spleen where it originated.

In a quarrel of considerable duration with this Dulcinea, in which Henry was not sparing of the most abusive epithets, on their being retorted on him, he struck the poor girl—woman though she was—repeatedly with his fist and rattan, and left her with the express injunction that she should not attend the theatre that night, and repaired to his lodgings to arrange his toilet, resolving to visit Helen Murray, and endeavour to see her alone.

Alone, a few hours after, he found Helen. She had a book in her hand, from which she did not raise her eye, until Henry had entered the room and twice said:

"Good afternoon, Miss Murray."

"Ah! Mr. Beckford! Good afternoon, sir;" and she shut the book with her finger between the leaves where she had been reading, placing the volume edgewise on her lap, and resting her hands on it. Henry, with an embarrassed air, took a seat at some distance from her, while she calmly patted her fingers against the book, and glanced over her dress and at her guard-chain and watch, as if to see that her habiliments were all properly adjusted.

"I hope you had a pleasant ride," said Henry in a slightly satirical tone.

"Delightful, most delightful, Mr. Beckford—I regretted exceedingly that your strict adherence to the truth of proverbs prevented you from accompanying us."

Henry bit his lip, and then said:

"You made me aware, Miss, that you had motives for wishing me to break the proverb so plainly, that, if you threw your bait at all as you rode out, Mr. Davidson must have caught the idea—old birds—as you love proverbs so, Miss Murray—are not to be caught by chaff."

Helen laughed. "That is very true, Master Henry, it is proverbially true, but is there anything in your experience, sir, that leads you to believe that

young ones may be caught by it? As for myself, I have arrived at that age when I can tell the chaff from the grain, but I am not old enough yet to do it at a glance; however, when I do find it is chaff, I never mistake it for grain again."

"Miss Helen," said Henry, after an internal struggle, drawing his chair close to the lady's, "let us away with this—I did not come here to battle words with you—I wish to know explicitly—after what has passed between us, I think I have a right to know—what this means."

"Means, sir! just what I have said, sir—that though I do not put myself down on the list of the aged, I have at least arrived at that age—the age of discretion I take it to be—when I am not to be caught by chaff. But away with this; Master Henry, go you to the theatre to-night?"

"Master Henry! you have resumed that phrase, Miss Murray, after having dropped it for a long time. But there is no away with this. Have you not, Miss Murray, given me encouragement?—did you not mean to give me encouragement?"

"Encouragement! in what respect?"

"In my suit."

"O! in your suit. Why, Mr. Beckford, I received your attentions as those of a gallant young gentleman who, having plenty of leisure upon his hands, was kind enough to bestow some of it upon me."

"But, Miss Helen, what when you saw that I was

serious, and confessed my attachment to you, and reiterated it?"

"O! sir, even then I thought you but practising to keep your hand in, that you might make a dead shot in some other quarter—up in Fourth street, for instance!" alluding to the street in which Miss Wraxall lived.

"But you are now convinced that I am serious?" asked Henry.

"Seriously, if I am, Mr. Beckford, I can make you no other return than I have made you—my acknowledgment of the honour you would do me, with my regrets that I must decline it."

"May I ask, Miss Helen, have I a rival who has caused this determination on your part?"

"You question me closely, Mr. Beckford, and remember I answer from courtesy, and not that I acknowledge the right of any one to question me. No, sir, my feelings are unengaged, if I know them; but you know it is said we women never know our own minds."

"May I then not hope, Miss Helen, by a continued perseverance, to merit a return for the long affection I have borne you. Reflect, Miss Murray, before you answer, do reflect. This attachment has not been the impulse of a day with me, it has been a part of my being now for many years."

"We can scarcely be said to have been acquainted so long, Mr. Beckford," interrupted Miss Murray, "one of us at least does not number many years. I

am sure, although I am the older, I should be angry with any one who imputed many years even of existence to me."

"I discover, Miss Murray," exclaimed Henry, in a tone of anger which he could not suppress, "that you are determined to make a jest of me."

"Make a jest of you! No, sir—there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and when you attempted to date the affection of one so young as yourself, by alleging that it included many years —and I all the while its object—I felt that you had taken the step."

"Well, Madam, you have brothers," exclaimed Henry, with a threatening brow, unable any longer to control his temper under the lady's taunts, "and as you are a woman, and I must not revenge in you the injuries I have received from you, what step do you think I should take next?"

"Any step you please, sir—the way to my front door, is as plain as any other—and you have stepped it often—I hope it will hereafter be, Master Henry, like the passage of the Styx, returnless."

"Do you think, Madam—I ask you, do you think I will bear this?" exclaimed Henry, starting up from his chair in a furious passion.

"Certainly, Master Henry, I think you have a spirit of endurance that can bear a much more taunting tongue than mine, and without the least restiveness, were it a *man's*. But away with all this rhodomontade, and listen to me, sir. Did you dare for a

passing moment to entertain the thought that I would dream of marrying you—you who make such a public boast of evil habits—you whose passion for the card table has already impaired your fortune—you who are given to such company that no modest woman can think of it without loathing—you who make a boast of the betrayal of a poor wretch—a woman, sir—whose greatest folly is that she loved you, and whose greatest vice is that she trusted you. Did you think that I, brought up in the strict discipline of Quaker rule, knowing these things of you, which I am informed you have been at some trouble to make public—did you think—no, sir, you never thought it. And did I not know, too, of your conduct to the Lormans—that Mrs. Lorman died of a quantity of laudanum, taken by her after a *friendly* visit from you, in which you wantonly destroyed the hope which you had been at some pains to raise—the hope that your intentions were serious towards Ruth, and that in marrying her you would lift them in the world again. Not even to have saved her family from that bitter poverty would Ruth have married you—you who, when her stepmother's attentions led you to believe that you had won Ruth, and outrivalled Ralph, at once forsook them, and did not even attend the funeral which you yourself had caused. After what I have said, you need not be assured, Mr. Beckford, that I never entertained the remotest idea of marrying you—I met you, sir, in fashionable society, which esteems you from ap-

pearance highly, and I was willing, as a belle there, to receive your attentions. I also was intimate with your mother, and could not therefore reject the courtesies of her son. I will be frank with you: the wit and the superior mind which your conversation displayed, made me often a pleased listener to you. But as for marrying," here Helen shook her head gravely, and continued, "many a gentleman mistakes for encouragement from a lady, what was only meant as a salve to his feelings. Construe, I pray you, Mr. Beckford, whatever in my conduct may have seemed as such, by such motives. And, sir, I hope we may still continue, as the world goes, friends."

"Friends, Miss Murray," exclaimed Henry, in a rage, "after such language as you have just used to me—friends!"

"Then, foes, if it so please you, Master Henry," exclaimed Helen, rising with that proud dignity which sat upon her so well, "it seems to be your fate to war upon women—foes, if it so please you, sir—suffer me to say, though, that my Quaker notions are not so strict, as to let me entertain my avowed enemy in my own house."

Henry bowed, haughtily stopped, as if to say something, and then, without speaking, left the house.

Helen threw herself upon the sofa. "That language," said she to herself, "was hardly justifiable. But how many boasts he has made of having won me at last! And in what language has he made

them? I wonder, will he pick a quarrel with my brothers? No he has not the courage, for he knows they have, and he cannot stand the consequences. Now, if they were right down sober Quakers, how valiant he would be! I startled him with Ruth's love for Ralph. How the coxcomb's comb was cut! Heigh-ho! This Mr. Davidson is certainly a marvellous proper man. Alas! but he is aged. I wish I could meet with some right down romantic fellow, like Ralph Beckford, fall in love with him, and have him at my feet. Vanity, saith the preacher, all is vanity."

CHAPTER III.

TWILIGHT was just coming on, when Henry left Helen Murray. He hurried gloomily to his room, at the hotel, and, filling himself a large glass of brandy, he drank it, and threw himself upon his bed. In many incoherent exclamations and curses, he vowed vengeance on Helen Murray; and he struck his clenched first against his brow in mortification and rage, when he reflected, that the story would get abroad, and all his boasting prove falsehoods. Again he arose and drank, and again threw himself upon the bed, with passions still more inflamed. Sometime after night had set in, and after having swallowed several other potations, which did not permit him to be entirely his own master, he rang violently for his servant, bid him brush his coat, and proceeded to the theatre.

The first objects that met Henry's eye, on his entrance, were Helen Murray and Mr. Davidson, seated together. Helen was dressed with regal display, and was in her best spirits; for while conversing in the liveliest manner, she would acknowledge, in some distant box, the salutation of a beau, with her blandest smile; or gaily comment on the passing scene, to those beside her. She sat in conscious

beauty, the admitted star of attraction to the most fashionable men of the city. Unseen, through the aperture in an opposite box door, Henry stood and watched her, until maddened with jealousy, rage, and the draughts he had taken, he had almost resolved to enter the box and seat himself beside her. Finding, when he made the attempt, that his courage failed him, he proceeded upstairs to the bar-room, to drink again. Here he met a number of his acquaintances—Stansbury, Wraxall, and others.

"Something is the matter with Beckford," said Stansbury, in a whisper to Wraxall; "he has been both drinking deep and playing deep, I expect."

Wraxall scrutinized him as he advanced towards them, and said:

"Yes, he is in for it. Beckford," he continued aloud, as Henry approached them, "where have you been all day? Is this your first appearance? That rich planter is below, what's his name?—with the Murray, breezing her in fine style. I'll swear to it, he understands the creature."

"Damn the creatures," exclaimed Henry, "come, let's drink. Are there any 'birds of paradise' upstairs?" alluding to those of the sex who there do congregate.

"Yes, a plenty of them," replied Wraxall; "and I see your lady fair among the rest."

"What," exclaimed Henry, "is she there? Come, drink—give me brandy, waiter;" and Henry took a

deep draught; and taking an arm of each of his companions, he went up into the third tier.

"Beckford," said Wraxall, as they passed up the steps, "do you intend to let that planter take the Murray?"

"He'll take her if he can get her, I suppose," said Henry; "and he may for me."

"Sour grapes, Hal! sour grapes," said Stansbury.

"I don't understand you, sir," said Henry, angrily releasing his arm from Stansbury's.

"Don't understand?" ejaculated both Wraxall and Stansbury, "ha! ha! ha! You are dull to-night, Beckford," continued Wraxall.

"What do you mean by this, gentlemen?" asked Henry, facing both alternately, as they reached the top of the steps.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Wraxall.

"Mean," said Stansbury; "Don't be provoked, Hal, accidents will happen; Brummel himself was not always successful. By gad, they do say though, that she flung you sky high—and she shows your letters to prove it."

Henry turned away his face to hide his shame and rage, and he beheld the girl of whom we spoke enter the bar-room. Glad of a harmless object to vent his rage on, and forgetful where he was, in the mad, maudlin moment, and with whom he was about quarrelling in the third tier of a theatre, Henry

grasped his rattan, and stepping up to her, said, in a menacing tone—

"Did I not tell you not to come here to-night?"

"Don't strike me," said the girl, in evident alarm; "just come here, I'll tell you—"

"Did I not order you not to come here," reiterated Henry.

"Beckford," said Stansbury, laying his hand on his shoulder, and speaking in a whisper, "don't strike her here and expose yourself; you have been drinking—let's go below."

But Henry shook him off, and bid him mind his own business. By this time a crowd, attracted by his loud voice, had gathered in the room. Unmindful of it, Henry again asked, in a tone louder than before,

"Did I not order you not to come here?"

"Henry Beckford," at last exclaimed the girl, "I am not your slave, to be ordered about by you. And now, once for all, I won't stand it. You have beat me already to-day; and now you may go your way and I will go mine."

"But you shall stand it," exclaimed Henry. And he sprang at her furiously, and struck her repeatedly over the face and shoulders.

The girl was beautiful, and the crowd instantly called out "Shame! shame!" and hissed. Regardless of them, Henry was about repeating his blows, when she felt hastily in her pocket, and the next moment, before any one could arrest her arm, she

exclaimed, "I will stand it no longer," and discharged a pistol full at the breast of Henry Beckford.

"She has shot me, Stansbury, help! she has shot me!" exclaimed Henry, as he fell back and was caught by Stansbury, who stood immediately behind him.

Amidst the confusion that instantly occurred, Stansbury, Wraxall, and some others of Henry's friends, with great difficulty bore him out of the theatre. He fainted from loss of blood, or from pain, before they could get him into a hack. He recovered a few minutes after they had placed him in it; and after looking around unconsciously, and inquiring where he was, he requested them to drive him to his lodgings at the hotel, and send for his mother and a physician.

Meanwhile, a great excitement prevailed at the theatre. Many of those above stairs hurried below, to be out of harm's way; while many of those below hurried above, to see what was the matter. Groups of young men stood in the lobbies, boxes, and bar-rooms, discussing the case.

The news soon reached the fashionables below, in the shape of a rumour that a man had attempted to beat a girl, and that she had killed him on the spot, and that there had been a general row in consequence thereof. It soon came in a more authentic shape, and at last Henry Beckford's name, with the particulars pretty much as they happened, reached

the ears of Helen Murray, through the channel of a "damn'd good-natured friend," of Henry's, who was giving himself much trouble to inform their mutual acquaintances of the fact.

"Mercy! is it possible!" exclaimed Helen, while a pang of self-reproach darted through her bosom. "Do, Mr. Davidson, be so kind as to learn for me if Mr. Beckford is much hurt. Mr. Townsend (their informant) will be my guardian until you return."

Mr. Davidson instantly complied, but returned in a few minutes, saying, all he could learn was, that Mr. Beckford had been shot, and that he had fainted as his friends were placing him in the hack, but that they had driven off with him—taken Henry to his lodgings, he supposed—and the result of an examination of the wound by a physician was not known.

"This has shocked me so much, Mr. Davidson," said Helen, "that if my carriage is at the door I will return home, and send and inquire how Mr. Beckford is. O! how it will distress his poor mother and his father."

Mr. Davidson observed, that but a moment before he had seen Miss Murray's carriage, at the door. He conducted her to it, and in a few minutes she was at home. She immediately sent a servant, first to Henry's father's, and then to his lodgings, to inquire how he was. The servant returned from the latter place, and informed her that the doctor had just examined the wound, and pronounced it a very dangerous one.

CHAPTER IV.

Luckily the ball did not enter directly the breast of Henry, but tended upwards—otherwise it would have killed him on the spot. It entered the left breast, above the heart, and passed within an inch or two of it. The patient did not suffer much pain at first, but the excited state of his system threw him into an alarming fever, during which he raved incoherently of Helen Murray—alternately imploring her regard, and imprecating her neglect—but generally speaking of her in the bitterest language. Sometimes he raved against Ralph and Ruth; and often against the girl with the vilest epithets. Stansbury was very attentive to him, and did much to relieve his mother, who watched by his bedside constantly.

The girl had been taken into custody the night of the misdeed, and was confined in jail to await her trial at the sitting of the court, if Henry should then be well enough to appear as a witness against her. Henry recovered very slowly; and, on hearing that she was in jail, though he felt deeply revengeful towards her, yet fearful of the exposure of his treatment of her, which would take place on her trial, he was extremely anxious that the affair should be hushed up. The public prints had already been filled with exaggerated accounts of the transaction, in

which his name had been introduced in no very flattering manner. During his long convalescence his mind had dwelt upon the subject, until he had become morbidly alive to the shame and degradation which he thought must attach to his character. At last, he never thought of Helen Murray, Ruth, or Ralph, but an imprecation rose to his lips; and a desire of revenge, particularly on the former, burned in his heart: for he held her the chief cause of all the evil that had befallen him.

The attorney for the commonwealth was determined to present the case to the grand jury; and Henry discovered there was no other way for him to prevent the trial than by absenting himself; for he was aware if he did not appear against the girl she could not be tried. As he grew stronger the determination was fixed in his mind not to appear against her; not, as we have said, on her account, but on his own. He therefore resolved, as the time was fast approaching when the criminal court would sit, and of course a grand jury be summoned, to quit the city. The odium which had already attached to his conduct would have induced him to do this, while the fear of the exposure of a trial, in which he was aware he would be sternly crossed-examined as a witness, and his conduct commented on by the counsel for the accused in most censurable terms, he felt was more than he could brook, if it were possible to avoid it. Added to this, all his previous recklessness and dissipation—which the world at

first were disposed to look over as much as possible, for his father's sake—were now dwelt upon, and even hinted at in the public prints in a tone of censure stronger than the apologies had been previously indulgent. Besides, he had represented the case to his father in a way so as to reflect the least possible blame on himself; and he knew well the testimony on the stand would not sustain this representation, which he himself there would be compelled to make more compatible with facts—as other witnesses would appear, whom he could not contradict without involving fearfully the question of his own veracity.

Henry's father, who was deeply wounded by the event, had made it his earnest request to the State's attorney that the matter should be dropped—and he had stated to him his son's account of the transaction: to which the attorney replied, that if the woman had acted so outrageously as Henry represented, the necessity for her punishment was increased. Henry was not a little startled when his father repeated the prosecuting attorney's remark to him; but, after a moment of embarrassment, he replied, that he could not see a woman who had stood to him in the relation of the girl punished, and sooner than she should be he would quit the city.

His father remained silent, but it was apparent he wished his son to do so; and Henry, in the course of conversation, asked him to which portion of the country he had better go. His father replied, to

the west, and that, perhaps, he might find it to his advantage permanently to settle there—saying he could give him letters of introduction to almost any portion of it—as he was himself extensively acquainted in the west and south-west.

Henry, when he had resolved on leaving the city, had an indefinable wish to wend westward, for he entertained a vague hope, by so doing, that he could be revenged in some way on Ralph and Ruth; and he was a living proof of the truth of the old maxim—"that those whom we have injured we hate."

Affecting to be entirely guided by his father's advice, he accordingly departed westward, intending to descend the Ohio and the Mississippi, and stop on his way down at Perryville.

CHAPTER V.

One of the most frequent inquirers after the Lormans, and how they liked the west, was our early acquaintance, Hearty Coil. Whenever Hearty saw Mr. Solomon Beckford, he was sure to put question upon question to him concerning the far way western country; and he had been often heard to say, after one of their talks, that if Mrs. Coil could be persuaded—now Parlot's wife was dead, and the family a kind of broke up—he would go there. To this the old miser was disposed to persuade him, for he thought, as Hearty would have to sell his little farm to do so, he might get it very cheap, and in this way remunerate himself for the carryall, which he had been compelled to mend at his own expense.

Hearty, too, had done sundry jobs of pruning trees, and doctoring horses for Mr. Murray, and when he called for payment, he frequently saw Helen, who never failed to amuse herself by a long chat with him, in which the Lormans, and the west, and what Hearty could do there, formed the principal topics.

"Do you know, Hearty," said Helen to him one day, "that I think it likely I shall go west some of these days, just to pay Ruth a visit."

"And by the living jingoes, Miss Murray," ex-

claimed Hearty, "that's just what Hearty would like to be a-doing himself. A sweet, neat lady is Miss Ruth, and I'm told by all accounts, it's a sweet, neat country, only the trees wants pruning; and I'll be sworn, there's many of their horses would be the better of skilful doctoring. Old Beckford, miser though he is, and though he loves cents more than I do dollars, is a good adviser, and he's a-thinking it's about the best thing I could do—ha, ha, ha! I tucked him in for that mourning suit after all. I got a week's good wear out of it, and never paid him the first cent."

Flattered with the expectation of being a lady in the land, and fond of novelty, and having caught the spirit of emigration from the Lormans, and their accounts of Perryville, Mrs. Coil was easily persuaded by her husband to emigrate there; for the "great west" is to many of the people of the eastern and middle states, what the United States are to the people of the "old country." And it is nothing marvellous to meet in a village, in the west, three or four families from the same neighbourhood. It is quite natural, that if one neighbour has emigrated and done well, that those whom he has left, when smitten with the love of change, perhaps, from the accounts which the emigrant has himself given, in seeking to better their condition, should locate where he had bettered his; as well from the fact, that his success seems to give them assurances of prosperity, as in the hope, that in fixing their abiding place by

some one from "home," it will make the location wear a familiar face to them. Therefore, often in our western cities, towns, villages, and even farming settlements, the *dramatis personæ* of fact are grouped together, as if placed there by the poetic arrangement of fiction.

When Hearty made up his mind to emigrate to Perryville, Mr. Solomon Beckford was much disappointed in not becoming the purchaser of Hearty's little farm at half price, with the cost for the repair of the carryall deducted, for Helen Murray's father purchased it, giving Hearty considerably more than its full value for it.

"Friends and neighbours all," said Hearty, as he stood on the steps of a country grocery in his neighbourhood, with a number of his acquaintances and neighbours around him,—"the thing's settled—Mrs. Coil give her consent long ago, and I've got everything in readiness; we are off for the great big west, now in a day or two. I will let you hear from me. I will write to Moran the keeper of the grocery, and he will give you the information. That is, I mean to say, that I will get Miss Ruth to put it down, as I am a kind of crampt about the fingers; though I writ Parlot's wife's obituary notice, I mean, that first one that the rascally printers destroyed, it was much more amplified than this other. I'll get her to put it down, but I will speak every word of it, and I'll tell her exactly what to say. It's a great country, that great big west. Jim Bunce is there, and he has a

distillery as big as the meeting house; think how the fellow is up in the world. I know it will be for the betterment of my family circle. I don't know what I shall follow: you know I can turn my hand to any thing—most any thing."

"Hearty, you must let us know all about the hunting *thar*," said a great, big, lazy-looking fellow, who stood in the group leaning on his rifle; "it's monstrous thin, no hunting at all here; it's making game to try to get game in these parts nowadays."

"Yes, Snodgrass, you may depend on me; there's plenty of game there, man; only think of the fish there must be in their big rivers—and their woods, they stretch as far as from here to where you can think, and they are full of every-thing, from a deer to a duck, and from a duck to nothing at all. You shall hear from me all," continued Hearty, theatrically waving his hand.

A few days after this conversation, Hearty, with four good horses hitched to a substantial wagon, and with Mrs. Coil, and his little family circle well packed up in it, departed for the west, intending to journey in this way to Wheeling, and then to dispose of the wagon and horses there, and descend the river.

We will not trace the journey of Hearty Coil, but precede him to Perryville, to notice the arrival of Henry Beckford there. The Lormans were surprised at seeing him. Mr. Lorman was delighted, for Ruth had never told him—not wishing to give him

unnecessary pain—of what she held the reason of her stepmother's taking the laudanum which caused her death. Her father, therefore, was still under the impression which his wife had been careful to plant in his mind, that Henry was pleased with Ruth. Amidst his tribulations and trials at his wife's death, the question had more than once entered his mind, why Henry did not make known his intentions plainly; but then he reflected, that though he might be attached to Ruth, yet there were degrees in attachment, and Henry's might not have arrived at the point of confession. Latterly, after the death of his wife, when Henry discontinued his visits, Mr. Lorman, when amid the press of his many cares, he thought on the subject, received the impression, that perhaps he had been mistaken—or that perhaps Henry had been taught to believe, in some way or other, that Ruth preferred Ralph to himself, and had therefore made a silent withdrawal, or waited other opportunities of wooing her. To this latter conclusion, his mind speedily came, on the arrival of Henry at Perryville, for Mr. Lorman could not perceive what earthly motive had brought him there, but attachment to Ruth. Ruth, on the contrary, felt a foreboding of ill, while she wondered that Helen Murray, from whom she had not received a letter for some time, had not written to her, and said something of Henry. The news of Henry's adventures at the theatre had not yet reached Perryville. Helen Murray had written to Ruth but once after the arrival

of Mr. Davidson, in her city, and then she wrote at length, and spoke in raptures of Mr. Davidson. Helen had sat down since several times, to write Ruth concerning Henry's adventures, but she was taken off by some one calling; and as Hearty Coil had, when she last saw him, informed her he would positively start for Perryville the ensuing week; she concluded to wait, and write by him, as it was her intention to make him the bearer of several valuable presents to Ruth.

"And so, Mr. Beckford, you have brought me no letter from Helen?" exclaimed Ruth, in a tone of deep disappointment.

"Ay, I did not mention that I had not seen her for some time before I left. The truth is, that an unfortunate creature in the theatre, who was insane from intoxication, alas! a woman, too, gave me, as I stood in the crowd, amidst many others, so severe a wound from a pistol, that I have been dangerously ill. Did not Miss Murray mention it in any of her letters to you, Miss Ruth?"

"No, she did not, sir," replied Ruth, much surprised.

"Well, I had supposed that ere this, you had received awful accounts of my mishaps, construed into misdeeds. The wildest and most exaggerated stories were flying over town concerning it. And, as Miss Murray, you know, is given to a little severity, I supposed, long before this, she had cooked up for your edification, no very flattering account to myself, of

my adventures. I lay very long ill, and when I recovered, not wishing the poor wretch to be sent to the penitentiary on my account, I absented myself to prevent appearing, which I must have done, had I remained, and in that event, she would have inevitably been convicted. Having resolved on absence, I knew no place where I could be relieved of its tedium, better than this place *now*."

A smile broke over Mr. Lorman's countenance, and after musing a moment, he apologized to Henry on the score of business, and left the room. Henry having heard from Helen of the relation existing between Ralph and Ruth, was extremely desirous to discover if it was a fact, but he knew not well how to introduce the subject, as he also had been made aware, from the same source, that Ruth attributed the suicidal death of her stepmother, to his conduct. He hoped Ruth would mention his cousin, and give him an opportunity of "pumping" her, but he could not but perceive that she evidently avoided naming Ralph, and that her conduct towards himself, was constrained and embarrassed. He saw plainly a sense of politeness, and not of pleasure, led her to make an effort to entertain him, and after the most disagreeable tête-à-tête he had ever held, with the exception of some lately with Helen; he arose and left, with more bitter feelings, if possible, against Ruth and his cousin, than he had ever yet entertained.

CHAPTER VI.

Introduced by Ruth to the Benningtons, Henry soon became intimate with them. He created quite a stir in the town, and appeared willing, nay, solicitous of extending his acquaintance in it. Dr. Cake and Miss Judson were soon also numbered among his familiars, and those who had known Henry in other scenes, would have wondered by what kind of alchymy he took to those worthies—perhaps it was for want of excitement, and for something to amuse him. After William Bennington's explanation of the affair of Dr. Cake's letter to Miss Judson, that lady had expressed herself sorry of the mistake under which she had acted, and hoped that Mr. Bennington would say so to Dr. Cake. On hearing this, and burning for a triumph over Wickelmous, who had circulated through Perryville that the Judson family had, in extremity, when himself was away, sent for Cake, and discarded him almost instantly for want of skill, and moved, maybe, by other motives, in which the virtues and person of the amiable Elizabeth were more concerned, the Doctor immediately concluded a truce with her, and an intercourse was soon established between them of the most amicable nature. In truth, having once been

slightly feverish since the affair of the letter, Miss Judson had sent for Doctor Cake, and he had been so fortunate as to administer a cooling medicine to her, which produced an almost instantaneous happy effect. None of the Judson household had been indisposed since that time, and it was shrewdly suspected by the Perryville gossips, that if any should be thereafter, Doctor Wickelmous would not be the physician called in. Dr. Cake, though he was prudent enough not to display it, bore no good-will to the Lormans; perhaps from the impression that there might have been some trickery in the matter of the letter on Ruth's part, or from the natural feeling that we like not those who even innocently have been the cause of casting ridicule upon us. It certainly could not have been, in the Doctor's case, a proof of the maxim that love rejected turns to hate. Be that as it may, the result was the same, and we will not stop to inquire whether it was sympathy or not, but merely mention the fact, that Dr. Cake's dislike of the Lormans was largely shared by Miss Elizabeth Judson. These two were the only ones in Perryville who did not bear the Lormans the kindliest feelings, and they were restrained by their popularity, from saying aught against them.

Very soon Henry's visits grew less frequent to Lorman's, and in proportion as they decreased there, they increased at Mr. Bennington's. He and William Bennington became inseparables. Miss Bennington staid more at home, not that she was less

cordial with Ruth when they met, but Miss Catharine's household duties appeared to be more urgent. William Bennington still visited Ruth as often as formerly, but oftener went unaccompanied by his sister, and his attentions were evidently more marked.

Thus weeks wore away, and Henry's popularity was increasing in the town of Perryville. Mr. Lorman, in the meantime, had gone down the river with his brother, the Captain, in some speculation or other, and Ruth was consequently much confined to the house, there being nobody about it but herself, to take charge of the family and direct the servants. For the two last weeks she had not been to Perryville, not even to attend the church on Sunday. She wondered why for the last four or five days she had not seen Miss Bennington or her brother, but she reflected that the autumnal rains had set in, which might have prevented their visits; in fact, Miss Bennington had so sent her word.

Sometimes, when Ruth was sitting alone with William Bennington, it would occur to her there might be something serious in his attentions, but not having anything like even a just estimate of her own attractions, she would discharge such a passing thought from her bosom, with a self-reproof for having had it. And she blushed when she remembered her own vanity, and reflected that the rains had kept William Bennington away. Ruth was not the least of a coquette, and it would have given her real pain to think she must inflict it on another. Her

affections were wholly and solely given to Ralph. Absence had, if possible, increased their intensity, and the greatest pleasure she had in the world was in reading Ralph's letters, and in looking over the many little tokens of his regard which he had given her. She slept with his letters under her pillow, and the last thing at night, just before she commended her spirit to the Father of all mercies, and the first thing in the morning, after she had expressed her thankfulness that she was permitted to see another day, was to read and re-read them.

Ralph was still at college; he had even spent his first vacation there, and as the life he lead was a monotonous one, his letters to Ruth contained few incidents, but they breathed and burned with deep, strong and devoted expressions of affection. They might be said to be a history of the heart's emotions under the tenderest passion. By a finesse, which lovers at least will pardon, Ralph's letters to Ruth came enclosed in those of Helen Murray, to whom Ralph sent them, for knowing that Mr. Lorman did not like him after what his father had said to that gentleman of him, he was fearful to arouse against himself the father's influence over the daughter's mind. To this arrangement Ruth, not without many compunctions of filial duty, consented, and her letters were conveyed to Ralph through the same channel. This prevented the lovers from hearing from each other as often as under a direct communication they would have done, but they consoled

themselves by believing that to them the long intervals that elapsed in their correspondence, was in some measure made up by its interrupted security. Ruth repeatedly in her letters to Ralph expressed the wish that their communications might be direct, as she thought their present mode of interchanging their sentiments involved duplicity, but she was always overruled by Ralph, who implored her, by the love between them, to write to him through the same channel as formerly. He said, that not only might Miss Murray feel offended if her friendly aid, after being resorted to so long, was rejected, but that he feared the prejudices of her father against himself might give her uneasiness, and that her father would, in all probability, write to his father on the subject. This would be very much to his injury, as his father would not only be harsh to him on that account, but might be induced to stop what little supplies he might otherwise be disposed to send him, and also combine with her father to prevent their marriage. These arguments prevailed with Ruth.

Not having been to church for the last two weeks, nor even into town, as we have said, Ruth, on the coming Sabbath, resolved to be present at divine worship. Attended by a servant girl, she took her way to church, and entered it just as the preacher was ascending the sacred desk. When the service was over, as Ruth passed out of the front door, it occurred to her that many of the congregation gazed at her very hard. Miss Judson, who used to be the

very first to greet her, when they met, with gross compliments, brushed directly by her so rudely as almost to push her from the path. Then turning, Miss Elizabeth looked Ruth full in the face—tossed off her head with a disdainful air—but without deigning otherwise to notice her. While Ruth was wondering upon this conduct, Dr. Cake passed by her also without the least recognition. On turning round, Ruth beheld Henry looking at her with so evil an eye that it made her start. At this moment little Billy came up to his sister, sobbing, with his Sunday clothes all torn, and his face and hands all covered with blood.

"Billy! Billy! what has happened to you!" said Ruth, "you have been a bad boy! Why did you not wait and come to church with me?"

"'Cause I did wait," said Billy. "I was playing by the barn when you come away."

"What's the matter with you, Billy? What have you been doing?"

"Why," said Billy, through his tears, "that Sam Ferret that stays in Mr. Judson's store, said that you were bad before you left home, and that people here wouldn't come to see you. And I jumped on him and beat him, though he is a bigger boy 'an me. Yes," continued little Billy, facing Henry, and shaking his little fist at him, "and when I'm a man I'll beat you, too; for you are always bringing harm on sister Ruth: and Jim Ferret says you told Miss Judson this, and it's a story."

Henry looked as if he wished the earth would open and swallow him.

A deep sense that she had been calumniated and injured so pressed upon Ruth that she could scarcely control her emotions. Her father and uncle were both away, and she felt like one forlorn. At this moment, Miss Bennington and her brother, who had seen and heard all that passed, amidst many others, for there was quite a crowd about the church, advanced and greeted her with their accustomed kindness. Unable any longer to control her feelings, Ruth took the proffered hand of each and burst into tears.

A number of the young Kentuckians around cast ominous glances at Henry, which might speedily have turned to something more than frowns, had not, at this very instant, our friend of other scenes, Hearty Coil, made his appearance, wet as a river god, and bearing in his arms a child, wet as himself, and nearly frightened to death.

Hearty, with his "family circle," had just arrived at Perryville. As the steamer which bore them rounded to at the landing, a little boy, the son of one of the most respectable citizens of Perryville, Mr. Moore, in attempting to get upon the boat ahead of his companions, and while there was a considerable space between it and the wharf, fell overboard. At the moment the child fell in, the hands bearing the lines leaped on shore and hauled the boat close to it, so that the person of the child, when it arose

to the surface, was hidden from the view, so that there was great fear that he would be drowned. There was evidently much risk to any one, under the circumstances, who might attempt to save it. Hearty was standing on the guards, an eager gazer at Perryville, when the child fell in. Calling out there was a child overboard, and to throw him a rope, Hearty leaped in to the rescue. He disappeared under the side of the boat, between it and the shore; and, after a fearful suspense, of such duration that the crowd thought that both were lost, Hearty appeared, like Cassius from the Tiber, bearing the fainting child in his arms. A dozen hands were outstretched to help him to the shore, and a loud shout welcomed him. Cassius was not prouder of his burden that was Coil of his. Many of the bystanders knew the boy, and exclaimed it was Mr. Moore's.

"Then, by the Powers," said Hearty, "show me the way, till I take him to his bereaved parents,—no, by Jingoes, they're not bereaved yet, for the little fellow is alive and kicking."

"This way, this way," exclaimed many of the crowd, and several of them led the way to Mr. Moore's house, which was a few doors beyond the church. The rest of the crowd followed after Hearty, while Mrs. Coil and the family circle brought up the rear. The mother of the child was just leaving the church; and the little fellow, who

had entirely recovered his senses ere they reached it, exclaimed, on beholding her,

"O! there's my mother! there's my mother!—take me to her."

The mother, hearing the accents of her child and seeing his condition, sprang towards him, and Hearty placed him in her arms.

"Are you hearty, Madam?" said Coil. "The little fellow's wet, Madam, but that's all."

A few words served to explain the event, to the agitated parent, and she clasped her child to her bosom, and overwhelmed his preserver with thanks.

As Coil looked round on the crowd, he beheld Ruth.

"By the Powers," he exclaimed, "if this a'n't Miss Ruth!" and then making his best bow, he continued, "and are you hearty?—O, but I am glad to see you."

Ruth shook Hearty cordially by the hand, and welcomed his wife and family, who, by this time, had pushed their way through the throng that were gazing on and wondering. When Henry saw Hearty he stepped aside, but not before the quick eye of the latter discovered him.

"Ah, by the Powers!" exclaimed Hearty, "there's Mister Henry, 'Master Henry,' as Miss Murray—a'n't she a witty lady and beautiful—calls him. Who the devil expected to see him here?"

Hearty was so excited at seeing Ruth, and with the rescue of the child, that he talked on, though

among strangers, with even more than his usual want of caution, notwithstanding Ruth, who felt very awkwardly, tried to check him by telling him that he must come to see her, and giving him the direction.

"Did you bring me no letters?" she asked.

"To be sure I did," replied he; "bless your soul and body, to be sure I did, Miss Ruth. You'll see the news there, all about this Mr. Beckford too. He beat a poor girl in the theatre, by the Powers—she was once a respectable woman, and it's his fault if she is not respectable now—he beat her, I tell you, in the theatre, and she just out pistol and shot him. He's skulking about here, I suppose, for some evil; you know he liked to have killed me one day, when I was on my own side of the road—and he has never paid for the carryall from that day to this; old Miser Beckford nearly pestered me to death about it. You see it's all truth what I tell you. I've got it in black and white in the newspapers, and Miss Murray has writ whole letters of the transaction to you. I knew the poor girl well when she was respectable," continued Hearty, glancing quickly at Mrs. Coil, for she was given to jealousy, and thought Hearty irresistible with the sex.

It was in vain Ruth tried to stop Hearty; for he was so fond of hearing himself talk, and of addressing his fellow-citizens, as he had been a candidate for office, that when he once got a-going he considered any question put to him apart from the main

matter, as a stump speaker would an interruption from the crowd—an artifice to snap the thread of his discourse. He therefore went on and spoke out his speech, his rescue of the child having added no small degree to his self-consequence among strangers, as he felt it made him a marked man; and the sight of Henry Beckford had raised his bile—for Hearty never could forgive him the awful cast he got from the carryall by his wilful transgression of the law, together with the rent in his inexpressibles, which he never thought of without shame.

"Yes," said Hearty, "what I tell you is a known and printed fact; and, by the Powers, if he had fell into the water—being he is so fond of proverbs, as Miss Murray says,—and I had been by, I would ha' left him to the proverb to save him."

Ruth had, while Hearty continued speaking with his eye cast rather on Henry than herself, partly got through the crowd. Miss Bennington and her brother, who had recovered somewhat from the bewilderment of the scene, pressed Ruth to go home and dine with them; but she was obliged to decline in consequence of there being no one but the servants with the children.

"Then allow me to be your escort," said William, and Ruth, anxious to escape from the crowd, took his arm and passed on, telling Hearty and his wife they must come as soon as possible and see her, and that as soon as she got home, she would send a

black boy down to the boat to show them the way, and help them with their baggage.

William and Ruth walked on in silence for some distance, when William asked—

"Miss Ruth, then it was no joke what you told me to tell Dr. Cake?"

"What I told you to tell Dr. Cake!" said Ruth, surprised.

"Yes, you remember, when I took the letter he addressed to you, I told you I would say to him you were engaged?"

Ruth blushed, "O! yes, I remember," she said.

"Is it true?" said William in a subdued voice. "Excuse me, it is not idle curiosity, Miss Lorman. If it is a fact, I would know it, for it will prevent me from involving my feelings hopelessly."

"Mr. Bennington," said Ruth, looking up into William's face confidingly, but blushing deeply, "I am most grateful for what you have said, most grateful! doubly so from what has transpired to-day, for I now feel if I have enemies here, I have friends also. But I believe it is true."

William, after a few moments' silence, in which he seemed to be struggling with his feelings, asked Ruth who Hearty was, and, to turn the conversation, she gave him a long account of that worthy.

CHAPTER VII.

"BROTHER," said Miss Bennington to her brother the next morning, entering the parlour with much embarrassment, and taking a seat by his side, "what do you think of Mr. Beckford?"

"Sister, what do you think of him?" replied her brother, reiterating her question.

"Why I was disposed to like him very much, he has been very attentive to me, you know; and construing his manner and language, as a country girl like myself would construe it, I should say that he had made love to me—addressed me. But what do you think of him, brother? Is he the circulator of these slanders against Ruth Lorman? I don't believe one word of them. If I thought he would slander a woman in such a way, and such a woman, I would cast him off, though he were bound to me by my heart-strings."

"Sister, I told him, on our first acquaintance, how much I liked Miss Ruth, and of course he would be cautious in speaking against her to me. But I have heard him darkly hint against her in, I thought, an ungentlemanly manner—you observe these few days we have not been so intimate, and he has plainly

told me that Miss Ruth was engaged to a cousin of his, and that his cousin would rue the bargain."

"Do you think, brother, there ever was an attachment existing between Ruth and Mr. Beckford? her father once hinted to me that he thought Mr. Beckford had come out here to court her. If he had, there has been a misunderstanding between them, for Mr. Beckford scarcely ever now goes to see Ruth, and—"

"It may be," interrupted her brother, "that his cousin has cut him out—and hence the unfrequency of his visits and his dislike of Ruth. I can hardly believe he is the author of these slanders, and yet I know not who could have originated them but himself. You overheard what Billy said was the cause of his fight with Judson's boy, and also what that man said, who saved the child?"

"I did; but, brother, I cannot believe it."

"Well, sister, one brought up a gentleman, as Mr. Beckford has been, with so respectable and distinguished a father, would hardly do so villanous a thing. I have it! Miss Ruth, it appears, from what that man said, has received letters from her friend of whom she talks so much, giving an account of some discreditable transactions in which Mr. Beckford has been engaged; it even appears it has got into the public prints, and that the papers containing the account have been sent to Miss Ruth. Go see her, and if it is neccessary, tell her why you are interested, and as your friend—though she might not feel

disposed to gratify a mere curiosity, if you asked on that score—yet upon the other, I have no doubt she will follow the golden rule with you."

Miss Bennington took her brother's advice, called on Ruth, and told her frankly why she wished to know Henry's character. Ruth hesitated at first from saying anything against Henry Beckford; but when she reflected, that Miss Bennington's affections would probably be jeopardized by her silence, she unreservedly told her all she herself knew of Henry; showed her Helen Murray's letters which related to him, and the newspapers which contained an account of the events in the theatre, with comments upon Henry's conduct and character.

That afternoon, Henry called on Miss Bennington, and she begged leave to decline the further honour of his visits: thus, in trying to blast the good character of another—a woman, too, who never injured him, his own bad character was brought to light.

On the evening of this very day, Miss Elizabeth Judson, arrayed in her most bewitching habiliments, and with her best cup of tea, in her brother's best china, in her best room, was entertaining Doctor Cake; who exhibited his Sunday's depth of collar, and breadth of frill. Washington stood behind Miss Elizabeth's chair, with his livery jacket on and his "knotted and combined locks," combed out as much as their woolly nature would allow.

Mr. Judson had just left the table for his store; for

in the fall he kept open at night. He gave a dry cough as he shut the door, and looked at his sister and the Doctor, with a penetrating eye.

Left together, Miss Judson gently dallied with her spoon; while the doctor caught a glance of himself in a glass opposite, and sagaciously said:

"I say, indeed, Miss Judson, as you truly said before supper, this is a very uncertain world."

Miss Judson simpered as she replied: "Indeed, Doctor Cake, I never was thought censorious, nor would I be for the world—it is unbecoming a lady; but there are some things, particularly where our own sex are concerned, which the gentlest heart must frown on—Wash-ing-ton, hand me Doctor Cake's cup—do, Doctor, take another cup—you will think nothing of my brother's leaving the table, in his French-leave way—he is so submersed in business—custom presses so upon him, tha—"

"Oh! I beg—I say, Miss Judson—I beg you will make no apologies—I understand it perfectly—I have often, I say, reflected, that I myself might be thought not the best bred man in the world, because sometimes, even when with my friends, I am compelled to leave; some case, I say—some patient occurring to me, who requires my immediate attention. A heart open to the claims of humanity, Miss Judson, I say, can never be closed to such considerations. Yes, another cup, if you please, Miss; indeed, you make such excellent tea, that you tempt me excessively; I say, it is not every body, Miss

Judson, that can make good tea—one must be naturally a chemist, that makes good tea."

"I forgot, Doctor," said the lady; "do you like much sweetening—much sugar and milk—much cream?"

"If you please, Miss Judson, I believe I have a sweet tooth in my head. I declare to you—I say, tea is very reviving; it is a gentle, and the genteelest stimulant; and, in my judgment, I say, much better than the feverish excitement of alcohol. But, alas! such tea as this, Miss Judson, suffer me to say, I say, is a rarity, indeed. Have you any particular way of making your tea? If you have, I should like to learn it, and give it to my landlady."

"Why, perhaps I have rather a particular way, Doctor, that is, I may say, I am particular. I make the water first boiling hot; I then scald the tea-kettle with it well; but not to let it stay in any very long time. Then I throw the water all out, and instantly put in the quantity of tea I mean to use; on that I pour the water, boiling hot, but not much of it—not so much as most folks. And after it has drawn awhile, I pour in a quantity more of boiling water—and the tea is made."

"An excellent mode, I say, Miss Judson; my knowledge of chemistry instantly suggests to me an excellent mode. You are aware of the fact, that the used tea leaves are, I say, a capital article to throw over your carpet previous to sweeping it; they are a great cleanser."

"Oh! yes, I have tried it often, and on this very carpet, Doctor."

"I suspected as much, I say, I assure you, Miss Judson; and I rejoice, I say, that you are setting a good example, in our town, as to taste in furniture."

"Yes, Doctor," said Miss Judson, with dignity, "and I hope you will attribute to me a taste in other things; that, I mean, of setting a good example as to who we shall, and who we shan't admit into good society in Perryville."

"I say, Miss Judson, do me the honour to believe that I gave you full credit; I knew, I say, that this Miss Perfection would be cut dead by the good society in Perryville. Yesterday, when we were speaking of this report before we went to church—and I got it as direct as you did, I suspect—you may remember, I say, that I told you the Bennington's had given her up. I say, you know I said, that when I asked him about them on Saturday last in a knowing way, he took the hint, I say, and there being several bystanders by, and as he did not like to speak out, knowing I could take a hint too, he just said that the rain had prevented him for several days from visiting Miss Lorman. I guess, I say, Miss Judson, she will find that these rains will last for some time, and that it never rains, but, I say, it pours—ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" gently echoed Miss Judson, "I declare, Doctor Cake, you are too severe. Yes, the Bennington's could stand it no longer—I told Miss

Bennington of it on Saturday. Her brother had told me they had not been there, on account of the rain; and I didn't see her speak to my lady in church yesterday, did you?"

"Oh no, Miss Judson, I say, oh no; she came out of the church on Sunday, and nobody spoke to her; you passed her right by, I say, without speaking, and I followed immediately after you, and followed suit, and joined you. You tripped along so lightly and so quickly that, I say, I declare, Miss Judson, I had hard work to overtake you."

"Yes, I always was accounted a good walker," replied Miss Elizabeth, complacently bowing to the doctor, "but isn't it wonderful, that after she kept herself locked up at home for two weeks after this exposure, that she should have had the impudence to brazen it out, and to look so modest doing it. Only to think of it, she had to leave home on account of her bad conduct, and she comes out here, and sets up for a pattern of goodness; gracious, what an abominable abandoned world. She, truly, Doctor Cake, shrunk with shame, when I gave her a look as I passed her yesterday. Have you heard anything about her to-day, Doctor Cake?"

"No, I say, I have not, Miss Judson; I have been all day from town, in the country, I say, Miss Judson, on professional business. Farmer Cobb's wife, I say, Mr. Cobb's lady was in a delicate way"—here Miss Judson inclined her head over the teapot, and blushed a blush—"and I had," continued the

Doctor, "to give her every moment of my attention. I say, Miss Judson, it was a very difficult case, a dangerous one."

"I hope she is better," said Miss Judson.

"She is as well as can be expected. I say, Miss Judson, she has presented the farmer—Mrs. Cobb, I say, has presented her husband with three bouncing boys, I say, and, I say, she is as well as can be expected."

"Gracious," ejaculated Miss Judson. "Washington remove the tea things. Doctor Cake, do take a seat on the sofa."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. Bongarden, the wife of the postmaster of Perryville, was the most intimate gossip of Miss Judson; and, as Miss Elizabeth had not seen her since Sunday, which seemed quite a long time, she forthwith, after breakfast the next morning, repaired to her house. The mail of Perryville not being very large, the post-office establishment was on a scale accordingly. Mr. Bongarden kept what is called a country store—consisting of a small assortment of almost every kind of goods. A couple of shelves in it comprised the post-office. In a little room behind the shop, that commanded a view of it, Mrs. Bongarden was in the habit of locating herself. There she could overhear all the news and rumours of news of every sort discussed by the boisterous politicians and wise men of the place—among whom her husband was a leading character, and as fond of the current slanders and wonders as herself. His memory and imagination, however, comprised a wider range than his rib's—as not only politics in general, but the secrets of the white house in particular, occupied his attention, as much, or more, than all Perryville together. Yet Perryville was not excluded entirely from his mind's eye, but occupied a place in it like a sunny spot in a large

landscape. This worthy often stood beside his front door (if he had stood in it, it would have been to the entire exclusion of customers—his frame was of such expansion,) with the *idlest* and *wisest* of his townsmen about him—one of these phrases, strange as it may appear, often includes the other—for while the industrious have enough to do to attend to their own business, the idle turn philanthropists—immediately have a great increase of wisdom—see where things go wrong when nobody else sees it—and devote themselves to the public. While Mr. Bongarden, then, was engaged with this portion of the Perryvillians, beside his store door, his good lady would be often employed with their similars, of her sex, in the little room aforesaid. Many were the marvels heard and told there. Thus, Miss Judson, though she had been but a short time in Perryville —enlightened if not honoured by the acquaintance of Mrs. Bongarden—became advised of every body's business, character and conduct in the place. Being childless, Mrs. Bongarden seemed still to preserve the habitudes and feelings of the unmarried of her sex of her own or Miss Judson's age; for, if there was a young girl, particularly if she was handsome, guilty of displaying the least of the budding proportions of her bust, or of romping the least with the young men, or of glancing over on the men's side at meeting, the prophecies of this lady of the end the damsel would come to were awful to hear.

The friendship between these two ladies was of

so unreserved a character that one, not knowing its strength, might suppose sometimes, did one overhear them, that there was a little female malice in the manner in which each would communicate to the other certain hearsays and insinuations about her—alleging it was quite public.

Mr. Bongarden had obtained his office through the influence of Mr. Bennington, and he looked up to him as his chief prop and support: therefore, whatever the Benningtons did the Bongardens upheld; and, if they could get any inklings of what they intended to do, they were sure to start upon the anticipated track in full cry.

When the slanders against Ruth were first circulated in Perryville, Mrs. Bongarden, knowing Ruth's intimacy with the Benningtons, stoutly maintained her cause; but when she came to learn, from Miss Judson, on Saturday, that Miss Bennington had not visited Ruth for some time—Miss Judson alleging that she was told so by William Bennington, as also, she affirmed, was Dr. Cake—the postmistress took the other tack. In her anxiety to show that what was said against Ruth was true (so foul a slander that we will not repeat it—nor is it necessary,) she let Miss Judson into the result of certain prying inspections of the mail bag, by which Mrs. Bongarden asserted she could corroborate the opinions of the Benningtons.

On Sunday, Mrs. Bongarden had repaired to church; and when, to her surprise, after an absence

of two weeks, Ruth made her appearance there, the postmistress thought she read shame and guilt in her face!

Mrs. Bongarden could scarcely keep her indignant eye from Ruth during the service; but when the church was out, and she saw what transpired at the door with Billy, and the friendliness of the Benningtons to Ruth, her mind underwent a sudden change, and she felt somewhat angered with her good friend Miss Judson, for misrepresenting the opinion of the Benningtons to her. As Mrs. Bongarden had not seen Miss Judson since church time on Sunday, she believed that Miss Elizabeth was aware of the fight between Billy and her brother's boy, of the cause of it, and of the conduct of the Benningtons. Mrs. Bongarden knew Miss Judson was at church, and she fancied Miss Elizabeth had overheard and seen what had there transpired. She concluded that as Miss Judson was one of the first to circulate the slander, she was not much disposed to appear. The feelings of Mrs. Bongarden towards her friend Miss Judson, proved one of the maxims of Rochefoucault, which says, "that there is something in the adversity of our best friends which does not displease us."

Dropping her veil before she reached the knot of talkers at Mrs. Bongarden's front door, and tripping by them with a short, noiseless, and rather hurried step, as if she would escape observation, Miss Judson passed through the shop and entered the room

where sat Mrs. Bongarden, who eyed her quickly and keenly for a moment, but when she met her eye, the postmistress said, with great softness,

"O! Miss Elizabeth, do take a seat."

"Mrs. Bongarden," exclaimed Miss Judson, throwing back her veil and seating herself, "it seems an age since I have seen you. Do tell us all the news —I was not out yesterday at all; I haven't been out since church on Sunday morning; I haven't seen a soul but Dr. Cake—he took tea with us last night; I was prejudiced at first against the Doctor in the foolish matter of that letter that made such a talk— I wish every body would mind their own business— and gave the mean tattlers of this town such sport; but now I have got to like the Doctor very much. Mr. Beckford agrees with me exactly about the Doctor."

"So do I," replied Mrs. Bongarden; "but the Doctor, though, is a very odd man—how wide he wears his pantaloons, when every body who cares about dress at all—I mean these young fry—wear their's tight."

"I know it, my dear Mrs. Bongarden; but don't you like the wide pantaloons? how much more genteel. I declare, those tight things shock me—I never know where to look when I see a man with them on."

Mrs. Bongarden laughed. "You don't remember the time when they wore buckskins?"

"O! no, indeed; but I've heard my grandmother speak of them."

"I don't say that I remember them either; but if you had seen that stranger that arrived yesterday you would have seen them."

"A stranger yesterday! Who is he?"

"Didn't you see him at church?" inquired Mrs. Bongarden, eyeing Miss Judson sharply.

"No, my dear Mrs. Bongarden; I left church immediately service was over. Doctor Cake joined me; and as we crossed the street below I heard him say the people still seemed to stay about. Was it about this stranger?"

"He is from the same place that Miss Lorman is," said Mrs. Bongarden.

"Ah, is he!" exclaimed Miss Judson, her eye flashing with satisfaction; "then we shall have everything corroborated. She'll—Miss Prue 'll have to quit Perryville. For my part, I can say that I never could abide her on the face of the earth. I am glad to know, too, that the good society of the place set their faces against her."

Mrs. Bongarden gave a quick cough, and then said, "Well, when I come to think of it, I believe it all downright slander."

"Downright slander! gracious, how you talk, my dear Mrs. Bongarden. It's downright truth—you had no doubt of it on Saturday."

"But I come to think of it—"

"Come to think of it!" exclaimed Miss Judson, in somewhat of a heat, for she held that the condescension necessary to the maintenance of their acquaintance came from herself, a point which Mrs. Bongarden would not have been disposed at all to acknowledge; "come to think of it! Why, I tell you —in confidence between us two—that Mr. Beckford hinted plainly the whole affair to me. Shameful, shameful was her conduct, and the Benningtons have given her up long ago."

"As to the Bennington's giving her up or no, that don't concern me, Miss Judson; this is a free country, and I thank Providence, that I do what I choose. But I can tell you the Benningtons haven't give her up."

"But I tell you they have," exclaimed Miss Judson, "I can tell you they have. What did I tell you concerning what William Bennington said to me? and didn't he say the same and more to Doctor Cake?"

"Tell me this," said Mrs. Bongarden, bridling up; "do you know who whipped your boy, Jim, on Sunday?"

"Yes, he was playing on Sunday out on the Common. I give it to him, myself, for the sabbath-breaking—a severe chastisement—and his mother came right straight the next day, and took him away. That's what I hate your slave states for—the apprentices where I came from, get punished as the niggers do here, and they do twice as much work. As I was

saying, he was playing out on the common with the boys, and he got into a fight with one of them about his ball. I made him tell me everything that happened. I was abused by his mother, as if I had been a drab in the streets. That's the way Jim got whipped."

"That's not the way Jim got whipped, Miss Judson; he threw up to Miss Ruth's brother what has been said against her—to that little boy. Jim said he heard you say it."

"Me say it!" exclaimed Miss Judson, in evident alarm.

"Yes, you say it, Miss Judson," reiterated Mrs. Bongarden, her tone growing firmer, as the other quailed, "you say it, and little Lorman beat him for it. Why, my dear Miss Judson, did you not know," continued Mrs. Bongarden, in a tone of incredulous surprise, "that little Lorman told his sister every word that your Jim said—told it at the church door—and how he had whipped Jim—and how Jim said that he heard you say it."

"Mrs. Bongarden!" exclaimed Miss Judson, alarmed, but assuming dignity, "I cannot suffer you to make sport of me."

"Make sport of you, indeed, I make no sport of you. It's heaven's own truth. And Miss Ruth—poor thing, was deeply hurt—and just then the Benningtons—William and his sister—I saw them myself—spoke to her so kindly, that it touched her, so that she bursted into tears. And that very stranger in the

buckskins, that saved Mrs. Moore's child's life, was here this very morning, to inquire for letters, and I inquired of him about Miss Ruth, and he said that she was one of the very first ladies in the land where she came from—that her father owned a great estate, and lent money to his friends—got cheated and lost it! Poor thing, I pity her."

"Poor thing, you pity her," echoed Miss Judson, unable to control her temper, when she remembered how completely Mrs. Bongarden had agreed with her on Saturday, "I pity you, Mrs. Bongarden."

"Pity me," retorted Mrs. Bongarden, "do keep your pity, Miss Judson, till I ask for it; charity begins at home. Yes, I pitied her, and I went up myself and shook hands with her, and told her she shouldn't mind such filthy slanders."

"Filthy slanders! do you mean that for me, Mrs. Bongarden?"

"If the cap fits you, you may wear it, Miss Judson," replied Mrs. Bongarden, with a toss of the head. "And you had better not try it on."

"Better not try it on!" exclaimed Miss Judson, rising from her chair, and advancing towards her particular friend; "what did you say to me last Saturday, in this very room, about that woman."

"That woman," replied Mrs. Bongarden, "why I said that old Shrew's daughter—the crier—would come to shame, and I say so still—'that woman!'—Miss Lorman is a lady, and I expect it will be proved

in a court of justice yet, when some persons will suffer."

"Proved in a court of justice, yet," ejaculated Miss Judson, in increased alarm, but determined to hold her own, "do you mean me, Mrs. Bongarden? I can tell you, Madam, *you* are the person who will suffer. What did you tell me about the letters you peeped into?" Here it was Mrs. Bongarden's turn to be frightened, which Miss Judson perceived, and took advantage of, continuing, "yes, the letters you peeped into, opened to peep into. It's a hanging matter, or, at least, it's penitentiary. Didn't you tell me that letters came to Ruth Lorman in an envylope—in a man's hand?—and didn't you say that the envylopes were from a woman, who wrote as if she was no better than she should be—that it was full of make game, and light conversation?—didn't you, I say, tell me so, last Saturday, in this very room?"

Mrs. Bongarden knew the assertion of Miss Judson to be a fact, but she felt, nevertheless, strongly disposed to "deny the corn." After a moment's reflection, it occurred to her, that at the time there was no one by but Miss Judson, and as the opening of the letter was an offence against the law, which would not only subject herself and husband to loss of place and character, but to punishment, she determined flatly to deny it.

"Woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Bongarden, jumping up from her chair, and shaking her clenched hand fearfully near Miss Judson's face, "I allow no per-

son to use no such language to me; it's an abominable lie; and I'll have you up for slander in no time."

Mr. Bongarden, hearing the voice of his wife in its highest tones, and in such language, quickly entered the store, followed most unceremoniously by the parties with whom he had been conversing. Miss Judson, in a rage at the language used by Mrs. Bongarden, reiterated the charge circumstantially before Mr. Bongarden, and his company, and then flung herself out of the shop in a most towering passion.

The whole of Perryville was astir for several days, with the war waged between these belligerants of the softer sex. Each sallied out immediately after the quarrel, to get the advantage of telling her story first, and thereby making a favourable impression on her own side. Twice they met in the progress of that day's peregrinations, at the houses of mutual acquaintances; the first time in sullen silence, when each nearly staid the day in trying to outset the other! The second time, Miss Judson had arrived first at the house of Mrs. Moore, the lady whose child Hearty Coil saved, and with whom Mrs. Bongarden had been acquainted several years, and whom, she of course, regarded as more friendly to herself than to Miss Judson, who had been in Perryville but a few weeks. As the postmistress entered the room, which she did unceremoniously, she heard Miss Judson making the accusation against her, of

opening the letters, nor did Miss Elizabeth think proper to stop, though her quondam particular friend stood before her face to face. On the contrary she ejaculated with nervous emphasis:

"Here she is now, and I tell it to her face."

Mrs. Bongarden couldn't stand this to her teeth, and, forgetful of all consequences, in the paroxysm of her fury she flew at Miss Judson, and tore from her virgin bust her best lace cape, that had cost seven dollars. Miss Judson could not be expected to abide this assault without resistance, and she accordingly clenched instantly with her delicate fingers, the new gipsy bonnet of Mrs. Bongarden, which, in a trice, was beyond casting any improper reflections upon the torn condition of the cape. Blows and scratches were given and received between the parties too numerous to mention; though it may be stated that Miss Judson received the most blows, and Mrs. Bongarden the most scratches. Mrs. Moore, frightened to death, screamed for assistance, when Doctor Cake and William Bennington, who chanced to meet at the door, rushed in at the cry, and not without considerable difficulty, parted the combatants. It is not to be denied, and perhaps ought not to be asserted, that Doctor Cake hereby saw more of the charms of Miss Elizabeth than he ever expected to see, unless he contemplated committing matrimony with her. As William Bennington scanned the tattered condition of the combatants, who still frowned fierce defiance, and Mrs. Moore,

panting with fright, and pitching violently to and fro in a huge rocking chair, into which she had, after the entrance of the gentlemen, hysterically thrown herself, he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. This had evidently more effect than any expostulation which had been used, for Mrs. Bongarden hastily adjusted her hair, and snatched up her bonnet, while Miss Judson, glancing towards Doctor Cake, whose presence she now first actually recognised, impulsively drew her silk gown over her shoulders, and darted into the back room, to adjust her dress, but within ear-shot of whatever Mrs. Bongarden might say. The postmistress finding her toilet almost as much disarranged as Miss Judson's, and being, as we have said, though married, a lady of very maidenly notions, felt herself, however much she might desire to state her cause of grievance, compelled in modesty to retire. Accordingly, she was about to enter the room where Miss Judson was, when Mrs. Moore started from the rocking chair, and begging in mercy that she would not go near Miss Judson, led her up stairs. As Mrs. Moore took Mrs. Bongarden up stairs, Miss Judson closed the door between her and the gentlemen, when silence prevailed for several minutes, which Doctor Cake interrupted in a suppressed voice, saying:

"I say, Mr. Bennington—Mr. Bennington, I say, this is a most extraordinary case."

"That's a fact, Doctor," replied William, after another hearty laugh; "as a Kentuckian, I am

thankful that one of the ladies is from the Jerseys, freshly imported—from the land of steady habits—and the other is a Pennsylvania-born, and a legitimate descendant—so her husband asserts—from a race of Dutch burgomasters. Were they Kentuckians, we should have this scene reported, and see it in print, perhaps embellished with an engraving, as the way in which the ladies of Kentucky—*ladies*, Doctor—settled their differences."

Here Mrs. Moore entered the room, and William Bennington begged her for mercy's sake to keep the ladies in separate rooms, and not to let them get together on any account.

Mrs. Moore implored the gentlemen not to leave her. William Bennington said he must go, while Dr. Cake, who was burning to know the particulars, said he would remain with Mrs. Moore, at the same time observing to her:

"I say, Mrs. Moore, you should compose yourself—I say—my dear madam—I am not your physician, but I may say to you as a friend, that your frame—I say—is of such a delicate nature, that—"

Now Mrs. Moore was a lady given to hysterics, and Doctor Cake knew it.

"Oh, Doctor!" she exclaimed, "I feel wretched; my poor frame can't stand these repeated shocks—my child on Sunday nearly drowned, and this to-day—it is too much for me."

Doctor Cake felt Mrs. Moore's pulse, and said if

she had any one whom she could send to the apothecary's, he could give her a harmless prescription that would be of infinite service to her.

"Do, Doctor, call my servant-girl for me—she is in the yard."

The Doctor proceeded with alacrity to call the girl, saying to himself as he went out:

"Another patient—I must contrive to throw Wickelmous out of this family too. I say, I shall have a damned time of it now, in keeping fair weather with Mrs. Bongarden and Miss Judson—but, I say—I must not take sides."

The Doctor soon entered with the girl, and despatched her for the prescription, which Mrs. Moore took, much to her relief.

As neither Mrs. Bongarden or Miss Judson could make their appearance in the street in the present condition of their features and wardrobe, Mrs. Moore was obliged to invite them to stay with her until dark, in their respective rooms, between which, during a long afternoon, she most impartially distributed her visits. Nor is it to be wondered, that after the ding-dong and clatter of their respective stories each time retold, that Mrs. Moore was confined to her bed with nervous disorders, and that Doctor Cake, after having administered so much to her satisfaction in the first instance, was retained as her physician.

In the meantime the characters of Mrs. Bongarden

and Miss Judson, in the mortal contest which they continued to wage, shared the fate of the two Kilkenny cats, who got into a fight, and mutually annihilated each other; at least, neither left of the other aught but the tail.

CHAPTER IX.

Hearty Coil's rescue of the child had made him almost instantaneously popular in Perryville. He took some trouble, or rather Mrs. Coil took much, in insisting that her husband should take more, to avoid his nickname of "Hearty," and make current his proper one of M'Murdock; vociferating, if she had ever thought he would "ever have taken up with such an abominable name as Hearty, that she never would have taken up with him." She held in as much detestation that cognomen applied to her husband, as did Miss Judson the abbreviation of Lizzy, from the fraternal, or any other lips. Mrs. Coil had got reconciled to the nickname among her old neighbours; but among one of the resolutions of amendment and correction, which she had determined to put in operation on their emigration, was the restoration of the proper appellation to her spouse. The misfortune was, that Mrs. Coil herself had acquired the habit of calling Mr. Coil, Hearty, whenever she was excited and forgot herself; and the consequence was, notwithstanding her resolution, that on the very day herself and family arrived at Perryville, when her husband saved Mrs. Moore's child, in her fear for his safety, and in the excitement afterwards, she repeatedly addressed him by that reprobated name.

Thus, when the affair was talked of in Perryville, and the stranger's name asked, it was immediately replied, that his wife called him "Hearty." Ruth, too, at the church door, had so named him; and little Billy told all the boys in town, who naturally marvelled over the risk that their playmate, young Moore, had run, that he knew the man who saved him, Hearty Coil, before he came to Perryville. Thus Mrs. Coil's efforts were frustrated, and the name of Hearty became as much fixed in their new abode upon her husband, as it was in their old one. Cromwell was not better known by the title of "Old Noll," or General Jackson by that of "Old Hickory," than was Coil in the sphere of his acquaintance—more limited than that of the two worthies abovementioned, but, nevertheless, the world to him—by that of Hearty.

Mr. Moore, solicitous of making some return to the preserver of his child, made inquiries as to the manner in which he might assist him; and as the keeper of "The General Boon Hotel," a house owned by Mr. Moore, was about to enter into some other business, Hearty thought he would like to succeed him; for he was a boarder there and saw what an easy life the proprietor led, and was moved, maybe, by the same considerations that made Jim Bunce take to distilling. On naming it to Mr. Moore, that gentleman told him he should have the house; and all that Hearty now had to do, was to obtain Mrs. Coil's consent. Mrs. Coil was a shrewd wo-

man and shrewish; and before Hearty could obtain it, he had to make concessions as to who should keep the keys and the cash, and as to the quantity of liquor he might take, which placed him in the situation of our first parent with the forbidden fruit; and with this difference, that the woman would dissuade him from evil. Alas! Hearty's own inclinations were temptations enough; for, notwithstanding Mrs. Coil assured him, with many asseverations, that so soon as he got drunk, they should break up tavern-keeping, it was to be feared, that unless he kept a brighter eye on himself than he had ever before been known to keep—and then, too, the tempter was not always before him—he would be overtaken in liquor.

"The General Boon Hotel" was considered the best in Perryville. It was a two story brick building on the main street, not far from the river; and its door and windows were rather the worse of election days and Christmas frolics. A porch with a broad roof, and with steps as long as itself and benches all round it, extended the whole length of the "Hotel" in front. Over it creaked the sign that bore, what was meant to be, the figure of the worthy from whom the hotel was named, Daniel Boon, the celebrated pioneer, the first white man who ever trod in Kentucky, dressed in a hunting shirt and moccasins, and in combat with a huge bear rampant. The bear was in the act of giving the pioneer a Brobdignagdian hug; and he was

avoiding the consequences of their approximation, by plunging his hunting knife into the side of the animal, that had its fore paws on his shoulders. The bear was done with most ferocious looking black paint; the eyes were portentous, and the mouth threatened to serve Boon as the whale served Jonah. Considering that Boon was of Quaker descent, and as Simon Kenton, one of the last of the race of the pioneers, who was last year gathered to his fathers, once told us, quite a Quaker-looking man—considering this—the traveller could not but be struck with the buckish habiliments of Boon, which, though of the backwood's character, had nevertheless a dash of dandyism about them, which indicated that if their owner had been in the sphere of Nash, or Brummel, they would not have lived unrivalled. His hunting shirt was blue, with flaming red trimmings, represented in that kind of paint, the flashing red, that a Dutch vrow loves. His leggings were of a light yellow, tied with red strings, so long that the fear could not but arise, that if the real character had appeared in such, his progress must have been impeded by the bushes, on which he must have left many a rag for others to take off—and not have taken the rag off of the bush himself, as was his wont, and from all competitors. The pioneer wore upon his head an immense bear skin cap, which at first sight might have produced on the bear the notion, that it was a brother bruin before him. The feet of the figure were graced with yellow moccasins, spotted with

blue and red paint to represent beads. Sam, the boot-black, affirmed immediately after the artist, who had thus immortalized the features of the pioneer, had treated him, and while the painter was feeling in his pocket for some change to remunerate him for his assistance in putting up the sign, that the moccasins were the things that hit his fancy most; "for," said Sam, glancing up at the sign as it creaked in the breeze, and extending his hand towards the artist at the same moment—"them are mockshins are the very thing itself; for, Mr. Muskman, when I look at them are beads on 'em, I think I hear 'em rattle. And I don't mean, no how, to disparage the bear; for many's the time I shall be toting my boots and blacking by in winter days when it's cloudy and the wind blows, and that are beautiful sign swings this way and that way, many's the time old Sam 'ill stop and look at it and think he hears the bear grunt, 'cause the knife sticks him. As for General Boon, hisself he looks like—thank, you Master Muskman. Whew, two quarters—sarvant, sir."

A row of trees had been set out before the General Boon Hotel, but only two of them remained, and they were in a very stunted condition, in consequence of the jerks and bites they had received from the horses that had been tied to them, and the cuts and barking from the loiterers around, and leaners against them. A number of broad flag-stones, not very regularly laid, were between the house and the trees, which last were placed in a line, where it was

contemplated the curb-stones should be, whenever this, the main street—which was of ample breadth, and appeared designed for the "Broadway" of a great city—should be paved. Two doors opened on to the porch of the Boon Hotel; one let you into a passage leading to a room not very large, and, by a stairway, to the second story, and the other directly into the bar-room, which contained a large bar, shaped like a half moon, and placed directly opposite the door. A few chairs and a couple of small tables, one of which held an old backgammon-box, and the other a number of newspapers, that appeared, from the beer and brandy stains upon them, not to be the chroniclers of the latest news, comprised the furniture of this democratic apartment.

Almost every Saturday—for sometimes it was delayed for want of paper or journeymen to the middle of the ensuing week—those newspapers above-mentioned, were augmented by the presence of the "Perryville Champion," printed, edited, and published by Vicesimus Finn, Esq. If the "Champion" did not wear the motley of the other papers, it nevertheless was as yellow as the deepest beer-stained one on the table, but it had a more amalgamated look, being yellow all over. However, it is proper to say of it, that the varieties of news were not placed in the columns with a disregard to their locations, but that each appeared under their respective captions; as, for instance, "Foreign News," "Domestic News," &c. Furthermore, the "Poetical Department" was

adorned with the figure of a Cupid, whose bow and quiver were plainly to be seen, and who seemed, from the attitude, in the act of piercing some heart. The impression of the arrow, if such was the fact, did not distinctly appear, nor, in fact, did the figure of the Cupid; but this gentleman had been so long shooting his arrows from the head of the "Perryville Champion," at the hearts of the maidens of that good town, in the shape of sonnets, odes, stanzas, "Lines to ——," &c., that there was no wonder his weapon was worn out, and that himself, in spite of his youthful appearance, was old enough to be included in the list of old bachelors.

Nevertheless, many able articles, both in prose and poetry, had appeared in the "Champion," the best of which were generally supposed to be by William Bennington. Attributing a power to himself, such as those veteran moulders of public opinion, Ritchie, Hammond, Walsh, or Noah, might claim, it was the custom of Mr. Finn, each Saturday evening after the "Champion" had appeared, to call for a glass, and take his seat in the bar-room of the Boon Hotel, and learnedly to expatiate to the Perryvillians, many of whom did then and there assemble, upon whatever topic might arise. Mr. Finn had served his time at the printing business, and on arriving at age, had quit it to read law; but finding that the legal profession did not suit his genius, that is, fill his pockets, he commenced editor in his native place,—from which he had been a wanderer for many years—

and where, when he was born, and where Perryville now stands, there were but two houses, one of which was his father's, who kept the ferry; yet Vicesimus was not thirty, and was a clever fellow—a little given to rhodomontade, but of generous and bold impulses.

It was on the Monday after Hearty's arrival, that Mr. Moore, on easy terms, made him his tenant. And as the former proprietor of the General Boon Hotel had not paid his last quarter's rent, Mr. Moore had agreed to take in lieu of the cash, furniture, such as it was, to that amount, so that Hearty had just to take possession without any trouble of previous preparation. He determined, however, after a long consultation with Mrs. Coil, and a profound weighing and studying of the matter, to change the title of his establishment from that of The General Boon Hotel, to the more fashionable one of the Boon House. On the next Wednesday he was fully installed landlord of it, where, to this day, the family circle of the Coils, increasing every year in number, may be seen playing about the door.

Henry Beckford, on his arrival at Perryville, had stopped at the General Boon, and after the scene at the church-door, and his subsequent dismissal by Miss Bennington, he had visited her but once, and did not go out much in town. He, however, had been gunning for the two days past with William Bennington, who, though he had lost all regard for and confidence in Henry, could not find it in his

heart to drop at once his acquaintance, when he reflected that Henry was a stranger, whose father was so distinguished, and friendly to his own parents, and that he had been so intimate with him. In their rambles through the woods, Henry observing, from his previous conversations with William Bennington, that he could not poison his mind against Ruth, carefully avoided speaking of her or of any of the recent events in Perryville that were connected with her name. The young men in gunning no longer proceeded together in careless and lively conversation, their intercourse was restrained, and each seemed not unwilling to ramble apart from the other. The feeling, on William's part, proceeded from his changed opinion of Henry, which he could not nor would not entirely conceal, while Henry felt mortified at the result of his suit with Miss Bennington, and desirous of discovering what had so suddenly changed her conduct towards him, but he shrunk from asking. He had several times determined to wait on Ruth, and ask her if she had made any communications with regard to himself to Miss Bennington, but he had not yet screwed his impudence up to the unblushing effrontery of visiting her, after what had occurred at the church-door. He would have done it easily if he had been satisfied of meeting her alone, but he did not like the probability of finding William, his sister, or even Coil or his wife there. Yet he lingered in Perryville with the determination of seeing Ruth, and questioning her

about Helen Murray's letters. He had no idea of the talk which the scene at the church-door, the remark of Billy, and the quarrel between Miss Judson and Mrs. Bongarden had made in Perryville, or that his name was so very closely connected with the slanders which these ladies, particularly Miss Judson had circulated against Ruth. Henry had seen Hearty, and had held some little conversation with him, which Hearty seemed so determined to cut short, that Henry could not prolong it, but he nevertheless determined to endeavour to learn from him what was said about his affair at home, and whether Hearty had spoken of it in Perryville, &c. Hearing that Hearty was to be his landlord, while he felt a misgiving, he knew not why, at meeting him hourly, he reflected that he could insinuate himself into the good graces of at least Mrs. Coil, and thereby win upon her husband, for he had not in his heart resigned his suit with Miss Bennington, and his hatred of Ruth grew daily more deadly. Henry had no great passion for Miss Bennington; perhaps, if she had accepted his addresses, he would have left Perryville never to return, for he held the wooing an amusement, and believed the conquest easy; but now that his vanity had been wounded, and he found the fair one not as consenting as he deemed, the desire to succeed increased with its difficulty. Besides, he he was in utter idleness, away from his former haunts and acquaintances, feeling perpetually the want of excitement, with the morbidness which its unsated

appetite creates; and as his reflections were not upon the correction of his vices, but upon the untoward circumstances which prevented their indulgence, he naturally hoarded deep and dark schemes of revenge against those whom he considered the cause of his misfortunes.

There is a short but pithy poem, by one of our American bards, which appeared some few years ago in a neat volume, in which his effusions were collected, entitled "The Devil a Fishing." The volume is by Selleck Osborne, and the piece alluded to struck us in our boyhood as the best thing in it. It recounts the various baits with which his Satanic Majesty fed his hook for the particular fish for which his palate at any time might have an especial craving.

The subtle fisherman goes on to narrate how he catches the belle with a ribbon, the lawyer with a fee, &c. but says he, in conclusion:—

"The idler pleases me the best,
He bites the naked hook."

Henry Beckford was in the condition to be easily caught, even by this unbaited hook, for he seemed determined, notwithstanding his past experience, to persevere in the indulgence of feelings and the encouragement of habits, that must plunge him irretrievably in deeper errors. The shame which he felt for the past, but made him the more anxious for

revenge on those whom his perverted moral sense led him to believe had brought it on him, while no regrets for his own conduct, except so far as it had injured himself, not others, and no resolutions of amendment, arose to his mind.

CHAPTER X.

On being installed landlord of the Boon House, Hearty gave what is called a house warming, or infare; or, to speak in more fashionable phraseology, had a collation served up, to which the friends of the establishment were invited. Of course it was a day of jollification to landlord and guest, and as the viands were given into the bargain, many were the number who chose this occasion to patronize the Boon House.

Mrs. Bongarden had called early in the morning on Mrs. Coil, with an offer of any little thing she had that Mrs. Coil might want, and with the secret desire of learning from her who Ruth Lorman was, and as she knew her to be friendly to Ruth, with the intention of seizing or making an opportunity of pouring out the vials of her wrath on Miss Judson. Mrs. Coil was too careful of her husband's interest and popularity not to receive Mrs. Bongarden with smiles and thanks, and while she busied herself with dishing a huge round of beef, which was to be served in the bar room cold, at noon, when the friends of the establishment were to partake of it, she continued to hold courteous discourse with the postmistress.

"And so you like our town?" quoth Mrs. Bongarden, glancing round the room and at Mrs. Coil, with a scrutinizing eye.

"I am double delighted ma'am," replied Mrs. Coil. "After Mr. Lorman moved out here, they wrote home such accounts that I told Mr. Coil we must certainly come."

"You knew Mr. Lorman's family before you came here?" said the Postmistress.

"Yes, and they used to be the richest people in the whole country, before they got misfortunate—they used to be well knowing to some branches of our family. When persons—respectable persons gets down in the world—you know, Mrs. Bongarden, they're got to turn their hands to any thing—particularly if their family circle is spreading. M'Murdock, my dear," continued Mrs. Coil, to one of her children, her voice at first reined into the gentle, but growing sterner as she looked at the child, "put that saucer up, M'Murdock—I tell you, you will break it—come away from that greasy tub with your new slip on."

At this moment, crash went the saucer, and M'Murdock broke out into a full cry, anticipating what might be coming.

"Mammy," he exclaimed, "I couldn't help it; the floor drawed it right out of my hand."

"The little wretch," muttered Mrs. Coil, and then with a violent effort, restraining herself, she continued, "No matter, M'Murdock—there now—pick up

the pieces, and throw them away down the yard, so that little brother and you won't cut your feet."

M'Murdock, glad to escape so easily, hurried out with the pieces gathered up in his slip, in a manner that would have scandalized Miss Judson.

"Yes, Mrs. Bongarden," continued Mrs. Coil, turning to the postmistress, "Mr. Lorman's family was and is as respectable as any body's family."

"There now," exclaimed Mrs. Bongarden, "I told Miss Judson so, but she scandalizes every body."

"Miss Judson! I wonder was it her that told all these abominable lies—that I should say so—on Miss Ruth."

"The very person," said Mrs. Bongarden, emphatically, "and she says that she heard every word of it from this handsome Mr. Beckford, who has lately come to our town."

"I wonder, good Lord!" exclaimed Mrs. Coil, "what, he that's from our city, and stays in the Boon House! my husband always said it—he nearly killed Mr. Coil, once—he's an awful character. Miss Judson says it, you tell me, Mrs. Bongarden?"

And Mrs. Bongarden thus appealed to, went into a long exposition of her own injuries, at the hands and tongue of Miss Judson, and of what that maiden said of Ruth, which our readers may be sure was not mollified in her account. This excited the horror and indignation of Mrs. Coil, in no ordinary degree.

Meanwhile, the patrons of the Boon House began to assemble, and Hearty's voice of welcome could be heard in continual greeting.

"Are you hearty, gentlemen? walk in—what'll you take—here's brandy, gin, rum, beer, any thing you please. Here's some of the best whisky, by the living jingoes, you ever tasted—it's old rye—and it's as good as the real Irish, and has pretty much the flavour, I tell ye. When I drink—and I tell you, gentlemen, the healthiest man requires it—even those poor shoats, the temperance people, have to take it for their health—we must all take it for health—it's mother's milk to many a man. When I drink, as I was observing, gentlemen, I take the old rye. But there's a maxim they say, that first appeared in Latin, and that says in English, 'taste is not to be disputed.' Well, by jingoes, I dispute no man's taste—just come up, gentlemen, and help yourselves—and taste all."

At this moment entered Mr. Bongarden, puffing and blowing like one who feared he might be too late for the fair, yet gathering himself up, and expanding his rotundity to its full dignity.

"Walk in, Mr. Bongarden," exclaimed Hearty, "happy to see you, sir, in the Boon House."

"Ah, thank you, my good friend, Mr. Coil, thank you, sir. I was fearful I might be too late, and you may call me any thing but too late to supper, or a round of beef like this. Mrs. Bongarden, Mr. Coil, left me a-reading some letters, fresh from head quarters," winking and speaking in an affectedly low voice, yet loud enough to be heard by every body in the room; "great things going on at the White House,

Washington city. Can't be more explicit now, but it will be out in a few days, and then you will find I am a prophet. That is, that I sometimes know a thing or two before hand. Mrs. Bongarden left me a-reading those letters, saying that she would call over and see Mrs. Coil, and I began to fear I should get in at the tail end of the feast. This beef cuts well—thank you, my friend, I'll take a glass of beer—gentlemen," addressing the persons in the room, "I'll give you a sentiment; fill your glasses, gentlemen. Gentlemen, the toast which I now propose, I hope, and know will meet with your approbation."

All parties filled their glasses; and, while they were so doing, Mr. Bongarden whispered aside to Hearty—

"My friend, Mr. Coil, inform me—had you ever a title: were you ever a colonel or captain?"

"Why, said Hearty, whispering a reply, "I never was fully made captain. But, by Jingoes, when they were getting up a maletia company, to use up the system, they talked of making me commander!"

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Bongarden aloud to the company, who stood expectant, with their glasses charged, "I propose to you the health of Capting Hearty Coil, the gallant saver of one of the native children of Perryville! That act alone entitles him to our welcome—our grateful welcome! May he long keep the General Boon—the Boon House—and never want customers!" This was drunk with loud

cheers, amidst which Capting Hearty Coil mounted a chair to return his thanks—

"My new friends and fellow-citizens," he exclaimed, with a flourish of the hand, "are you hearty? Just the same kind of welcome you gave me to your beautiful city I give you to the Boon House—a HEARTY welcome!" [The guests took the pun and shouted uproariously.] "I am as glad to see you here—and shall always be—as you can possibly be to see me. As to the jumping in after the child, by Thunder, that's a mere circumstance! and, my fellow citizens, Mr. Moore's a gentleman—every inch of him—and every hair in his head!"

Here there was a loud call for a sentiment from Capting Coil.

"Gentlemen," continued Hearty, "my fellow-citizens and friends, it is a long time since I have made a public speech; I will therefore conclude—having expressed my thanks—with the following sentiment—Here's to the sons of old Kentucky: may they never—by the living Jingoes—may they never, never be weaned from—may they never be too old to love their mothers' milk—old rye!"

Hearty's toast was received with such enthusiastic applause that, amidst the confusion of the moment and the whisky, in endeavouring to make a dignified descent from the chair, it tipped over, and he fell to the floor of the Boon House, as many had fallen before him—without the dignity attendant upon Cæsar at the base of Pompey's statue. Before he could

get well upon his feet again—and he jumped up quickly—his little son M'Murdock, his namesake, jerked him by the coat skirts and said—

"Daddy, mammy wants you—*now*."

Instantly, though not willingly, Hearty obeyed the connubial mandate; for, as he looked round, he saw his better half peeping through the half-opened door at him with a prying, suspicious glance.

"Coil—Mr. Coil"—exclaimed his wife, pulling him through the door, and closing it, "have you been beastifying yourself?"

"Beastifying myself!" reiterated Hearty, assuming a look of wonderment and sobriety, "I tell you, by Thunder, I am as sober as ever was St. Patrick! My dear wife, I haven't drunk near enough for the occasion; there is not a man in the Boon House that is not ahead of me. Come, give me a buss, my dear, and you'll find out by my breath that I have scarcely tasted a drop. No, I am determined to keep duly sober. It would hurt our house, my dear, you well know, if I were to get in liquor—though there might be some excuse, by Thunder, in the occasion! They do say, Mrs. Coil, that your cooking is tremendous. You see I was just returning thanks; you heard, my dear, how they drank my health; they've made a captain of me. I was descending from a chair—after returning thanks—and, you know, my dear, you yourself fell off of a chair once. They are hard to stand on, and, in speaking, a man forgets what holds him; and I—the chair

slipped over with me. Your cooking, my dear, by Jingoes, it does honour to the occasion!"

"I believe the people here do wish us well, Mr. Coil. And they thought well of the cookery, hey?'

"Tremendious well. Ay, there they're calling for me!" And Hearty broke away and re-entered the bar-room.

In his absence there had been an accession to the guests in the person of a stranger, who was greeted with warm welcomes by most of those present, and familiarly called by them Blazeaway. He was a man of tall and almost gigantic proportions, being nearly six feet two inches high, and what is not often seen in men of his height, his limbs were well knit, and graceful, though his arms seemed rather too long, and he had a habit of swinging the right one by his side, while the left was thrust carelessly in the bosom of his shirt. He was dressed in a full suit of that domestic cloth called "Kentucky jeans,' and wore an old slouched hat upon his head, that evidently had braved all sorts of weather. His coat, though not worn as an overcoat, was what is generally called a box coat, having huge pockets at the sides, with large lappels. The buttons on it were much better than the quality of the cloth, in the opinion of the knights of the needle, would demand, being great pearl ones of the best kind. The stranger had a handsome foot, and he appeared to be conscious and proud of it, as it was encased in a

fine and tight boot, which would have been the better though from Sam's attentions.

The face of this individual was a very marked one; and as he wore the rim of his hat turned up in front, somewhat after the fashion of our forefathers' cocked beavers, but certainly not with their taste, his features could be distinctly seen. His forehead, massive and bold, was shaded with long dark hair at the temples, where gray, like a party in the minority, but on the increase, grew daily more prominent. His eye was a small gray one, that flashed with good-humour and shrewdness, and indicated that its possessor had a daring and reckless courage, that would brave fearlessly any danger. His nose was straight, with a slight inclination to turn up at the end, which added much to his look of good-humour or shrewdness, whenever his features wore either of those expressions. His mouth was quite large, but expressive of firmness and decision, displaying, when he laughed, a remarkably fine set of teeth, that, from the use of tobacco, had parted with much of their pearly hue. A thick hickory stick, in fact, a dray-pin, such as are used in Cincinnati, projected from one of the pockets of his coat, and added to the peculiarity of his appearance.

"Blazeaway," said Mr. Bongarden, as Hearty reentered the bar-room, "or rather Mr. Staylor, allow me to introduce you to the new landlord of the Boon House—Capting Coil. Capting Coil, Mr. Staylor, or," continued Mr. Bongarden, moved to facetious-

ness and familiarity by the good cheer, "be you known to each other as Blazeaway and Hearty; and now let's take a drink—blaze away heartily together!"

"Blazeaway," said Coil, taking the hand of the person we have described, "that's, by thunder, that's, I suppose, a nickname like mine of Hearty."

"You're right, my hearty!" exclaimed Blazeaway, shaking warmly the hand of Coil, "you're right; but I had more thought of a burying than a christening when I got it."

"And how did you get it?" inquired Hearty.

"Capting Coil," replied Blazeaway, laying his hand on the shoulder of the landlord, and speaking in his free and dashing way, "don't press me—I am a modest man, but, by Jove! sir, nature meant me for a great one, only she left me three drinks behind hand. I never can do or say anything till I have about six inches of liquor in me."

"By the living Jingo!" exclaimed Hearty, in a lively manner, "I am just your way of thinking. Six inches, hey? Mr. Blazeaway, do ye see, it is a matter of fact, that there is many a gentleman that's left three drinks behind hand, when he's born, and he never has the spunk to push up to a point; he sees what he thinks he might do, but, by Thunder, he's afraid of trying. But if a man could always feel, Mr. Blazeaway, as he does sometimes when he has three drinks in him, he'd be before hand with most people. Come, sir, what'll you take?"

"Anything that's good," replied Blazeaway. And while he was drinking, Doctor Cake, who had just entered the bar-room, after holding a long conversation with Mrs. Coil shook him by the hand, and asked him when he left the lower country.

"Three weeks ago, Doctor, and I am now bound eastward to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and all about there. I shouldn't have stopped at Perryville this time up, but I met Capting Lorman and his brother, who lives here among you as they told me, and I promised them to stop and see their folks, and and give them some letters; the Capting and I are old friends. I am told that Mr. Davidson—you all know him here, he's our richest planter, and the friend of your congressman—they tell me he is going to bring home a wife with him; he stays long enough to get a dozen; and I've some business with him that presses me. I wonder if William Bennington can tell me any thing about him; I fear it will turn up that I pass Mr. Davidson on the river; I should like to see him."

"Doubtless, I say, Mr. Staylor," remarked Doctor Cake, "William Bennington can give you information. How is the health below?"

"On the mend, Doctor, it a'n't half so bad there as you think for!"

"Blazeaway," quoth Mr. Bongarden, "why the devil do you carry that stick in your pocket?"

"That's an old friend, Mr. Bongarden," returned Blazeaway, drawing out the stick, "an old stand-by,

a friend in need. Last summer, when I was in Cincinnati, as I was stepping down to the boat one night to leave, I was beset by three fellows, that I had quarrelled with once in a gambling house, at New Orleans, fellows who had come to Cincinnati to spend the summer. I had nothing but my fists to defend myself with, and they had knives. You know there are no stones on the landing at Cincinnati, it is as clear and clean as this floor. These chaps came right at me, it was light enough for them to see a man as tall, and as large as I am, and they came right at me. I stepped back, not knowing at first what to do, and I never call for help; I thought my time had come, as I felt one of their knives in my arm, but as I stepped back, my foot hit something that I knew was a stick, I dodged them by stooping, and as I did it, I picked up this very dray-pin; I felt like a man at once. When a man knows he has strength, and feels a weapon in his hand when rascals run at him, it's quite a different sort of an affair from dying like a dog. As I seized the pin, I made an upward blow with it at the fellow who had struck me, and he fell like a log; the other fellows turned to run, one started up for Main street, and the other down to the river. As my way lay towards the river, I followed the water rat, and made him take to it; he got beyond his depth in his fright, and I suppose couldn't swim with his clothes on well, may be he couldn't swim at all, for he called out loud and long, and begged hard for help. It was night, as I

was saying, late too, and if there were any watches set on board the steamers about, they were asleep, for the fellow yelled as if he feared his carcass was a case, and nobody came. So I just laid my old stand-by down carefully, my dray-pin, and jumped in and brought the rascal to shore. I took him on my shoulders—he was nearly gone—up to a coffee-house on the landing, and after a little rubbing and some brandy he came to. Some fellows were in there who called themselves constables, and when they heard the cause of the fuss, they wanted to insist on taking him to jail. I thought the fellow had suffered enough, and if he hadn't, if I choose to let him off, whose business was it? They talked strong about taking him, whether I would or no; and one impudent rascal said they would take me too, and if I could not give security for my appearance against the water rat, when the court sat, that I myself would have to go to jail for safe keeping. I can stand a good many things, but there are some things I can't stand. So I just looked at the constables and I told them, that I would not only go myself free as I came, but that I would take the fellow with me. And I just took a good grip of my dray pin, told my chap to go before, and I dared the best of them, or all of them to stop me. They were too tired with their day's work to try it, and so I led my man off. The fellow, in gratitude, told me all about his companions, and I discovered that, as I said, they had

a grudge against me, for a gambling scrape I had with them in New Orleans."

"What became of the other two?" inquired Mr. Bongarden.

"Why," replied Blazeaway, "as the one who had run up towards Main street—you know where that is, it is the street that comes down to the lower part of the landing—as he was the instigator, I determined to have him punished. The fellow I took told me of his haunts, and I went straight back to the Coffee House, treated the constables, took them with me, and sure enough we grabbed him, and had him safe enough in the jail that night. There he caught vengeance, for they suspected him to be a fellow who had committed a robbery, and set a house on fire the night before, and the constables treated the chain gang—they knew what it was for—and then thrust this fellow in among them. They nearly cobbed him to death with their shoes, to make him tell where the property was—This proceeding is not according to my notions of things. I say law is law, and if you put a man in jail to try him according, why do so. And if you mean to lynch him, lynch him. To go both, is neither law or justice."

"The knave may have deserved it," observed a legal gentleman by, who was looking out for an eligible location to settle in, and who was reconnoitring in Perryville for that purpose, "but I should certainly be of the opinion that the parties, the constables I mean, nay the sheriff himself might be made

to pay a heavy penalty for such a wrong doing. Are you certain, sir," addressing Blazeaway, "of the fact?"

"There's no mistake in it," replied Blazeaway, "I saw the marks on the poor devil myself the next day. I thought it awful hard, any man a stranger there—you or I, stranger, might be arrested to please any body or no body, who might accuse us of theft, and they might get us lynched to find it out, or lynched to gratify their spites, if they were enemies of ours, and when they had fed their revenge, we would get free because we were innocent. I say such proceedings"—

Here there was an interruption, which will be accounted for in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Blazeaway was interrupted in the midst of his remark, by the appearance of Mr. Finn, the editor of the Perryville Champion, who entered in a great heat, and mounting one of the chairs, said—

"Gentlemen—Mr. Coil, my respects to you, I will drink presently. My fellow citizens, there is an act of injustice about to be perpetrated here, against which I know every citizen of this town will put his face, and lift his arm, whether he is a slaveholder or not."

"What's the matter?" interrupted several voices, while all became anxious to hear.

"To be short, gentlemen," continued Finn, "you know that when our fellow citizen, Mr. Jackson, died, he made a will, disinheriting his son Tom, for his dissipation, and ordering that his farm and slaves should be sold at auction, and the amount portioned out among his daughters. The sale is now being held. Nat, Mr. Jackson's body servant, is just to be put up, and his brother, a free man, is here from Louisville, where Nat's wife lives, and he wants to buy him, and let him open a shop for himself there, and live with his wife and family. Nat's a good

barber, we all know, and a worthy negro; he will soon in this way be able to pay his brother for himself, and be a free man. Would you believe it, gentlemen, Nat's young master, Tom Jackson, hating him because he was a favourite with his father, has sworn that Nat shall not be free, and that if it costs him all he's worth he will buy Nat and keep him a slave. We all know what kind of a master Tom Jackson will make under such circumstances, and we are bound as men, and as Kentuckians to prevent it."

"That's a fact!" shouted a dozen voices, and Finn, discovering he had produced the desired effect, leaped from the chair and hurried to the place of sale, followed by Blazeaway and every person present except Mr. Bongarden, who observed it was a very long walk to where the auction was held, and that he had been exercising over much through the day. He, therefore, sans cérémonie, replenished his mug with beer, took a handful of crackers and cheese from the table, and leisurely seated himself for a chat with Hearty, who was in the act of following the crowd, notwithstanding, when Mrs. Coil called him back, and after telling him in no gentle terms that it was outrageous that he should attempt to leave the bar, she drew him aside into the back room, and narrated to him what Mrs. Bongarden had told her concerning the origin of the slander against Ruth. Hearty at first was restive beneath the connubial hand that held his coat, but when he came to

hear that Henry Beckford was the originator of the slander, he swore a deep oath, and stood some moments motionless, though Mrs. Coil had dropped her hold. At last he exclaimed:

"By Thunder! I'll put an end to his stopping at the Boon House, and hang me if I don't disgrace him into the bargain."

Mrs. Coil whispered to her spouse not to drink too much, and Hearty, after assuring her, with the soberest face he could assume, that she might be entirely easy on that score, re-entered the bar-room.

After silently arranging matters and things in his bar for a few minutes, Hearty looked towards Mr. Bongarden, like one whose thoughts had taken another turn, and asked:

"An' Mr. Bongarden, tell me now, will ye, why do they call this remarkable-looking person with the dray-pin—I never saw such a dray-pin in my life before, in ———, where I'm last from, they use iron ones not half so long as this—why, tell me now, do they call this person Blazeaway? if it's a fair question."

"Entirely fair, Capting, entirely fair," answered the postmaster, with a dignified move of the head. "This beer is good," smacking his lips. "Blazeaway, you may truly observe, Capting Coil, is a remarkable person. He has been a flatboat-man, a pilot, a farmer, and almost everything else—I don't know what his politics are—and he is neither afraid of man nor devil. If you were to meet him on at

the east in your city, Capting Coil, you would find him a well-dressed, well-looking man. He made folks stare in Washington City the winter before last, they tell me. Capting Coil, I assure you I am informed that he took the President by the hand, and held a talk with him, and he was no more abashed and put back than I would have been myself. It is not every man could do that, Capting, men in public stations—holding public offices, sir, are expected to do it—and it's republican that it should be done—it's democratic, but it takes the leaders, sir, Capting, to act out the thing. I wish you, Capting Coil, to mark my prophecy, we shall have news, I mean public news—I received it privately, myself, sometime since, but that's neither here nor there—mark my words, we shall have public news from Washington City before long!"

"By the Powers! I believe you, Mr. Bongarden," exclaimed Hearty, impatient to know more about a person called by such a singular nickname as Blazeaway, "but as you were remarking on this Mr. Blazeaway?"

"Ay, as I was remarking, Capting, he is a remarkable person. He got the name of Blazeaway in this way. He now farms it, or rather has large wooding places down in the lower country, to which he attends occasionally, acting as pilot, and often roving up and down the Ohio and Mississippi, partly for pleasure, and partly for business. Mr. Davidson, a great planter, and he live near each other, and

Mr. Davidson has helped him to make a great deal of money—they live near the town of ———. Staylor, Capting, is well known there, and stands high. Being a pilot and a river character, he has many friends among such folks, and is of course friendly to them—as you know is quite natural—for I speak from a judgment of myself, I feel friendly towards every man holding, for instance, a highly responsible office. Staylor being friendly, as I have observed, to river characters, and having a particular friend, the capting of the Kenton, he felt bound to stand by him. It so happened that the capting of the Kenton did something to offend the people of ———. What the real offence was, is hard to get at—some say one thing, some say another. However, the people got offended, and they swore that when the capting of the Kenton stopped there on his way up, they would lynch him.

"Staylor knew all this, for he was at the place—and he knew how horn-mad the people were—and he determined to save his friend, if he could, and at every venture. So, as the Kenton drew near the wharf, he hurried on board and told the capting of the fuss. The capting was frightened, you may be sure, and he started steam again and away he went. The towns-people were so mad that they chartered another boat and put directly after. They do say that they had a devil of a chase. Sometimes the pursuers were so near that they could almost jump on board the Kenton—and many shots were fired,

and one killed on the Kenton, and one on the other boat, and several were badly wounded. But they had, after all, to give over the chace, and you may depend they returned mortal mad to home. By the time they got there, it was suspected who had advised the capting of the Kenton off. The man killed was a soldier of a regular company in that place, and they resolved to bury him with military honours. Just as the company were leaving the killed man's house with his corpse some one called out and said—and every one had heard it before you know—that Staylor had advised the capting of the Kenton off, and he was the cause of the death, and it ought to be revenged on him. Some one called out, there was Staylor now: for it seems that he was coming down the hill behind the town, right into the street where they all were with the corpse. You know he is a man easily known. One fellow who had some bullets in his pockets, handed them out to the company, and proposed that they should drop them in their guns, and as they passed by Staylor, let him have them. The capting of the company and others said, no—fair play—that they would call on him first to vindicate himself: and it was agreed on that they should. Sure enough, when they got up to Staylor they halted, and the capting stepped out—told him what the report was —what they had resolved to do if it was true—and then asked him whether it was true or not—and what he had to say in his defence. They say that

Staylor never looked the least daunted. He got upon the hill side, while the soldiers stood in the road, facing him, on either side of the corpse, and he told them what a friend the capting of the Kenton had been to him—that he had saved his life once at the risk of his own, when he was beset by an awful odds. 'I've got,' said he, 'as sincere a tear for the man in that coffin as the best of you; he never did me any harm, and I am sorry for him: but the capting of the Kenton was my friend; he saved my life; and I did advise him to leave.' 'And,' said he, throwing his arms wide open, and facing the soldiers face to face, 'if you seek my life on that account, *blaze away!*' That's the way he got the nickname," continued the postmaster, drawing a long breath, and taking a deep draught, "but not a man pretended to fire. Staylor, by their own invitation, went with them to the funeral; and, when it was over, they placed him in among them and escorted him home."

At this instant the loud talk of persons excited and the sound of approaching footsteps arrested the attention of the landlord and his guest; and, in a moment more, Finn, Blazeaway, and the persons who had left the Boon House, with many others, entered it. Blazeaway walked up to the bar, exclaiming—

"The thing was well done and justly. Capting Coil you have been treating: now we must treat. Come up, gentlemen, and call for what you want. "Consider yourselves touched," said he, making a

salutation with his glass to the company ere he drank its contents. "Here, boy, take this," he continued, as he offered a stiff glass of the raw material to a black man, who stood with his hat off just within the door, "you looked so frightened that I thought you were going to turn to a white man or a ghost. Well, you are a free man now, Nat, and take care of yourself."

"I will try to, master," replied the black in a grateful tone.

"How was it managed?" asked Hearty of Mr. Finn, who was in the act of taking a glass—"did the fellow's brother buy him?"

"It was well done, as Mr. Staylor says," replied the editor of the Champion—"and I'll maintain it to be right by press, pen, or pistol, any where. After I made those few hurried remarks, to your guests, Capting, stating Nat's case to them—I hope you will not think anything of my taking your guests from you, seeing I have returned with them and with a great accession to their numbers—after I had briefly stated Nat's case, we all hurried to the place of auction. There was poor Nat, the black fellow, frightened to death, and Tom Jackson standing near him, half drunk and swearing he would buy him, and nobody else should. He was threatening Nat's brother with every kind of punishment, if he should dare to bid for him. The crowd looked on indignantly, but they had not yet said anything. At last Nat was put up, and Tom Jackson bid three hundred

for him. Nat's brother wanted to bid, but he was afraid of Tom. Mr. Staylor and myself, both at the same instant, told him to bid and fear nothing; that he should be protected. At this, Tom Jackson swore he would kill Nat, if he dared to do it; and went on in such ruffianly style, that the crowd got round him, hissing and hooting, and hustled him off. Then Nat's brother bid four hundred dollars, and Nat was knocked down to him; as there was nobody under the circumstances would bid against him. That the estate might not be the loser by the low price, the sum of three hundred dollars was raised on the ground—William Bennington and Mr. Moore, who can afford it, giving the most; so that a fair value (seven hundred dollars) was paid for Nat, at last. Tom Jackson has almost run out his rope; it's time for him to quit this place, or it will be made too hot for him."

"That's a fact; there's no mistake in that," exclaimed the bystanders, and they pressed towards the bar to drink on the invitation of Staylor.

It was not until long after dark on this day, memorable in the history of Hearty Coil, that the guests departed. They dropped off lingeringly; in squads at first, and latterly—those who love good cheer most, remaining to the last—one by one, till Hearty and his spouse were left the only remaining occupants of the bar-room in which they were seated talking over the events of the day. The landlord

was desirous of retiring, but though he had full possession of his tongue, he felt that his limbs would not do their office without betraying to his spouse how entirely he had enacted the character of Boniface. He, therefore, still kept his seat, wishing that Mrs. Coil would leave the room first, and then he intended to strengthen himself with another glass, and steal off to bed. He had, therefore, in profound silence, (hoping that if the ball of conversation was not kept up, Mrs. Coil would the sooner depart,) listened to his lady expatiate upon the sayings and doings of the day. While the matters stood thus, the door of the Boon House opened, and Henry Beckford entered from a gunning excursion, which had occupied him all day and caused him to encroach upon the night, in consequence of having stopped at the house of a farmer, whom he had met in the woods, and who had invited him to his farm, to take some refreshment.

Hearty, a little testy from the curb which he had put upon his inclinations, and not certainly more peaceably disposed from the potations of the day, glanced at Henry with an angry eye, as he called up to his mind his own injuries in the affair of the ride, and those of Ruth Lorman, which were fresh upon his memory, as Mrs. Coil had narrated them to him but a few hours before.

Not observing, or indifferent to the state of Hearty's feelings, Henry said, "he would take a glass of

brandy and retire;" when Mrs. Coil jumped up in a flurry, exclaiming:

"Now, I declare, your bed's not made, Mr. Beckford. Rest a moment till I make it, sir; you know, under circumstances, we can't get everything right at first." And she hastily withdrew to perform the office.

"Mrs. Coil," exclaimed Hearty, as his wife shut the door, "you needn't trouble yourself," saying which, Hearty endeavoured to brace himself up with an air of dignity.

Without noticing Hearty's remark, which did not reach the ears of Mrs. Coil, Henry said, in a tone of command, "A glass of brandy and water!"

"By the Powers!" exclaimed Hearty, striking his fist against his knee, with emphasis, "I'll speak right out to you, Mr. Beckford, and tell you at once that you can neither have bed, board, nor lodging, in the Boon House. I can't stand you. You have played the rascal at home, and now, by Thunder, you have come here to play the rascal again; and damn me if I countenance you. Don't say that I am not a plain man—I say plumply, damn me if I countenance—"

"You countenance me, you poor, drunken devil! What do you mean?" And as he spoke, Henry advanced to the bar to help himself.

"Drunken devil!" repeated Hearty, in a great passion, jumping up and staggering between Henry and the bar. "Don't you, by Thunder, attempt to

take my liquor without my leave. There's a punishment for theft here, as well as elsewhere; and I'll let you know, if you go to add stealing to your low-lived slanders, I'll have you in the penitentiary, and that won't feel like the Boon House to you, I can tell you."

Enraged beyond self-control, Henry caught up the chair, from which Hearty had just arisen, and with it struck him to the floor. Notwithstanding Hearty made no resistance, Henry repeated the blow, several times, and violently kicked him, as he lay so insensible from the assault and intoxication together, that he did not utter a word.

While Henry was thus engaged, the front door of the bar-room opened, and Blazeaway entered. Advancing into the room before Henry perceived him, he caught that worthy by the shoulder with the gripe of a giant, and jerking him violently away, exclaimed,

"What are you after? You have killed him—he's dead!"

"Dead drunk!" said Henry, in vain endeavouring to shake off Blazeaway's hold. "The rascal has grossly insulted me. Unhand me, sir!"

"We are in a slave state, stranger," replied Blazeaway, tightening his hold, "but I'm not a nigger; and though I am rather a rough man myself, I have a way of teaching some people manners—so speak a little softer,"

So saying, Blazeaway pushed Henry aside, and lifted up the prostrate landlord. As he did so, Mrs. Coil re-entered the room.

"I wonder what's the matter with Hearty—with Mr. Coil?" ejaculated Mrs. Coil.

"Just show me the way to his bed, madam," replied Blazeaway; "liquor and this stranger have been too much for him, I expect. Show us the way, Madam. Look here, stranger, (to Henry,) you are not for making off, are you?"

"I am for making off to my room," replied Henry, as he lifted the light which Mrs. Coil had placed on the table.

Supposing the only enemy that Hearty had encountered was that which the great poet says "men put in their mouths to steal away their brains," Mrs. Coil determined, though with much difficulty keeping the determination, to hold in her curtain lecture until returning sobriety should enable her husband to appreciate its eloquence; yet wishing to apologise for the aberrations in public which she did not intend lightly to forgive in private, she remarked,

"Mr. Coil, sir, being as we opened house on this day, has had to drink with so many of his acquaintances and friends, that it is no wonder, as he can't stand a very great deal, that he should be overtaken. This way, if you please, sir," and so speaking, Mrs. Coil held the light, while Blazeaway bore the land-

lord in his arms as easily as Hearty would have borne one of his children.

Henry lingered sullenly till they had left the room, and then quickly quaffing another deep draught, he repaired to his chamber.

CHAPTER XII.

On awaking the next morning, though the landlord of the Boon felt satisfied that he had been more overcome by his potations of the previous day, than by the blows of Henry; he nevertheless determined, particularly in consideration of Mrs. Coil's opinion, to lay all the consequences of his inability to get to bed, to the account of the assault and battery. Hearty was fiercely indignant at the usage he had received, and as he dressed himself, finding Mrs. Coil was up before him, and that from the shortening shadows of the sun, it was wearing fast towards noon, he turned over in his mind the affair, and convinced himself that he had been treated most diabolically. His memory of what he had said to Henry to cause the the assault was not very distinct, but there were certain protuberances on his head, not of a phrenological origin, which satisfied his Eventuality, that the altercation on Henry's part, had not been confined to words. Connecting this fact with his previous opinions of Henry, arising from their meeting on the road, he soon satisfied himself, that the battery was made with malice aforethought against his life. Having the marks of the blows to prove what he resolved should be his assertions, he bound up his head, put

on a rueful face, and descended the steps with fewer misgivings than he else would have had. In fact, he almost congratulated himself he had been assaulted, when he thought of his spouse. This, nevertheless, lessened not at all his designs of retaliation, when he remembered the assaulter. After taking much more than his usual time at his toilet, Hearty descended into the connubial presence.

Resting from her labour of sweeping the room, by leaning on her broom handle, Mrs. Coil eyed Hearty as he entered from top to toe, and said:

"This is a pretty time of day for you to get up, Mr. Coil. I wonder don't you think this is a fine beginning for the Boon House."

"Are you knowing to what happened to me last night, my dear?" asked Hearty, putting his hand pathetically to his head.

"Knowing! to be sure, I am. You don't think I was beastified too, Mr. Coil, do you? Knowing! why I know that you fell off of your chair, and that I got that big, strange man to take you to your bed."

"I know, by Thunder, that I was taken to my bed, my dear; but did you know that I was knocked off of my chair, and by this Henry Beckford? where is he? Hang me, if I don't use him worse than I was going to use him, when that beautiful lady, Miss Murray, begged so for him that I let him off. Just feel my head. Do you think a fall made all these bumps as big as hen's eggs?" continued Hearty, tak-

ing his handkerchief from his head, and presenting that member to his wife's inspection.

"As I live," exclaimed the landlady, "your head is wonderfully bruised, and your neck is all black and blue."

"Where is he?" asked Hearty, in an angrier tone than he had yet spoken.

"Gone," replied Mrs. Coil.

"Gone!" echoed Hearty.

"Yes, Mr. Coil, as sure as you are a living, breathing, bruised man, he's gone. He got up early this morning, and asked how you were? I didn't know what had happened—not the beginning of it—and thinking that you were overcome, and not wishing people to know it, I told him you were very well, but worn out from your exercise in entertaining the friends of the Boon House, at our infare. He studied awhile, and then went out; after awhile, came back in a hurry, as if something troubled him—brought black Sam with him—asked for his bill, paid it right down, and said, 'there was a boat just going to start at the landing, and he had got letters, and must leave.' He took Sam up stairs for his trunk, and went right away."

"By Thunder! don't that show you, my dear, that he had a design upon my life, and was afraid of what might turn up. Knowing, you see, that I was alive, he thought I'd pour it into him, as I was going to do on the road, and the cowardly scamp made off. It's good riddance to bad rubbage, my dear, but he shall

hear of it. I'll have him put in the Perryville Champion, and let the public know of him."

In the meanwhile, Henry was on board of a steamer, on his way to the south-west. He had arisen in the morning with many fears, for the extent of the injury he had inflicted on Hearty, and it's consequences to himself. On meeting Mrs. Coil, knowing as Henry did from her manner, when she held the light to Staylor, that she was not aware of his assault on her husband, he asked her how Hearty was, to discover if the landlord had communicated any thing to her. When he learned Hearty was still abed and asleep, the fears of a coward's conscience whispered him, that the worst results might have taken place. He therefore went forth to the landing, to inquire if there was any steamboat about to depart down the river, resolving if there was, to leave Perryville. Whether Hearty was hurt much or little, Henry knew there would be danger in staying, and Perryville now had no attractions for him, as he had failed both in his schemes of vanity and revenge. At the landing he found a boat, and on hastening up to his lodgings for his trunk, he called at the post office, got several letters, which he did not stop to open, and returning with his baggage borne by Sam, was soon on board the steamer, and rapidly leaving Perryville.

His letters were not of a character to comfort him. The first he opened was from Stansbury, informing him, that great odium was attached to his

name from the affair at the theatre, and that Helen Murray was married to Mr. Davidson, and was soon to leave her native city with her lord, for his estate in the south-west. Henry crushed the letter in his clenched hand, with the wish that he could annihilate all whose names it contained. He started as his eye caught the seal of the next letter, for it was black. He scrutinised the direction; it was in his mother's hand-writing, but so different from the usual precision of her pen, he did not at first recognise it. The letter informed him his father was dead! It was full of lamentations, evidently from a spirit not used to suffering, and overwhelmed by the suddenness of the loss. Mrs. Beckford was a weak woman, but she loved Mr. Beckford, and the death of such a husband, during the absence of their only child, and under the circumstances of his leave-taking, was calculated to bear down a stronger philosophy than hers. While conducting a cause of great moment, Mr. Beckford was taken suddenly ill, with an affliction resembling apoplexy. He was borne from the court to his chamber, in a state of insensibility, and died the next day, without giving any signs of consciousness. Notwithstanding his vast practice, he died insolvent, owing to his own and his wife's extravagance. All these facts Mrs. Beckford communicated to her son, and she concluded with repeated requests and solicitations that he would return home. Subdued, at the moment, by the news, almost to a resolution of reformation, Henry

determined to write to his mother from the first post town at which the boat might stop, expressing his deep sorrow at the event, his sympathies with her at their mutual irreparable loss, and his resolution, instantly, to proceed to New Orleans, and embark on a packet there, for home. He intended to say to his mother, that he had business in New Orleans, in relation to his property, which he had more than two-thirds lost; and but for that, he would have returned immediately home on the reception of her letter. The fact was, he shrunk from appearing among his old associates, perhaps more so now than before, for the influence of his father had gone with him, and not even the consideration of becoming the comforter of his surviving parent could induce him directly to return. His heart was selfish to its core, but he therefore felt not the less these inflictions, he felt them the more as they all bore heavily on himself. The steamer, on which Henry had embarked, was impeded very much on her passage, in consequence of the injury done to her wheels by the immense quantity of drift wood afloat, particularly in the Mississippi. Many boats passed her, and many days elapsed before they stopped at a town, where Henry had a sure and direct channel of communication with his mother. They had passed several places, from which Henry might have had an opportunity of writing, had the boat touched there, but being full freighted, she proceeded past them on her way, nor did Henry make any interest with the

Captain, which he could easily have done, to have his letter sent ashore. After the first impression made by the news of the death of his father had passed from his mind, his anxiety to write to his mother decreased daily, nor was it until after the boat had stopped several hours at Memphis, that Henry wrote to her, stating his intentions of returning home by New Orleans, &c.

After he had written his letter, he went on shore to seek the post-office, and stepped into a tavern to ask its direction. On casting his eye around the bar room, he beheld on the table the Perryville Champion. Attracted by the name, which appeared in large capitals at the head of the paper, Henry took it up and glanced over it. The leading article under the editorial head he instantly discovered to be an account of his assault on Hearty Coil, given in the strong, exaggerated language of the editor, from the mouth of Hearty himself. It wound up by stating that Henry had surreptitiously left Perryville the day after the assault, and concluded with copious extracts from and comments on the accounts given of his conduct and character before he left home, as contained in the newspapers.

The bell of the steamboat rang as Henry, with a burning brow and angry eye, was re-reading for the third time Mr. Finn's editorial. On hearing it he sprang to his feet, tore the newspaper together with his letter to his mother to pieces, and hurried on board.

CHAPTER XIII.

No one felt the loss of Gladsdown Beckford more than Ralph. It was to him a blow that seemed to deprive him of his only friend—of a more than father. In fact his uncle had almost entirely supported him at college. What he obtained from his father was merely an occasional pittance enveloped in pages of economical advice. But his uncle was all generosity and kindness to him, and Ralph was about to pass through college, not only with the reputation of a highly intellectual man, but with the means of liberal expenditures in the enjoyment of any rational and harmless pleasure with his fellow collegians, when this unforeseen death came over his heart and hopes.

Ralph heard not at all of his uncle's indisposition. With a glow of pride he was reading a paragraph in the newspaper, stating that his uncle had made one of his ablest arguments in a cause which occupied public attention, when he received a letter from his aunt, in frantic terms mentioning the death. Ralph instantly obtained leave of absence from college, and hastened home to attend the funeral of his uncle, and do all in his power to console his aunt.

Mournfully he shook his fellows by the hand, for

he felt the gates of his alma mater were about to close on his college career, and the honours which all had expected he would receive, he knew now were not for him, for he was satisfied that the increasing avarice of his father, which grew with his age, would prevent his return. In the dead of the night, he sprung with an effort from his restless couch, on which he had thrown himself in the vain hope of snatching a little sleep, and gathering his cloak around him, he hurried into the stage, while the clouds of the future rolled darkly before him, and more darkly as he attempted to penetrate the shade. As he thought of himself and his prospects, he felt his own to be a disposition unfit for the turmoil and excitement of life, and full, he thought, of gloomy tendencies which required a soothing and cheering spirit to dispel them. Then how natural the vision of Ruth arose to the mind and heart of Ralph, and he determined, if he could not return to college with the same facilities he had enjoyed there under the patronage of his uncle, and remain until he was of age, so that he might graduate with honour, when he would be his own master and receive the little property due him, he would instantly wend westward, and seek his fortune where Ruth's was cast.

He pictured to himself Perryville, as Ruth had described it to him in her letters, and the little farm on which she lived. He thought he saw Billy playing by her side, or saying his task to her in the quiet scene, and he resolved to throw aside ambition and

worldly strife, and live, he believed, happily, oh! how happily, with Ruth, the queen of his destiny. Then the dark thought arose, could it be that fate had so much happiness in store for him? could his cup be so full, so overflowing with joy? and gloom again took possession of his mind. He reverted to his uncle and all his kindnesses to him; recalled to memory his form, and voice, and look, when he last saw him; and, smitten to the heart with the conviction that he should see him no more, Ralph buried his head in his cloak, and wept like a woman.

As soon as Ralph reached the city of his birth, he hurried to the residence of his uncle. The burial was to take place that afternoon. Ralph found his aunt in her chamber, stunned by her loss. She wept bitterly when he entered; and finding his presence seemed to add to her grief, he left the room, and passed into that where lay the mortal remains of the one who had so befriended him. Ralph removed the lid of the coffin noiselessly, like one who feared to awaken a sleeper, and yet as he did so, the wish arose in his breast, almost to its bursting—"Oh! God, that I could reanimate that clay!" Could he have done so, he could not have restored the Promethean heat to a nobler heart, or a manlier brow. The dark hair, just touched with gray, lay heavily on a massive forehead, where intellect was stamped, as with a seal, its impression still lived there so vividly. In every lineament was written ennobling character, and vigorous intellect; or rather in their expression

was the proof of what had been there, while the conviction of what was—the fearful presence and reality of death—pressed the more heavily on the beholder. He looked at the lip, on which a smile seemed to play, and he could hardly realize the fact, that it would speak to him no more.

"My dear uncle," said Ralph, as he gazed upon the features of the dreamless sleeper—"Oh! that you could speak to me; but I will so live and act, that if you could, even from the grave, speak, you would not censure me,"—and he sat down beside the corpse, he knew not how long; nor was he conscious of anything, until an attendant roused him from his gloomy reverie, and led him to his chamber.

A week or so after the burying, Ralph learned that his uncle had died insolvent; and that his aunt was entirely destitute, except what she might receive from Henry. The information he obtained from his father, who made loud complaints against his deceased brother, stating, he had lent him two thousand dollars but a few weeks previous to his death, and should never get a single cent of it.

Ralph was astonished to hear of the pecuniary condition of his uncle, and feeling his deep indebtedness to him, he determined to do his uttermost to contribute to the comfort of his aunt. In a few months he would be of age, and he resolved, if it took every cent of the property which he would then receive in right of his mother, to contribute it to the maintenance of

his aunt. This resolve he communicated to his father, who, our readers may suppose, was awfully astonished.

"By dad," exclaimed the old miser, jumping from his arm-chair in a passion, "Ralph, you are demented. Give all the money you have in the world away to feed your aunt's extravagance—when two thousand dollars of my money has gone to the devil the same way!—good God, did you learn this at college? you never got it from me. I shall never leave you a cent, Ralph; it would be a sin, a crying shame to give you money, when I know it would be squandered. As soon as you are of age, you will take possession of your property, to give it to your aunt, hey? Well, do so, sir; and then you may take possession of yourself and depart from my house. By dad, I'll turn you out on the common; and it will be with you—root, hog, or die!"

Ralph could not but smile at the phrase of his father, ere he replied in his strain,

"I expect, father, I shall root in the western country."

"Yes," retorted the old man, "and you'll die there, too, of starvation. I see what you are after—you are at deception again, Ralph—you're for your love affair with that little vixen, Ruth Lorman, the greatest little hussy I ever knew! Well, you may live on love, I can tell you. Bless my soul! every one that you have anything to do with cheats me. There's your uncle dead, and the two thousand dol-

lars gone with him, yet you are grateful for his support of you at college. Did it cost two thousand dollars? wasn't it my money, if it did? and notwithstanding you are giving your last cent, received, too, through your mother, whom you pretend to love so much, to your aunt. Your aunt! Why, Ralph, do you know that she treated your mother abominably —yes abominably! She scarcely ever called to see her, and when she did it was to put extravagant notions in her head, and create bickerings between us. Yes, I repeat, every one whom you have anything to do with, cheats and bamboozles me. The two thousand's gone I lent your uncle—I never would have lent it to him if I hadn't thought he was kind to you. There's old Lorman, knowing you thought well of him, I lends him a thousand dollars,—that's just as good, I expect, as an insolvent dead man's debts, too, I have no doubt. Merciful Providence! I shall be ruined—have to beg my bread in my old age yet."

"Father," replied Ralph, "you'll have to lose a good many thousands more, folks think and say, before you come to that, unless as a matter of choice."

"Folks say! Who says?" exclaimed the old miser, glancing suspiciously round. "Yes, I may be murdered yet, and all by what folks say. Yes, you nincompoop, and folks say that you might have married that beautiful rich lady, Helen Murray, the daughter of my old friend; but you stood shillyshally

with a sheep's face upon your shoulders, and now she has married, for want of a husband, a man old enough to be the father of both of you, you stultified know-nothing—I waste words—you must do for yourself, that's all."

A week or two previous to the death of his uncle, Ralph had received a letter from Helen Murray, in which she jocularly said she had a notion of changing her name, and she bid him to the bridal. Ralph hardly knew whether it was jest or earnest, and he replied in a similar strain. When, after the burial of his uncle, he inquired after Helen, that he might pay his respects to her, he learned she was married, and that the bridal party had gone on a pleasure jaunt to New York. A few days after this Ralph received a letter from Mrs. Davidson, stating she was shocked at seeing the announcement of the death of his uncle, and making many earnest inquiries as to what property he had left, and as to the condition of Mrs. Beckford. Ralph replied, and fully informed her as to her inquiries.

A few weeks brought the bridal party back, and Ralph hastened, though in the habiliments of mourning, to call upon the bride. He thought he had never seen Helen look half so lovely, yet he could not but smile at the devotedness of the groom.

If Ralph was much struck by the appearance of Helen, she was more impressed with his. He had grown tall and thin; his intellectual brow had expanded, she thought, and the deep shadow of grief

upon his features, and his mourning suit, awakened an interest in her bosom, of which her lord might have been jealous, had he known its extent.

"Indeed, Ralph," said the bride, as he took a seat beside her on the sofa, "I cannot tell you how much I have been distressed by the death of your uncle. And your aunt—what will she do? Where is Henry?"

"In the south-west, I believe," replied Ralph.

"What is he doing?"

"Indeed, I cannot say," said Ralph, unwilling to say anything against his cousin.

"From what I can understand," said Helen, "he has not improved. I am told his associations are becoming worse and worse, and that he is more reckless than ever. A great part of his fortune is gone. I fear—I fear Mrs. Beckford will have very little comfort in him. He was some time in Perryville. You saw the article in the "Chronicle," did you not, recopied from a Perryville paper? Ruth does not say much about him."

"When did you hear from Ruth?" inquired Ralph, quickly.

"A few days since. She is well—unmarried," continued Helen, smiling, "as, I suppose, you know. It is Mr. Davidson's intention to proceed immediately west. I shall see her, and persuade her to visit the south-west with me. Come, you must accompany us."

"I would that I could," exclaimed Ralph; "but I must not leave my aunt. When do you leave?"

"The day after to-morrow. I wrote to Ruth from New York. Come, Ralph,—Mr. Beckford—you must go with us."

"I need no persuasion, you well know, Mrs. Davidson; but I am not yet of age. I shall be in a few months, and I must wait till then to obtain the possession of some property, to speak candidly, not egotistically, with which I may assist my aunt, as you think that Henry will not be able to do so."

After a long conversation about Ruth and the west, and after expressing many heartfelt regrets that he could not now accompany Mrs. Davidson westward, Ralph took his leave, promising to return at three, and dine with herself and husband.

CHAPTER XIV.

After dinner, when Mrs. Davidson and her mother had retired, and Mr. Murray had gone to indulge in a nap, while Ralph and Mr. Davidson were taking wine together; the latter said, with the frankness of a true southerner:

"Mr. Beckford, you will excuse me, sir, if with the impulse of the south, I say to you that, as I adopt all my lady's partialities, I am anxious to show you I am your friend. Mrs. Davidson has informed me of the situation of your aunt, of her son's character, and of your desire to assist her, as you feel indebted to her, and your deceased uncle. She has also told me, that you have certain thoughts that tend westward," here Ralph blushed; "you will possess property I am told, sir, when you arrive at age, which will be in a few months, and you must suffer me to make you any advance you wish, until that time."

Ralph hesitated a moment, was on the eve of politely rejecting the loan, but he thought of his aunt, and said, while mingling emotions almost choked his utterance:

"Mr. Davidson, I thank you, I shall feel deeply indebted to you for the loan."

"No indebtedness whatever, Mr. Beckford," replied Mr. Davidson, "I have the money idle in the

south-west; I have enough without its use, it is entirely at your service. It will be some five or six weeks before I can obtain all of it, however; I must write home first. You must come to the south-west, Mr. Beckford; it is the place for young men. Mrs. Davidson and myself will stop some time at Perryville, which," continued Mr. Davidson with a smile, "I am told has some attractions for you; it is too early yet for us to go south, we shall spend the time there with my friend Mr. Bennington, and my lady is very desirous of being near her friend, Miss Lorman. In the interval, you can arrange your business here, and come to Perryville, and we'll all go to the south-west together. Mrs. Davidson means to persuade Miss Lorman to spend the winter with us. So I offer you great inducements."

"I feel them, sir," replied Ralph, "and to show you that I do, I think I may say, that your kind invitation will be accepted."

Here a servant entered, and told Mr. Davidson that there was a gentleman in the next room who wished to speak with him.

"Who is he?" asked Mr. Davidson.

"I don't know indeed, sir!" was the reply, "he is a very tall gentleman, and he says he must see you. He told me to tell you that his name was Blazeaway."

"Ah! my old friend Staylor—an original, Mr. Beckford—show the gentleman in, John."

John retired, and in a few moments ushered in

our former acquaintance at Perryville, but the outer man was much improved. He had thrown aside his old suit of Kentucky jeans, and appeared in a blue broadcloth suit from top to toe, which was made of the best materials, though certainly not put on with a strict regard to the fashion, though it was made fashionably. His vest was buttoned awry, and though a black silk neckcloth enveloped his neck, it was adjusted very carelessly. Instead of the dray-pin, that stuck from his coat pocket at Perryville, he carried in his hand a stout cane, which was handsomely ornamented, and for which he must have paid a goodly price.

"Ah, my friend Staylor," exclaimed Mr. Davidson, as Staylor entered the room, "I am rejoiced to see you."

"And indeed I am rejoiced to see you, Mr. Davidson," replied Staylor, advancing quickly and grasping the proffered hand of Davidson, "and I give you joy. They tell me you are a-going to take a madam down to the south-west."

"Yes, Staylor, I believe so—take a seat. Mr. Staylor, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Beckford."

"Happy of your acquaintance, Mr. Beckford," exclaimed Staylor, grasping Ralph firmly by the hand, "and I could not say that to one of your name that I met in Perryville."

"Ah, who was that?" asked Ralph, with the conviction that his cousin was meant.

"A chap of not much account," replied Staylor, "not worth talking about, in fact, Mr. Beckford, though he is a namesake of yours. Mr. Davidson, I hope the madam is well."

"Quite well," replied Mr. Davidson, "come, Staylor, I must introduce you to Mrs. Davidson," and the speaker led the way to the withdrawing-room, and made the introduction. Mrs. Davidson had often heard her husband speak of Staylor, and she felt pleased to see him. Entertained by the originality and manliness of his character, she held a long conversation with him, which not a little delighted him, during which Ralph rose and took his leave.

Bitterly Ralph regretted that he could not accompany Helen and her husband to the west, but he experienced a gratification in knowing Helen and Ruth would be together, that somewhat softened the pang, for he felt assured he would be not the less remembered.

Helen was much impressed with the society of the west, as she saw it in Cincinnati and Louisville, in each of which cities she staid several days. A high and haughty beauty, and the belle of one of our largest and wealthiest Atlantic cities, she was not prepared to meet her equals, if not superiors in attraction, in the west; of which, like many others of the east, she had received, she knew not why, impressions of its inferiority.

Showed every attention by the intelligence, fashion

and beauty of the rival cities of the west, she left them on her way to Perryville, where she arrived safe, making the frank confession that she had never beheld lovelier or more accomplished women, or nobler or more courteous men.

We will not stop to dwell upon the meeting between Ruth and Helen, but return to Ralph. After several weeks spent in almost constant attendance on his aunt, who had been compelled immediately on the death of her husband to quit her splendid mansion, discharge her servants, and take private and humble lodgings, Ralph received the promised loan from Mr. Davidson, in a letter postmarked Perryville, and he instantly contributed all his means would allow to render Mrs. Beckford comfortable. She talked to her nephew perpetually of Henry, and informed him that she had heard but once from her son since the death of her husband, when he sent her a small remittance, and said he would return home by the way of New Orleans.

Mr. Davidson, in his letter to Ralph, painted in glowing terms the happiness of the friends at Perryville, and pressed Ralph warmly to join them, and visit the south-west, whither he informed him Ruth would accompany his lady. He told Ralph that as there was now no obstacle in his way, his lady-love would consider him a recreant from his faith if he came not. Helen added a postscript, enjoining him to come, and asserting that Ruth fully expected him. The post after the reception of Mr. Davidson's letter,

Ralph received one from Ruth, expressing her happiness at meeting with Helen, and delicately hinting that they wanted but the presence of another to make their happiness complete. Ralph was left to guess who that other was, but he was not slow in coming to the conclusion. Ralph determined instantly to follow them—what lover would not?—and every moment seemed an age to him, until he put the determination into execution.

Fearful that if he informed his father of his resolution, he would throw some obstacle in his way, Ralph thought it best to write to him on the subject on the eve of his departure, without having an interview with him. He accordingly did so, and four days therefrom he was on the Ohio River, not content even with the swiftness with which the genius of Fulton has contrived to bear the traveller on his way. There was some reason for this, with which the genius of Fulton had nothing to do. The captain of the steamer had advertised to depart from Wheeling at five o'clock on the afternoon of Ralph's arrival in that place. Ralph, therefore, hurried on board, expecting to be off at the hour, but he was kept there until ten o'clock the following morning. Punctuality Ralph soon discovered to be a virtue not much practised by western steamboat-men. He roamed about the boat, in vain endeavouring to dispel a tendency to low spirits, by listening to the slang of the crew below, and in conversing with those around him.

"I have no particular reason for having the blues," thought Ralph to himself; "and, if I had, perhaps I could call up the energies of my spirit to dispel them. These sombre, weird spirits that throng upon us from the vasty deep of feeling and memory are, it seems to me, of that wayward nature, that, as we never call them, they, with malice aforethought, come upon us when we have no particular reason to expect them—seeming content to leave us, when we have real troubles, to those troubles' torments—being satisfied if we are dissatisfied, and never satisfied when we are not. How we try to be amused on such occasions, and to be pleased; 'but pleasure,' says Ninon De Enclos, 'must come extempore.' In trying to dispel a sombre image from the mind we make it, as it were, a reality—an image of *stone*—and this accounts for the phrase 'heaviness of heart.'"

Ralph was struck with the difference in the construction of the eastern and western boats. The eastern boats have their cabins below the deck, while the western ones have theirs above deck, and look somewhat like a house afloat upon the water with a kind of piazza, called the guards, around it. On the guards, which are protected by a railing, it is the custom of the travellers to walk or smoke, instead of on the top of the boat, as is the eastern custom. The top of the western boats covers in the cabin, like the roof of a house, and is called the hurricane deck. It has no railing round it, but nevertheless passengers frequently promenade there.

The boat had been under way for several hours. It was in the afternoon, verging towards night, and Ralph sat upon the guards, unconsciously watching the rippling waters, when his attention was attracted by a person on shore waving a handkerchief at the end of a stick. In a moment more the speed of the boat was slackened, and the person who waved the handkerchief leaped into a canoe, accompanied by a negro, who seized the paddles and made towards the steamboat. The negro did not appear well skilled in the art of propelling the canoe; for he had scarcely made half a dozen strokes with the paddle, when the white man beside him took it from his hands and commenced paddling it himself, which he did with astonishing speed. In a few moments he stood on the deck of the steamer. Throwing a dollar in the canoe to the negro, the white man gave its bow a shove with his foot with such violence as to overthrow the negro, who tumbled into the water.

"Can you swim, Pomp?" exclaimed the stranger. "Not a stroke!" he continued, as he observed the negro sink. "Stop steamer!" he cried, throwing his stick on the deck. He was in the act of leaping in, when the negro rose to the top of the water, and adroitly seizing the side of the canoe, succeeded in getting into it.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the stranger, "why, you black fool, can't you keep balance?"—throwing more silver to him—"there's something more for a dram."

"Good by, Master Staylor!" shouted the negro, catching a paddle from the bottom of the canoe, as the one he had floated off.

"Good by, Pomp!" returned Staylor, for it was that individual, "take care of yourself, old boy, and thank God you're a nigger, for the devil can't burn you any blacker than you are."

As soon as Ralph caught the eye of Staylor he knew him, notwithstanding his change of dress, for he appeared in the suit of Kentucky jeans, in which we first introduced him to our readers, and, instead of the cane which Ralph had seen in his possession at Mr. Davidson's, he stooped to the deck of the steamboat and picked up the identical dray-pin which he carried in his pocket at Perryville. Ascending the steps from the lower to the boiler deck, Staylor caught Ralph, who stood there, by the hand, with the gripe of a Hercules, exclaiming—

"Mr. Beckford, I am glad to see you; you are welcome to the west. Hurra for the Ohio! I love her like a mother. I suppose you didn't know me at first sight. The fact is, Mr. Beckford, give me, in spite of your dandies, old clothes and old friends—they set easy—we are used to them. That suit you saw me wear, as I never will have but one with me I gave my brother. He is pretty much my size, but not so active a man as I am. So I made him a present of it for taking care of this one, with my dray-pin, while I was away. I wore it, because"—Staylor was interrupted by the cabin boy, a little black fellow,

who seemed a greenhorn, for he pulled Staylor by the coat, and told him he must go below, meaning among the deck passengers, evidently supposing that Staylor, from his dress, had not taken a cabin passage.

"There," exclaimed Staylor, laughing, "You can see why I wore a better dress when you saw me. I had got among a race who judge people, like this nigger, by appearances. That little rascal," pointing towards the boy, "would be worth five hundred dollars where I came from. I be d—d if I haven't a scheme in my head, that is as good as any that Clay, Calhoun, or Webster ever originated."

"What is that," asked Ralph.

"Why, to get Pennsylvany to sell all her free niggers to the south, and to put the proceeds to internal improvements. Well, as that little black imp thinks I ought to be among the deck passengers, I will just go below and look at them."

So saying, Staylor left Ralph, and descending the steps proceeded aft. Ralph entered the cabin, and found the boat had a great number of passengers of as motley character as could well be described. There were several dandies among them, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and merchants' clerks going west, some of the latter as collectors of debts for their employers. There sat a solemn looking man reading a Bible, presented to the steamboat, by the Young Men's Bible Society—there an individual looking over his accounts—before the glass stood a fop, cultivating the

growth of his whiskers, and around the table a group were seated playing cards. Others were laying listlessly in their berths, or trying to amuse themselves by looking through the windows at the scene, which, from the progress of the boat, was changing continually.

While Ralph was engaged in observing his fellow passengers, Staylor re-entered the cabin, and taking off his hat near the door, said in a loud voice, address the company:

"Strangers, I tell you what it is—just listen to me a moment—there's an old lady down below among those deck people, who is old enough, and genteel enough to be the mother of any man in this cabin. She has a son away down the river, below the mouth, and word has come to her that he is very sick. The old lady has raked and scraped all she had in the world to go to him, and there she is below, not able to pay her passage in the cabin. The fact is, strangers, we must raise a collection for her, there's no mistake in it. If there's any man here that can't afford to take from his family, why he has a good excuse, but every other man must give. I go in this much," and Staylor took two dollars from his pocket, held them up to the eye of all, and then dropping them in his hat, he proceeded to hand it round. "Strangers," he continued, "I once heard a preacher, down the river, preach a charity sermon, and when they came to take up the collection, as he saw none but coppers falling into the hat, he told the man that carried it to hand it to him, and he himself would hand

it round. So he did, and when a generous chap put in a bank note, the old fellow called out thankfully, 'thank God for bank notes.' This is as good a cause as that, strangers, remember the widow and the orphan, the sick and the needy. A good many of you are from home; suppose you are taken sick, wouldn't you like your mother, or your wife to come to you? Do as you would be done by—so shell out."

Staylor's impressive manner and appearance, together with his oddity, had the desired effect, and every one to whom he handed his hat, gave liberally. When Staylor reached the man with the Bible, who had a clerical look, he said:

"Ah! now we shall get something! If ten good men could save a city, one good man can save a steamboat: so there's no danger from boilers bursting;" and he held his hat to the person, who hesitated, and at last said he would not give any thing.

Staylor scrutinized his dress, which was of the finest stuff, and asked—

"Stranger, can't you spare it?"

"Yes, I can spare it," replied the person addressed, "and would, but I don't know that the woman is a worthy object."

"Then, stranger, come below with me and see for yourself."

"I cannot now," replied the stranger, casting his eye on the Bible, as if he did not wish to be interrupted, "I am engaged."

"Stranger, do you preach the gospel?" inquired Staylor.

"Yes, I have preached, and do preach."

"You do, hey; well, if that's a Bible you have in your hand, I suppose you haven't come to the place yet concerning the good Samaritan and the High Priest. Read on. Come, strangers, shell out. Staylor went the rounds of the boat, and raised a considerable sum of money, with which he paid the captain for a cabin passage for the old lady—making him take much less than the usual charge: for Staylor remarked to him that he must give in that way. After the old lady's passage was paid there were fifteen dollars over, which Staylor counted out on the table, and said—

"Strangers, if you say so, we'll give this overplus to the old lady."

"Agreed! agreed!" they all called out; and Staylor went below—assisted the old lady, who was a very respectable looking woman, through the gentlemen's cabin into the ladies' apartment, and coming out he said—

"Come, one of you, in with me, till I give her the money—that you may know all's right. It might have hurt her feelings to give it to her here before every body."

When supper was placed on the table, Staylor conducted the old lady from the ladies' cabin, and, handing her a seat at the table, he took one below her, among the gentleman, nearly opposite to the

individual who called himself a preacher. As soon as the bell rang, Staylor, sans cérémonie, thrust his fork into a cold roast pig and began to carve it. The preacher looked at him sternly, and, stretching out his hands over the table, said, "Wait till I ask a blessing."

Staylor laid down his knife and fork, folded his arms deliberately, and eyed the preacher from head to foot with a look of such withering scorn and contempt that he arrested the attention of all at table, while the preacher sank and quailed beneath it. "Stranger," at last said Staylor, in a tone correspondent with his look, "you need give yourself no trouble, for, by God, your soul's of no account!"

The man could not stand the rebuke: he took a seat impulsively; called for tea and coffee in the same breath—glanced round the table, and hastily rising from his chair, left the cabin.

When the supper was over, Staylor followed Ralph out on to the guards, and said—

"Mr. Beckford, I know all about that preaching chap, though he don't know me. I have as much respect for the cloth, sir, as any other man; it's such rascals as he that brings disgrace on it. He was once a lawyer—and couldn't get on at it; he then turned merchant—failed with pocket full and paid nobody; got cheated by a keener rogue than himself—and turned preacher, to live by the Bible, but not according to it."

CHAPTER XV.

STAYLOR took a seat by Ralph as he concluded his remark about the preacher, and as the shades of the evening gathered round them, they sat seemingly each occupied with his own thoughts, but not unconscious of the pleasure of his companion's company. Staylor was the first to interrupt the silence, which he did by remarking:

"I seem lively, I suppose you think, since I have been on board, but I can't say it's from the heart, and yet these chaps to-day looked at me as if they thought I never had a care. I've just parted with my old mother, Mr. Beckford, and it's touched me somehow more than I've been touched for years—she is living with my brother, but, you see, I was always the favourite. I was the worst, and she thought more about me, and loved me, maybe, therefore, the most. She is a pious woman, and I felt to-day, when she gave me her blessing, that there was something in it—but I don't know, I'm not lively—I took several parting-drinks with my brothers, and when I came aboard—I feel my steam is getting down now, and I must wood. Come, the least drop in the world can't hurt you."

Ralph assented, and they entered the social hall, and drank together.

"Capting, come take something," said Staylor, addressing that worthy, who at this moment entered the social hall. The captain said he had no objection—the decanter was handed to him, and Staylor drank again to be polite. He pressed Ralph to replenish his glass, but he refused.

"You're right," said Staylor, "if you don't want it don't take it, but I'm one of those kind of men that can't or won't say no to a good horn. And yet I never was drunk in my life, that is to say, so far gone that I couldn't navigate. My brain's never drunk, but my blood often is. We have a man down south—we had him, the devil has him now—he was rich, and had everything around him that was splendid—but I wouldn't be in his shoes for all his lands. He treated every body bad about him, his sons bad, his daughters bad, and it was no wonder then that he treated his niggers bad. His conscience plagued him awfully in his old age. It plagued him so that he couldn't get drunk. I've seen him try to drown it, till the liquor he had in him would have killed any other man, but drunk wouldn't come. Capting, when shall we get to Ballton?"

"In about a half an hour," replied the Captain—"the Alexander's there, and I'm told she is going to give us a race."

"Is she?" exclaimed Staylor; "she's a fast boat, but the night promises to be cloudy."

Another half-hour brought the steamer to Ballton, and, as there had been both a race and a religious convention, one near the town and the other in it, on this day, the boat obtained a considerable increase of passengers. The Alexander had her steam up, determined to test the speed of the boat on which Ralph and Staylor were, and which, for the sake of a name, we will call the Turtle. When the Turtle stopped, as she was known to have much better accommodations than the other boat, many of the passengers of the latter left her, and came on board of the Turtle.

The night had set in, and a hazy mist prevailed, through which an occasional star glimmered, watery and indistinct. Here and there heavy clouds were gathering in the heavens, which seemed to threaten a storm, but the pilot observed that he would not be surprised if a wind arose, and the mist and clouds were dispelled. The Turtle, finding the Alexander was anxious to leave port before her, so as to be a-head, rung her bell as soon as she had taken the wood-boat in tow, and proceeded onward. Ralph stood on the guards, watching the bustle and confusion amidst the passengers and the citizens as the bell rung, the first hurrying to get aboard, and the last as much hurried to get ashore. The hasty leave-taking—the more last words called out from the departing passenger to his friend ashore, and the injunction not to forget such and such a message, echoed back, were all over, and the Turtle held her

way ahead. The Alexander left port but a moment after her, and came barking on her track, like a blood-hound from the slip, or like a high-mettled racer trained for the contest. Just below Ballton the banks on the river are abrupt and high. Through the haze to the eye of Ralph they loomed mountainous and overwhelming, while from the many short bends in the stream it was constantly seeming to the beholder as if the boat would dash immediately against the precipices that often appeared directly before it as if it dammed up the river, on which the light from the fires of the steamer cast a strong glare for a short distance, while beyond the darkness was deeper from the contrast. The Alexander could easily have passed the Turtle while the latter had the wood-boat in tow, had it not been for the narrowness of the channel in this place. As it was, the Alexander pressed close behind the Turtle, and her hands and even passengers called loudly on the latter to give way, but at this the Turtle threw loose the lines of the wood-boat, and kept her place ahead, apparently by her superior speed, for the distance between them was now increased. Ralph turned to make some inquiry of Staylor, and found that he had left his side. After gazing a few moments more on the scene, Ralph entered the cabin. He found it crowded with passengers, a number of whom had clustered round Staylor, who had seated himself on the end of the table, and, with the front of his hat cocked up, and the light shining down from the sus-

pended lamp on his strong features, he was amusing them with his remarks. As Ralph looked round, not seeing the preacher among the number, he inquired of the Captain where he was.

"Gone!" said the Captain; "he couldn't stand Staylor," pointing to him. "I tell you what, he cares for nobody, he's a caution."

"Talking about drinking," said Staylor, to those about him, I know it's wrong, too much of it I mean; and I met a temperance society fellow the other day, and he slyly took me to task about it. Well, I didn't say much, for when I know I'm wrong, I never say I'm right; but when we stopped I had my own fun, for this temperance man eat more than any fellow I ever met with, eating was meat and drink both to him. When we got into the stage again, I poked fun at him all day so hard, that he thought proper to stop and rest, and take the accommodation line, that stops at night, and we dashed on in the regular mail line. Temperance is temperance, and if a man eats too much, it is just as bad as drinking too much, and then as to his temperance of temper, he didn't pretend to it. He had no more chance with us, than a bob tail bull in fly time; we used him up. Ha, ha, ha! speaking of drinking, I couldn't but laugh at a neighbour of mine, who killed himself with hard drink. He died of *mania a potu*, I think the doctors call it; I know it's Latin. Luke didn't think so, he held it plain English, for I went to see him when he was on his last legs, stretched out on his bed, and

just after a fit, when he had been fancying he walked on his head, and that the bedstead had stolen his legs, and wanted to walk off with them; and I said to him, 'Well, Luke, how goes?' 'Ah Blazeaway,' says he, 'I shall have to go the journey, the doctor says I've got the *pormanteau*.' Ha, ha!" laughed Staylor heartily, and then after a moment of thought he added: "And he did go the journey, poor fellow, and many a worse man has gone it before him.' Yes, as Bobby Burns says, a chap who loved a glass himself, I say,

> With such as he, where'er he be,
> May I be saved or damn'd.

and I'll be ——" Staylor was just about adding an emphatic oath, when a personage joined the group around, much like him who proclaimed himself a preacher, and who, judging from his garb, might be a divine or might not. Staylor hesitated, from a sentiment of respect, to give utterance to the oath. At this moment the little black cabin boy, who wished to send Staylor below, passed by from the ladies' cabin on some errand, and trod on the foot of the individual whose presence had abated Staylor's sentence. The man drew back his afflicted member, and with a tremendous oath, gave the boy a kick that certainly hastened his speed. At this Staylor burst out into a horse laugh, and eyeing the man from head to foot, he nodded his head to and fro, like one who has caught a new idea; drawing his knees up

so as to embrace them with both his arms, as he sat on the table, he exclaimed: "Stranger, I'd give a fifty dollar bill for your face."

"What do you mean, sir?" said the stranger, speaking angrily.

"Mean," replied Staylor, eyeing him all over, and laughing, "I mean what I say, I'd give a fifty dollar bill for your face, for if I had it, I'd make my fortune selling tracts."

A loud laugh broke from every one present. The stranger looked at Staylor, like one who wished to pick a quarrel, but could not screw his courage to the sticking point, when he beheld the huge proportions of his adversary. After gazing at Staylor a moment irresolutely, he drew his hat over his brow, and entered the social hall, with no very social feelings.

"That," said Staylor, pointing after him, "is one of your amphibious fellows, there's no telling what side he's on; he's astraddle of the fence, ready to serve God or devil, as best suits his pockets; he see-saws between saint and sinner, determined to take the strong side. Look at his coat, you can't tell whether it is methodist or not, or quaker or what-not, it's shad belly and it a'n't shad belly; his hat has a broad brim, and a sharp top. Ha, ha, ha! I suspect he is amphibious in other respects; that while he pretends to belong to the cold-water society, he creeps ashore sometimes like an alligator, and lays down on the sunny side of a distillery. Strangers,

if there is one thing I scorn in this world more than another, it is hypocrisy. If I enlisted with the devil himself, it would be on the agreement, that he should show his flag, his bloody banner, and I would set up for ensign myself, that it might float free, so that people should not be taken under false pretence, come to us as friends, and find us foes. We go very fast, don't we?" he continued, getting down from the table; "how the boat shakes, she puffs like a porpoise. I expect we are racing it."

"Racing it!" echoed a nervous, gouty man, on crutches, who had just come in from the guards; and who had been hobbling about in a state of inquietude ever since the boats started; "it's awful, we have been racing it this hour."

"We're ahead, a'n't we?" asked Staylor.

"Yes," replied a one-eyed, hard-featured man, who entered immediately behind Staylor, and who appeared to be a "river character," perhaps belonging to the boat; "we're ahead, and likely to keep so; and we will, if it takes all old Dobbin's barrels of rosom. I'll turn in, anyhow."

"You are right," said Staylor, turning to go out and observing the speaker was one-eyed; "you must make the most of your time, for I see it takes you twice as long to sleep, as it does another man."

"Look here, Mister, do you want to pass an insult?" exclaimed the one-eyed man, while the Cyclopian member flashed with all the ire that would have

beamed from both, had the other been able to do duty.

"None in the world, stranger," said Staylor, good humouredly—"it's only a joke; it's all in your eye. Come let's drink together."

"Agreed," said the one-eyed man; and he and Staylor proceeded to the bar and drank deeply to their better acquaintance; when the former quietly retired to his berth, and the latter walked out on the guards and stood by Ralph, who had preceded him.

The scene was one likely to live in the memory of Ralph. Frowning immediately before him, (for the river here was very winding, and thus the effect was produced,) was a bold and high cliff, against which the boat seemed hurrying to its destruction. The haze had passed off from the bosom of the river; but here and there dark clouds floated over the sky, between which the stars appeared cold but clear; for though the clouds lay in dark masses between them, the patches of sky were as blue as if the heavens were cloudless. Just above the peak of the precipice a new moon floated through cloud and sky, like a frail bark on the troubled sea; while the huge forest, on either side of the river, seemed to form a channel to direct the eye to it. Immediately before the boat, the light flashed forth fiercely on the dark bosom of the wave, appearing like a mass of molten gold, thrown into a sea of lead. As the river was low, its banks high, with tall trees upon them, which increased their apparent height, while

the waves cast back, here and there, the strong reflection of cloud and sky, it made the heavens appear much higher and farther off, and struck the beholder, in connexion with the surrounding scenery, with sensations of the sublime.

Behind the Turtle, the scene was of a different character, and Ralph dwelt upon it with fearful interest; for it was the first time he had ever been a witness to such a one. The Alexander was not more than fifteen or twenty feet behind the Turtle, pressing immediately in her wake. If the Turtle had run aground, or any accident had happened, to have stopped her, before the speed of the Alexander could have been lessened sufficiently to prevent injury, in all human probability, she would have dashed, with great violence, against the Turtle.

But what struck Ralph most, was the dark forms of the fire-men on board the Alexander, as they moved before the fire, stirring it up and throwing wood into the furnace. Though the evening was rather chilly, several of them had, from the heat and excitement, stripped off their shirts and with their persons naked to the waist, they were feeding the fire, which consumed as fast as it was fed. There was one mammoth negro, who particularly arrested Ralph's attention. He caught the large logs of wood up and cast them on the fire, as easily as a boy would have thrown upon it as many willow switches. His black form and countenance glowing in the glare, the energy with which

be laboured, the muscular power that his naked chest and arms exhibited, together with the occupation in which he was engaged, brought to the mind of Ralph, the idea of one of Satan's devils feeding the infernal flames. Every now and then, the firemen would cast their eyes towards the Turtle; and if they thought they had gained upon her, they would give a quick, startling yell; which, from the surrounding scenery, might well call up fancies of the past, and almost make the white man think the Indian was pursuing him in one of his own "fire canoes."

"She's doing her hardest," said Staylor to Ralph, "but I don't think she gains much."

At this moment the voice of the captain of the Alexander could be distinctly heard and himself seen as he leaned over the boiler-deck, and looking at the hands below, called out in an excited and angry tone—

"Keep the fires up there, boys! give her all the steam you can. Mate, get out quick a barrel of rosin from below, and try them. Keep the steam up, I tell you!"

"That fellow means to go his death," exclaimed Staylor, to the crowd around him; for the passengers, with various feelings, had gathered on the guards. "He means to go his death. He has spunk, any how: I like to see it." And Staylor, who had become very much excited at the scene, and with what he had drunk, exclaimed, calling out to the crew and passengers of the Alexander, "Good-bye,

stranger—you can't do it—good-bye. Which way? are you for Cincinnati? When we have got there, done our business, and are leaving, we'll mention you'll be down in a week or two."

"Make way!" cried out the pilot of the Alexander—who could be distinctly heard on board the Turtle,—with an awful oath, "make way—give us part of the channel, and we'll pass you now."

"You may have all of the channel," retorted Staylor, "behind us; but—"

"We'll have that before you, too," interrupted the pilot of the Alexander, "if we have to ride over you. I'll mash your mouth when I meet you."

"Ha! ha! ha!—it takes two to play that game, stranger. Blazeaway is my motto!"

"It's Blazeaway Staylor, from the lower country," remarked the pilot to a man standing beside him, as Staylor's voice rung in their ears, for he had the lungs of a Stentor, "if they don't beat us it won't be his fault."

According to the order of the captain of the Alexander, the firemen had thrown on the fire a considerable quantity of rosin, and in a few moments it emitted a dark, gloomy smoke, in which innumerable shining sparks flashed like the stars amidst the clouds above. It was now evident to all that the Alexander was gaining on the Turtle.

"Where's the capting?" called out Staylor, as he observed the advance of the other boat. "He must use rosin, too—they'll be in to us, or pass us, soon if

we don't. Capting!" he continued, at the top of his voice, "where the devil is the capting?"

"Here," replied the captain of the Turtle, who answered from the roof of the hurricane-deck, where he stood beside the pilot.

"Capting!" returned Staylor, "a'n't you going to give us a touch of rosin?"

"No, no!" exclaimed many of the passengers, whose fears for their safety had become aroused, "let them pass us."

"Let them pass us! not without a trial, I hope," said Staylor. "Come down, Capting."

At Staylor's request the Captain descended, when that worthy grasped him by the shoulder, and pulling him hastily aside, said—

"The devil, Capting, you are not going to let them beat you, are you?"

"No," said the Captain, "I'll be blowed if I am, let's drink something."

"Agreed," replied Staylor, "I'm for a little brandy, in the way of rosin, myself. They're pressing hard on us; come, let's be quick."

They entered the social hall together, and again drinking heartily, they returned, when the Captain called out to the firemen to get some rosin. The order was obeyed, and in a few moments clouds of smoke, as dark as that of the Alexander, and full of glittering sparks, were, emitted by the Turtle.

Great excitement prevailed on both boats. The river was here broader than above, and the Alexan-

der had advanced so far that her bow was within a few feet of the stern of the Turtle, but in turning so as to enable her to get along side of the latter, she neccessarily lost some headway, and fell a few feet behind.

"Keep her in the track," called out the captain of the Alexander to his pilot, "and if they won't make way, go over them."

"Take care of yourself," called out the pilot of the Turtle to him of the Alexander, "mind the law. If you strike us, I'll shoot you, mister. Tom," he continued in a lower voice, speaking to the assistant pilot, "go into my berth, and bring me my rifle, prime her anew. If that fellow won't mind the law, I'll inflict the punishment."

His assistant obeyed his request, and brought him the rifle.

"Did you prime her?" asked the pilot.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Did you try if she was loaded?"

"No, I did not, you didn't tell me."

"Well, try."

The assistant tried, and said "she is loaded."

"Well, put her here, then," rejoined the pilot, "just at my right. Fair play is a jewel, and if he won't give the jewel, he shall take the lead."

In the meantime, Staylor, who knew all about steamboats, as he had been for many years a pilot on the western waters himself, had gone below

among the firemen, bearing a bottle of whisky and a glass. He treated them all round.

"Old Virginny never tire," exclaimed the negroes after they had drunk.

"That's right, boys," replied Staylor, "steamboat men can't do without steam, at least when they're for going ahead."

Under her immense press of steam, the Turtle trembled in every joint. It seemed as if she must shake to pieces. Intense excitement possessed the crew, and some of the passengers, but the most of them were very much frightened. There were several ladies on board the Turtle, and as the Alexander pressed so closely to her side, they shrunk in their cabin, and advancing to the entrance of the gentlemen's cabin, implored whoever they saw to beg the captain to race no longer.

"We have done all we could, madam—we have done all we could, ladies. Come out yourself and ask the captain," said the old gentleman on crutches, "we shall be blown up—merciful Providence, we shall be blown up!"

Here Staylor entered the cabin, followed by a number of the passengers, who sought to find in his cool recklessness security—in the presence of his courage, trying to abash their fears.

"She's gaining on us," said Staylor, throwing himself into a seat, in the stern of the gentlemen's cabin, where he could look out of the door leading on to the guards, on the side where the Alexander

would have to pass them, if she could succeed in doing so. "She gaining on us, and we have done our best—the boat shakes like a coward—she quivers too much. Well, if the other fellow can beat us fairly, let him do it. Yes," he continued, looking through the door at the Alexander, who had got her bows nearly aside of the wheel house of the Turtle, "she gains on us amazing. There must have been something wrong in her machinery at first, and they've found it out, and righted it. The last time she turned her bows to pass us, she fell back. Now you see she's got nearly on to the other side of the river, and yet has gained. I thought this was a better boat. She's for taking the start on us at Turner's point, I see what she's after. You see we have the advantage of her, because we'll hug the shoulder of the point, and not have so much water to go over, she expects to dart ahead there, and she takes the other side to come on ahead of us, as it's shoal between. This is a good place for passing, if she has the speed."

In a few moments the Turtle reached Turner's Point, and the other boat had gained on her so much as to be thought, on the opposite side of the river, nearly side and side with her.

"Ah!" exclaimed Staylor, as the Turtle was turning the Point, "now's the time! You see we have her a little—that's because she has to turn her bows this way, and that makes her lose ground. Now she goes it! You see her bows are pointed right at

us: she's taking too short a turn; but she can't afford to lose time."

"She looks as if she was coming right into us!" exclaimed several of the passengers at once, in great alarm.

"That's a fact," replied Staylor, rising from his chair, and looking through the door, over the heads of those who stood on the guards, "she comes on finely."

"Can't you," said Ralph to Staylor, "get the captain to put an end to this; the ladies are terribly frightened."

Staylor looked at Ralph with a sarcastic smile, to see if any of the alarm had communicated to him; but, discovering by Ralph's tone and features, that he did not seem to fear much on his own account, Staylor replied, laying his hand on Ralph's shoulder—

"Wait a moment; if they don't get ahead of us here they'll give it up. I swear I forgot we had ladies on board; frightened men never worry me, but a frightened woman's a different thing: they've a right to be frightened—and no shame neither—it's natural to them."

"My God, she'll be into us!" exclaimed several of the passengers on the guards opposite the Alexander; and, as they spoke, they hurried into the cabin in such haste that some fell and others pitched over them.

The exclamations, from many voices, of "Stop

her!" "Do you mean to run us down!" mingled with the prayers of the women, the imprecations of the men, and the splash of the water, together with the noise made by the engines, and the attendant danger from the approximation of the boats themselves—for the Turtle was close into the shore, and could not avoid the contact of the Alexander, if her pilot should so choose—formed a scene of dread and dismay seldom surpassed. Many of the females had rushed into the gentlemen's cabin to obtain that mental relief which danger finds in companionship, and clinging to the hope that they would be assisted by the sterner sex.

The man on crutches, at this crisis, danced about, in the agony of his fear, upon them, as though they had endowed him with a power of locomotion beyond all others.

Staylor looked at him for a moment in a kind of wonderment, and then said to him, as though he was calmly making an inquiry—

"You look frightened, stranger?"

"Yes, sir. Oh, my God! I am frightened!—what's to become of me!"

"That's the question," replied Staylor, putting a quid between his teeth, "for the fact is, stranger, if this boat goes down, the only part of you that ever gets to shore, will be your sticks!"

At this moment, the glare from the fire of the Alexander, flashed fearfully through the cabin windows of the Turtle—the women screamed and covered

their heads—the men started to their feet, when a sharp noise like the report of a rifle was heard. A wild cry was uttered by the crews of both vessels, and in a moment more, the Alexander came against the Turtle with such a tremendous crack, that those on their feet were thrown prostrate on the floor of the cabin—the suspended lamp was broken to pieces—and the lights on the tables, and most of the tables themselves, were thrown on the floor. There was a moment of awful suspense; "the boldest held his breath for awhile," and the next instant, Staylor called out through the door, "Put out your fire—quick—let off your steam, you fools."

Brought somewhat to their senses by Staylor's voice, many of the passengers, particularly several gentlemen given to dress, sprang to take charge of their baggage.

"Here, let's look to the women," said Staylor, lifting an unextinguised light from the carpet; but the gentlemen were too much engaged with themselves. In the midst of their confusion, the little black cabin boy darted into the cabin, wringing his hands in the violence of his fright, and exclaiming:

"The biler'll burst, O! the biler will burst."

"Here," said Staylor, addressing the boy with a voice cool as an undertaker's, but not so mournfully modulated, "here boy, are you particularly engaged?"

"No, sir," ejaculated the affrightened urchin.

"Then," rejoined Staylor, "while these gentlemen are taking care of their baggage, do you take care of mine."

Struck with his cool self-possession, every one, notwithstanding the critical situation, turned to look at Staylor, who put his hand in his pocket, and deliberately drawing forth a clean sham shirt collar, he handed it to the black boy, and turning to the one-eyed man who had been asleep when the boats struck, and who was huddling his clothes together, he said:

"Why, stranger, you tumbled from that upper berth, all in white, like a rat from a meal bin."

"Who the devil are you," asked the one-eyed man, turning his head round to enable his remaining organ of sight to take a full view of Staylor's person. Before Staylor could reply, an explosion, loud as the roar of many pieces of artillery burst upon every ear, and as it died away, reverberating over the hills and waters, shrieks, groans and cries arose, that froze every heart with horror.

Staylor glanced quickly round at his fellow passengers, and perceiving no one appeared hurt, he exclaimed:

"We or the other boat has burst its boiler;" he sprang towards the door and hurried out. In a moment he discovered from the smoke and cries, that the accident had happened on board the Alexander, whose bow had struck, in a slanting manner, the wheel house of the Turtle, and smashed it into a thousand

pieces. If the former had hit the latter plumply, she would, in all probability, have sunk her. As it was, both boats were much injured, and were jammed together. Staylor at a leap, lit upon the deck of the Alexander, and beheld a most appalling sight. Dead, mangled, burnt and scalded bodies lay around him.

"Pitch me over, Master, for God sake, or give me water!" exclaimed the Herculean negro fireman, whom we have described, as in unutterable agony he lay upon the deck, and not knowing what he did, tore the flesh from his scalded body by the handful, like pealings from an onion. As he spoke, he dragged himself to the edge of the boat, and attempted to throw himself overboard, when he was prevented by Staylor.

The scene was too shocking to describe. Five firemen, two women, a child, and three men, deck passengers, were scalded to death. Five others were scalded badly, it was thought mortally, and nine others were seriously injured. The wounded were immediately placed in berths, or laid on the floor of the cabin on beds, and every possible attention that circumstances would allow was shown to them; but it was a poor consolation, to the friends of those who died, to remember that had their lives been guarded half as well as their wounds were dressed, the awful accident would not have happened.

Ralph Beckford exerted himself, with true philanthropy, to the utmost of his power; but the recollec-

tion of the scene, whenever he thought of it, though long afterwards, made him shudder in every nerve.

It is marvellous and most melancholy to observe the reckless disregard of life and limb, which exists in this and other respects, on the western waters. It will never be remedied until Congress takes hold of the subject, and, by severe enactments, makes all those who have control on such occasions, penally responsible for all injuries that occur from their carelessness or ignorance. Justice as well as humanity demand such enactments: travelling never will be half as safe on the western waters as it should be, until they are made.

"Yes," said one of the hands of the Alexander, as he assisted in removing the dead body of one of his companions, "this never would have happened if it hadn't been for the pilot of the Turtle—he ought to be strung up for it."

"Strung up for what?" inquired the pilot of the Turtle, who stood within hearing, though on the deck of his own boat, with his arms folded and looking sullenly on the scene. "Strung up for what? Blast you, I'd give you a bullet for much."

"Try it!" replied the fireman—a white man—speaking fiercely.

"Come," said Staylor, "there's enough of this. Did you shoot the pilot of the other boat?"

"I did," replied the pilot, "and I'll abide by it. Was he not coming right down on us? didn't I warn him off often enough?"

"He would have kept off if you hadn't a shot him," replied the fireman, "and I say that you ought to be taken and given up to justice."

"Take me, then, if you think so," replied the pilot, though his voice evidently faltered a little; but he continued and addressed Staylor, saying:

"He was coming right down on us; I warned him off, but he came ahead; and if he meant to come into us, did I not serve him right? I tell you, sir, I thought besides that I might save the lives of our people if I dropped him. He was coming right into us, and if the Alexander was left to herself, I thought the tide, as we were going down river, would keep her off—so it would if she hadn't been under such headway. What headway she was under is now plain to every body; for what made her boiler burst?"

"Stranger," said Staylor to him, "I don't know you; there may be some truth in what you say, and the whole business was in hot blood. I tell you what, unless you mean to stand a tough time of it, you had better be off."

The pilot took the hint; for, half an hour afterwards, as the alarm and confusion subsided, when it was talked of among the passengers of both boats as expedient and proper to arrest and give him up to justice, it was discovered he had gone ashore, no one knew where.

CHAPTER XVI.

All that night the boats lay together; the Alexander with her boiler bursted, and of course useless until another was obtained; and the Turtle unable to proceed, in consequence of the broken condition of her wheelhouse and buckets. Few on board of either boat slept, for the groans of the miserable sufferers reached every ear and heart. Though Staylor, by his recklessness, had assisted may be in bringing on the catastrophe, he was not wanting in humanity to the afflicted. He and Ralph were the most active of all in rendering assistance; they were up all night, giving every aid and comfort in their power.

There were several dandies on board of the Alexander, towards whom Staylor entertained an unconquerable aversion. It seemed not misplaced in this case, at least with regard to three of them, for they, as soon as quiet was restored, and there was no more danger to be apprehended, slily betook themselves to their berths.

In the morning, without even asking after the condition of the injured, two of them got up, and displaying their dressing boxes with great formality and care, they commenced the duties of their toilet.

Staylor, who had just entered the cabin of the

Turtle, from the other boat, where he had been engaged all night, cast his eyes on these gentlemen at their vocation, and after inspecting them for several minutes, as if he doubted to what race they belonged, he called sternly and loudly for the cabin boy. The urchin soon made his appearance, and Staylor demanded of him: "Where's the baggage, my baggage, I gave you last night."

"Your baggage, master?" ejaculated the boy, with a look of astonishment.

"Yes, my baggage, you black rascal, if you've lost my baggage, I'll take your ears off close to your head. I can't afford to buy baggage for you to lose."

"What baggage, Master?" asked the boy, imploringly.

"Why, my indispensable baggage, my clean sham shirt collar, like that gentleman's!" said Staylor, pointing to one of the persons we have named, who at that moment, was adjusting with much precision, a sham collar round his neck.

"Oh! it's in my other jacket pocket I believe," replied the boy, his face brightening up, "I'll get it, sir."

"Well," said Staylor, authoritatively, "be in a hurry, I want to dress for breakfast."

As the boy left the cabin to get the collar, Staylor walked across the floor, with the eyes of all the passengers turned on him, and picking up a piece of a mirror, which had been shattered in the night by the

collision of the boats, he drew a chair between the two young gentlemen, whose berths, lower ones, happened to join each other. Each had his dressing case in his berth, with the glass of it so arranged that he could view himself. Drawing his chair, as we have said, between them, Staylor, with affected nicety, took two pins from the cuff of his old jeans coat, and with them contrived to fasten the broken bit of the mirror on the board that formed the partition between their berths. Having done this, he called for the cabin boy, with a manner and tone of affected softness, which was so well acted, that notwithstanding the gloom that hung over every one present, there was scarcely an individual, save the two young gentlemen, who could refrain from laughing. At this moment, the cabin boy returned with Staylor's sham in his hand, which was not at all the smoother from having been mashed in his pocket.

"Ah, waiter," said Staylor, in a simpering tone, "that's it. I wish you'd tell those scalded persons not to groan so, it disturbs my nerves, and I can't adjust my collar."

Staylor's satire took, all understood instantly what he meant, and amidst a roar of laughter, at the objects of his ridicule, he with great formality, fixed his sham collar. During the operation, the young gentlemen put up their dressing cases with looks of chagrin, that in vain attempted the disdainful, and left the cabin.

In the course of the morning, not far from the

bank of the river, on the skirt of a wood, three or four hundred yards from a shanty, the only human habitation within several miles, the dead were hastily interred. No service was said over them. They were placed in rough square boxes for coffins—the mother and her child in the same box—and hurriedly consigned to their mother earth by six of the firemen, who unceremoniously gave dust to dust. The passengers, reminded of the frailness of mortality, shrunk from standing on the damp earth in the chilly morning, but gathered on the guard of the Turtle next to the river bank, and there beheld the interment, while the ladies, muffled in their cloaks and shawls, looked on it from their cabin windows with troubled countenances. The mate ordered one of the hands to cut several gashes in a tree nearest to the place of burial, that the friends of the dead might find their remains, if they wished to give them holy sepulchre. This was all the mark or memorial that told of their resting-place.

It was not until noon that the Turtle was able to proceed. Then, her buckets having been mended, and the wounded from the Alexander placed on board, whither her passengers had all repaired, she left her ill-fated companion.

After the boat got under way, in looking round for Staylor, Ralph was much disappointed to find he was not aboard. Ralph concluded that Staylor must have been accidentally left, as he had understood him to say he was bound for the south-west,

where he lived, near Mr. Davidson, Helen's husband.

With reflections saddened with melancholy Ralph wandered about the steamer, paying very little attention to any thing or any body. He thought of Ruth—of their loves—of the journey she was about to take with Mrs. Davidson—and his mind became morbidly alive to the dangers of the way. The form of Ruth—a scalded and mangled corpse, such as he had just seen buried—arose to his imagination so fearfully, that it appeared to be impressed on his organ of sight. To exclude it from his mind he threw himself in his berth, and, drawing the curtains, placed his arm over his brow, and tried to philosophise with his melancholy. This only made his fancies more morbid; and, as a heavy rain had set in, Ralph felt he had the prospect of three or four as gloomy days before him as he had ever known.

At Portsmouth (Ohio) the Turtle stopped, and Ralph took passage on board of another boat, called the Caution, which had just rung her first bell, and was on the eve of starting. It still rained incessantly, and continued to do so until after the boat had passed Cincinnati some hours, when, about ten o'clock in the morning, the blue sky appeared, here and there, above; and a brilliant sun, at last, struggled through the clouds, and, dispersing them, shone forth in his full splendour.

Ralph took a seat upon the guards, determined to observe and be amused with the scene around him,

and to participate in whatever was harmless that might occur; for he found that sadness, like jealousy, "makes the meat it feeds on." When the Caution was within some ten or twelve miles of a certain town in Indiana, it was compelled to pass close to the shore, and Ralph could not but observe the situation of a wood boat that lay between it and the Caution.

The lubberly boat alluded to was loaded down nearly to the water's edge, having in, as was afterwards ascertained, twelve cords of wood and two feather beds, together with three lads who were navigating her. Ralph was standing on the guards looking at the waves the Caution threw from her as they rolled in to shore, when he caught a view of this wood boat. It instantly struck him, inexperienced as he was in matters of this kind, that the wood boat would probably be sunk. The Caution darted by it rapidly, and her waves tossed their white tops towards it as though they were exulting in their power to destroy. Ralph thought he saw the waves leap into the boat, and one of the boys quit the oar and commence bailing, but while he gazed to satisfy himself, the boat became the more indistinct from the distance, until it was lost to view. At the town the Caution stopped, expecting to be detained there two or three hours in taking in freight. While the captain was busy at his duties, a strange-looking personage, bent nearly double, of the masculine gender from the dress, entered the steamer.

It is no exaggeration to say, the bend in the body aforesaid was so great that the head upon it was not more than a foot higher from the earth than its hips. The individual was compelled to turn his head up, like a terrapin, when he looked you in the face, and, not to mend the manner of his glance certainly, one of his eyes, the left one, glanced over the top of his nose, as if it was taking sight at you from a double-barrel gun, while its fellow, as if angry at the obliquity of its brother, assumed a straight-forward, steady stare, that did not seem addicted to expressing the amiable. The owner of these brother organs, whose form seemed every moment in the act of making a profound salaam, asked the captain, in a gentle and flattering voice, that was redolent of as much courtesy as he could possibly assume, and which seemed to express great respect for him, "if he was the captain of the steamer?"

"Yes, sir," replied the captain.

In a moment the voice and manner of the gentleman changed, and laying his hand upon the shoulder of the captain, he said imperatively:

"Then you must go with me right off, for I've got an instanter forthwith agin you."

"What do you mean?" said the captain, pushing him by.

"It's no joke, I tell you," was the reply, "I'm a constable, and I've got this forthwith against you, for sinking a wood boat; and you must go right up to the magistrate's with me."

"As soon as I get my cloak," said the captain, turning to enter the cabin for the purpose.

"I know my duty," replied the organ of the law, laying his hand on the arm of the captain, with the intention of making a forcible detainder. The captain, *sans cérémonie*, but laughingly, released himself from his hold, entered the cabin and informed the passengers of the circumstances, requesting them to accompany him to the magistrate's, as their testimony might be needed.

Arrived at the magistrate's office, they beheld that worthy in his chair of justice, ready to dispense its dictates. He was a plump, good-natured looking man; wearing an air of becoming dignity. Knowing something, from what he had seen in his uncle's office, of magistrates and law, Ralph advised the captain to obtain a legal character to see him through. With the frank and brave impulses which characterised the captain of the Caution, who was truly a gentleman, he was for going into trial, and trusting to the justice of his cause. Ralph had much difficulty in persuading him to have a lawyer. However, he at last consented, and Ralph started to drum one of them up. On inquiring for the one, who, he was told, was the 'cutest there, Ralph learned he had but a short time previous quit the practice, and was then a president of a bank in the town. He had made quite a fortune in a few years. Ralph, nevertheless, determined to see him, as he thought the proceedings on the part of the boatmen unjustifiable. Escorted by a volunteer, who

very evidently had been sacrificing to the jolly god, Ralph entered the bank. There he saw the quondam lawyer, and hurriedly narrated to him the case. He said, that he had quit the practice, and Ralph could not awaken a particle of interest in him, in the case. Ralph thought, from what he had heard, that on the Kentucky side, with a Kentuckian, it might have been done. At last, a lawyer was obtained; a young member of the bar, but who is esteemed by all his acquaintances, a man of talents, and chivalrous bearing. When under the wing of council, the captain made his appearance at the magisterial bar. The plaintiff, a tumid, corpulent creature, with here and there a big drop of perspiration on his forehead, said he was not ready for trial; and by consent of all parties, the case was put off for an hour.

At the time appointed, captain, lawyer, and most of the passengers, stood in the presence of the hooshier Daniel. There was the plaintiff, with his three boys-boat-men for witnesses—and a marvellous tale told they. They averred, that they believed the pilot of the steamer meant to sink them, and that sink they did—there could be little doubt of the latter assertion, for their apparel looked as though it had encountered the deluge. The first witness, a lad, considered himself a "river character," because he had boated a year when quite a boy, and in the last two years, had been about a month at it, in the employ of the plaintiff, in which time, he had three times assisted in bringing a wood-boat to town from the

house of his employer, five miles up the river. He knew, too, the channel the steamboats always took; and he asserted plumply, that no steamboat, in the present state of the water, ever held the course of the Caution, which course was taken, he said, to sink the wood-boat; and that the crew laughed heartily when they succeeded. In one part of his testimony, he swore, that when the boat sunk, she was fifteen or twenty feet from shore: and he afterwards said, he jumped to shore when it was sinking! thereby conveying the opinion, Ralph thought, to the credulous, that he possessed the boots of the seven-league-stepping giant. The next witness was a son of the plaintiff; and when asked of his cunning in the craft, he made himself appear a perfect Jacob Faithful, and daddy as old Tom. He said, he knew as much about wood-boating as the next one; expatiated upon the loss of the feather-beds—he was a sleepy looking dog—and maintained that he wouldn't have got as wet as he was, for two dollars and a half. His face being scarred, his lawyer asked him, expecting it was bruised in the mishap, what harmed it, (and the limb of the law stared with a foolish face of wonder, that Liston would have envied,) when the boy replied—"he once had had the small-pox!" The damages were laid at fifty dollars. The third witness being very young, though old enough to tell of that disaster,

"All which he saw, and part of which he was,"

was not examined by the plaintiff's counsel. The Captain, Ralph thought, made out a clear case. The pilot swore that he was keeping the channel, and that he had good reason to know it, as he had once been aground near the scene of the sinking. In speaking of the channel and the direction of the boat, Ralph was struck with the ease with which the pilot recounted the landmarks and the names of the points, and gave descriptions of the bars. This man too, Ralph was told, would pilot the boat down to New Orleans, and could describe with accuracy—as indeed he must from his vocation, the wonder is, that he kept so many land and water-marks in mind—every portion of the winding way of the Ohio and Mississippi.

A farmer, in the neighbourhood of the town, of respectability and wealth, who was familiar with the portion of the river spoken of, as he had often navigated it in his own flat-boats ladened with wheat, testified that just before the accident occurred, he was standing on deck, and remarked to some one beside him, that the pilot knew his business. He thought the wood-boat was very much overloaded, and said the track kept by the Caution was the usual one, to his certain knowledge, as he had often seen steamboats on it. Other witnesses were called who testified to the same. The Captain's counsel made a very able and convincing argument in his behalf. But the plaintiff's counsel was to be heard, and of all the orators Ralph thought he had ever

listened to, in certain qualities of that divine art, qualities of which we discern nothing in Demosthenes or Cicero, and which are, of course, modern improvements, this worthy took the lead. Certain steamers in plying from Louisville to Cincinnati had, it seems, at least in the opinion of the good citizens of this town, committed many outrages on the rights and privileges of the good people, particularly the flatboat-men of Indiana. There was prevailing, therefore a great excitement against them, and the sanctum of magisterial justice was thronged with a motley crowd, panting for retributive justice against all steamboats, which, like Gulliver in the court of the Lilliputians, without being moved by his good intentions, had scattered their water to the injury, and against the dignity of the flatboats. Of this excitement the plaintiff's lawyer, who seemed after a fashion a clever enough counsel in both senses of the word, took a shrewd advantage. He did not pretend to argue the case at all. He denounced steamboats as great big, puffed up aristocrats, who considered all the river theirs, and who held it a mere circumstance to ride over shoals of little democratic flatboats. "Yes, sir," said he, we quote, as above, his very language, "these big-bellied aristocrats kick out of their way, our poor son of a —— (he said plainly what may not be written plainly,) of a democratic wood-boat, without condescending to give them notice to keep out—but the law, sir, the law, sir, it's democratic, sir—yes, sir, I say it's demo-

cratic, and I'll show you, sir, that these puffed up aristocrats have got to keep out of the way of the little democrats, and if they sink 'em, sir, they've got to pay for it." The Captain's lawyer requested him to produce the law, and he wound up with a flourish upon democrats and aristocrats, and started to his office, like fox-hound from the slip, for it. In five or ten minutes he returned—all the time silence reigned, and expectation was on tip-toe—and began turning over the magistrate's books, to find the book which it appears some one had abducted from his office. Ralph thought if folks had purloined his law, he, by hook or by crook, should obtain some too. He found not the law in the magistrate's books, and the opposing lawyer advised him to take out a search-warrant for it. "I lost the book," said he, in reply, "some one's taken it, it's no matter," and the magistrate proceeded to give judgment.

After a long exposition of his views of the case, certainly not so lucid as would have been Marshall's, he decided that the steamboat was bound either to have stopped her paddles, and float by the wood boat, or to have sheered off and passed over the bar, which the pilot swore he had hugged close to the shore to avoid, and on which the magistrate believed there was water enough for the Caution to have passed over, without any danger of grounding. Therefore, in the opinion of the magistrate, as the Caution did not do either of these things—and as the boat was sunk—but as the captain was not morally in fault,

he could not give the plaintiff the whole amount of the damage proven, but decreed that he should pay twenty dollars.

When the case was decided, Ralph sauntered through the town, which is beautifully situated, and rapidly improving. The quay is a very fine one, or rather will be, as it is not yet finished. It is made sloping to the water's edge, like that of Cincinnati, and will be covered with gravel, which it is believed will form a macadamized landing. The population, Ralph was informed, is approaching three thousand.

Amused with the incidents of the day which had whiled him from his melancholy, Ralph rejoiced that he had attended the trial, and taken an interest in the scene. The captain having been drawn off from his duties by the trial, together with most of the crew, who were in attendance as witnesses, should they be wanted, the Caution was delayed in consequence much longer than was expected. It was supposed she would not be able to start until late on the morning of the morrow.

The captain and Ralph, therefore, together with several other passengers, accepted the invitation of the lawyer of the Caution, a most gentlemanly and intellectual man, to crack a bottle of champaign with him.

In the evening they repaired to his house, under his escort and that of his brother-in-law, and found he was a husband-bachelor, his lady being absent

with her child, on a visit to Augusta, Kentucky, where a year previously they had been married.

This Ralph regretted, as he remembered that one of his classmates at college, a young buck-eye, had spoken of her as a most fascinating and accomplished lady.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next morning the crew were busy taking in the freight of the Caution, which consisted principally of bacon. Most of the hands were negroes, who beguiled their task with their accustomed song, in which all joined in the chorus, as they rolled the heavy hogshead from the landing on to the steamer, whose head still towered gallantly above the water, though her deck was but a few inches from it. Several of the negroes had their faces fantastically marked with red paint. There was an Indian among the firemen, who was a Cherokee, and a good hand, if kept from the bottle. As the hands took their meals from the rough boards laid on the bacon barrels, with which the lower deck was crowded, Ralph, as he looked over at them, observed the Cherokee was an enormous feeder. His cheeks were big and flabby, and his expression stolid and unobservant. Alas for the red men! how changed their fate! The reflection is a common-place one, but it struck Ralph none the less because it has struck others. In the light canoe, how gallantly this man's tribe has bounded over the waters, monarch of the wave and wild. And knew he this? perhaps not—and if he did, his look and

manner forced the conviction that he would not have felt it.

Ralph remained on board all the morning of this day, in lively conversation with several of his fellow passengers. In the afternoon, he repaired with the captain's counsel to the magistrate's, where he went to take the depositions of the pilot and mate, in the case of the flat-boat, as the captain had appealed to a higher tribunal; and as his steamer would not be at this place, in all human probability, at the sitting of the court, the depositions were obtained to be read on the trial. After the depositions were taken, Ralph walked through the town, and greatly to his surprise, met the brother of a lady whom he had formerly known, and who had, a year ago, emigrated to this flourishing place with her brothers, who were engaged in mercantile operations.

They held a very lively chat until the approaching twilight warned Ralph to be aboard, as the captain had said they should leave for Louisville at night. Accordingly, they left, and, while snug in their berths, were borne to the chief city of Kentucky. Speaking merely of appearances, not of her citizens, Louisville loses in comparison with Cincinnati. The landing is narrow, muddy, and uneven; but there is a great bustle of business about it, more so, apparently, than at the former city; but this may be owing to the fact that the landing at Louisville, to use a western phrase, is a mere circumstance to that of Cincinnati, where, consequently, the operations of business are more diffused.

As the Hail Columbia steamer was trying to force her way through the mud at the entrance of the canal, in which the boats are transported round the falls, and as the Caution was to enter it the moment she got out, and it was not known at what moment she might succeed, Ralph thought he would step to a bookstore in sight. He took the precaution of asking the captain to send for him, should he not be on board when the Caution was about starting.

Within an hour the captain sent for Ralph. With a new work under his arm, he hastened on board. The Hail Columbia had made some demonstrations of freeing herself from the dominion of mud by the press of her steam, and the exertions of her crew with oars, spikes, poles, ropes, &c.; but they proved so far powerless: she lay but a few feet from where Ralph last saw her, only emitting an occasional long breath, like a plethoric man of a hot day, while the hands were busy unloading to lighten her. From the deck of the Caution, Ralph for an hour observed her efforts to come forth, and listened to the crew's outlandish, odd remarks and jokes upon her. At last, lumbering from side to side, like a sick elephant, and creeping like a snail, not as is her wont, the Hail Columbia passed out of the mouth of the canal, followed by the General Clarke, which had come up while the other was struggling to get through, and had been a half hour astern waiting her egress. They both dashed into the broad bosom of the Ohio, the Hail Columbia leading, and made

for the wharf—then, for a moment, they contended for the best wharfage, side by side. The Hail Columbia came so near the Caution, that the hands of the latter were called to keep her off, while the Clarke pressed against the former, and it seemed that the three would be jammed together; but the Clarke shot ahead, and no damage was done.

The Caution now hurried to the mouth of the canal, hoping, by a press of steam, to pass the barrier of mud. She went gallantly to the place where the Hail Columbia had been so long detained, a host of idlers watching her, but on reaching it, was as suddenly stopped as that personage who repaired to the giant's cave without the magic word. Here they had, emphatically, a trying time. The boat was backed, and driven forward with the whole power of her steam, to stick fast again. Then her stern was dragged round by ropes affixed to stumps and logs on the right side of the canal, and the effort made to force her bow a few feet towards the left bank, so as to loosen her from the mud. After a desperate effort, the stern was moved, and then the same means were applied to the bow, while her wheels were kept in rapid motion. How powerless! Like the flutter of a wounded eagle's wing, when the giant bird is gasping in its last agonies. At last she moved, and was forced so close to the right bank, that the efforts of the crew to keep her from pressing against the jagged stone wall of the canal, —which certainly is not a model of architectural

skill—were entirely fruitless. There were several hands grasping a long pole, and pressing with all their might against the stones to fend off. Some pressed with their hands, others with their feet, in many grotesque attitudes. One Herculean fellow particularly amused Ralph. He had planted his feet high up the wall, and with both hands against the railing, and his head nearly touching them, was shoving off with all his might. While thus engaged he grunted forth:

"Hang these canal fellows! they ought to pay us for going through their canal, and not take pay. If we pay 'em, why don't they get us through?"

After half an hour of unremitting exertions, the boat was forced to the other side, and the same labour renewed in hopes to advance her a few feet, in which a huge rope was snapped like a pipe stem. At last she lumbered through without unloading any of her cargo. But the "winding way" of the canal, its obstructions, its jagged walls! It is no wonder a western steamer, with the fiery force within her, impelling her ahead, and such impediments on both sides, before and beneath, does not last long. Either she must yield or they, and therefore it is no marvel that buckets are broken, and timbers started. It took the Caution three or four hours to pass through the canal, and it was one continued struggle with obstructions. Here the buckets were smashed with a tremendous crash, there she bounced against a rock that seemed to have entered the keel, which

nearly all the time was dragging against the points of stone with which the canal is built. It was a source of congratulation to all the passengers, when the Caution had passed the locks, and was once more in the Ohio, where she lay by until late the next morning, to repair the wheels.

Once more she was bounding on the Ohio. A lovelier sight than the one above him Ralph thought he had never witnessed. The moon arose like a virgin queen, who with imperial majesty advances to her throne, and here and there, in the blue depths of heaven, the beauties of her court, a beaming star looked forth. For several melancholy, but not unpleasing hours, Ralph sat alone on the hurricane deck, and looked round upon the night. In rippling sheets of silver the river bounded, and the waves the steamer threw from her side and left in her track, seemed like smiles beamed forth by La Belle Revere, as she welcomed her into her bosom. While far behind, a melancholy shade spread o'er the waters, like the parting regret of woman, watching when her lover's gone. The overhanging banks were shadowed in the river, in a thousand fantastic shapes, while the bold bluffs and high woodlands looked down upon her like a sentinel who watched and guarded her course. How the past crowded upon Ralph; nor was it strange that at such an hour it should come. And her he loved and sought! was she well? was she all unchanged? had her bright eye dimmed the least? how touchingly beautiful she

looked when they parted. And when he should meet her, would her heart be the same, and her faith undoubting?

The Caution took on board the next day, a gentleman who was going south, and who had brought with him four or five horses, and a little negro boy to attend them. The little blacky looked wobegone and worried, and gaped about the steamer, and into the splendidly furnished cabin like one wonder-stricken. But he soon made the acquaintance of Antony, the little Dutch cabin boy, and not only became reconciled but pleased, for in half an hour afterwards, he was assisting Antony on the guards to clean the knives, and grinning from ear to ear with delight and amazement at the account Antony was giving him of steamboating, and the innumerable fips he had levied on the passengers. Antony had made but two trips to New Orleans, and when he first went on the boat, he was a dull, sheepish boy. Antony since then had learned a thing or two, and was conscious of it. His eye, which was much sprightlier than it had been, betrayed it. His manner of travelled superiority over the black boy, was just like that of a gentleman who has taken the grand tour, towards his neighbour who has never quitted his fireside. Ralph, who had been observing Antony and the black boy, was attracted from them by strange oaths, spoken by some one in a passion, and shouts of laughter from many voices, from the lower deck.

He advanced to a part of the upper deck, where he could see what was going on below, and there beheld the hands in the act of tying, as he was informed, one of the deck passengers to the rail, for presuming, by way of amusement, to heave the lead and test the depth of the Ohio. They had the amateur navigator on his knees, with his chest against the rail and his hands over it, and in not the gentlest manner, with strong cords, were binding him to it, while he, uttering imprecations and solicitations in the same breath, trying now to extricate himself, and now yielding to their superior force, was every moment losing his relish for the joke, as theirs increased, becoming more angry, as he was rendered less capable of resistance. He at last grew furious, and made several ineffectual efforts to strike them with the lead which he held in his bound hand, while they, nothing fearing or caring, tied him hand and foot. Ralph was amused the while with an old tar, who had quit the ocean for the river, because he liked the grub (alias the food) better on the steamers. He sat on the rail within five or six feet of the parties, with an enormous south-wester on his head, a cap made of tarpaulin, with scarcely any brim before, but which spread out so amply behind as entirely to cover the collar of his pea-jacket, and thus protected his neck and head from the rain, or the wood, which he has to assist in carrying from the shore to the boat when the steamer is loading. Jack,

seemingly a listless spectator, "a looker on in Venice," continued slily to hand, unobserved by the deck passengers, bits of rope to the wrong doers.

As the amateur navigator turned his head first to one and then to the other, remonstrating, or imprecating, and latterly vowing unmitigating vengeance, the old tar, whenever he caught his eye, would instantly assume a look of most tender commiseration for his condition. When at last the hands, filled with fun, left the poor fellow tied, and walked away to enjoy it, Jack took a seat by him, and expatiated upon the enormity of any one, but by the captain's orders, heaving the lead, saying it was a wonder they had not chucked him into the boiler, or into the river, or landed him in the woods, and left him there after an "almighty lynching with the rope's end."

"I'd like to loosen you," said Jack, "but do you see they might serve me just so if I did."

"O! no they wouldn't," replied the bound man in a low voice, "I wish you would. If you do I'll treat, stranger, to a certainty."

"Well," said Jack, "I'll try," casting at the same time a pretended furtive glance at the hands, as if to see if they were observing him, he proceeded to untie him. "It shall be done," he continued, as he unwound the rope, "but don't say a word about it to them fellows, if you do, they'll poke you into a treat for the whole. We can just take the bottle to our-

selves to-night, when I'm off watch—you can get the cretur at the bar. These fellows, do you see, are real alagators, you must let 'em do with you just as they damn please—but you may depend on me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

On a clear frosty morning, the Caution arrived at Perryville. Ralph had been up for some hours in anxious expectation of reaching it. Before the boat touched the bank, Ralph leaped on shore with the hand who carried the line.

A negro, no other than Sam, the boot-black, who was looking out for a chance of carrying a traveller's trunk to the Boon House, and thereby earning a quarter, lifted an old straw hat from his head with one hand, and drawing the other across his mouth asked—

"Any baggage, Master?"

"Yes, yes—I've a trunk aboard. Where does Mr. Lorman live. Do you know Mr. Coil?"

"Mr. Coil?—yes, Master, knows him well—an' he knows me like a book; he keeps the Boon House—I tends there 'lection days. Shall I carry your baggage there, Master?"

"How far is it?"

"Right up there, Master—soon as you get to the rising you'll see the sign itself—General Boon—swinging."

"Here, come show me. Where's Mr. Lorman's?"

"Maybe more 'an a mile off, Master, down the river." Sam estimated the distance by the remem-

brance of the walk he had taken there for Dr. Cake, for which he had only been paid in pills.

"Can I get a horse at Hearty's?"

"Hearty's? O! Mr. Coil's—yes, Master, I 'spect so."

"Show me the way there," said Ralph, walking hastily before Sam, who followed in a shuffling trot, saying—

"Soon git there, Master; 'ta'n't far off."

"Is Mr. Lorman's family well?"

"Yes, Sir, I b'lieve so. That's the Boon House, Sir," exclaimed Sam, pointing to it.

"Here," said Ralph, giving him a piece of money, "bring my trunk from the boat. Mr. Beckford's trunk."

"To the Boon House, Master?"

"Yes, yes!" replied Ralph, as he hurried towards it.

Without observing any person or thing around him, in his desire to get a speedy conveyance to Mr. Lorman's, Ralph entered the bar room of the Boon House, and there beheld Hearty, behind the bar, in the very act of taking his bitters before breakfast.

"Hearty, my old friend, how are you?" said Ralph, with emotion, as he advanced towards the landlord.

"Ay, by the Powers, it is him!" exclaimed the host of the Boon, placing his glass with emphatic delight on the bar. "Are ye hearty now, Mr. Ralph?—We've been expecting—Give us your hand." Hearty had left the bar, and grasped

Ralph's hand. "I'd rather shake your hand, Mr. Ralph, than any living hand anywhere, bating my brother's that's dead."

"How's Mr. Lorman and his family, Hearty?—Let me have a horse, can you not?"

"What for?"

"To go there."

"To go there! Ay, by the Powers, you've missed it;—they're gone!"

"Gone, Hearty!" ejaculated Ralph, throwing himself in a chair.

"Ahem! ahem! The young gentleman alludes to the Lormans. They went yesterday, Sir," remarked a personage of large proportions, who was seated in the corner. He proved to be Mr. Bongarden, who had called in to take his morning bitters with the landlord. "Yes, they went yesterday. Mr. Davidson was compelled to go, and they had promised to visit the lower country with him. Mr. Davidson, Sir, (addressing Ralph,) to my certain knowledge, has lately received a great many letters from Washington City,—I speak knowingly, Sir, for, ahem! I have the honour, Sir, of being the postmaster of Perryville,—I don't tell these things publicly, but I may speak them privately to you and capting Coil—the capting is my particular friend. As I was observing, Sir, Mr. Davidson has lately received many letters from head quarters,—I wish you to observe gentlemen, that I prophesy something of consequence will turn up some of these days in the political world.

As I was observing, in connexion with these letters from head quarters, Mr. Davidson has received many letters from the south. Things are not very clear there. I suspect I know how to put this and that together. Something will turn up—I say nothing—but, mark my words, something will turn up, you may depend upon it, capting Coil, and young gentleman—I—I myself, Sir, an humble individual in this community—if I have any honours—any office of responsibility and trust—I did not seek it—Sir, I abide by republican principles—it sought me—I myself, Sir, undertake to prophesy that something new will——"

Ralph was all worriment at Bongarden's talk, but he did not like to interrupt him. He looked several times at Hearty, wondering he was a listener so long, but he observed him most intently engaged in mixing a glass of liquor. It was evident Hearty was paying the postmaster very little attention. Ralph, notwithstanding his shiness, could not stand the postmaster's second prophecy. He therefore interrupted him by asking the landlord—

"When did they go, Hearty?"

"Here," said Hearty, addressing Ralph in reply, and handing him the glass he had been mixing; "take this. You're from a place where they boast of their drinks. Even Moran thinks he's great shakes at it; and so he is of a morning, for his hand shakes like the devil. Here, Mr. Ralph, take this, it will comfort you—I understand—take this, I want your judg-

ment on it. I call it a cocktail of the first water—yes, and by the Powers, of the first whisky too."

"Thank you, Hearty, thank you; I have no taste for liquors in the morning," said Ralph.

"But I tell you, Mr. Ralph, this will give you a taste. O! by the Powers, do you remember the ride we took, when your cousin like to have killt the pair of us?"

"Where is Henry, Hearty?"

"Gone to the devil, Mr. Ralph."

"Where is Mr. Lorman, where is Ruth?"

"They're gone the same way, by the Powers."

"Why, Hearty, I don't understand you, what do you mean?"

"Mean! why I mean they've all gone down the river."

"Ahem! young gentleman," said the Postmaster, rising from his chair, and addressing Ralph. "Excuse me for interrupting you, Capting, but I must go, I have some letters to write to Washington City. Young gentleman, you are welcome to our town, I should be happy, sir, to see you at my store, at the post-office, of which I have the control. I am the Postmaster, you have been made aware, sir, and while you stay in town—What's the gentleman's name, Capting Coil?"

"Beckford, Mr. Ralph Beckford, he is"—

"While you stay in our city, Mr. Beckford," continued the Postmaster, "I shall be happy, sir, to see you at the post-office. I have there, sir, as you of

course know—this is a considerable town—I have there papers from all parts of our country, sir, particularly from Washington City—and you are welcome, sir, to call at the post-office, and look over them while you stay in our city, sir. Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, sir," replied Ralph, rising.

"Ay, my dear sir," said the Postmaster, as he got by the door, turning towards Ralph, "are you just from the east?"

"Yes, sir, directly."

"Any news there, sir, any political news?"

"None that I heard of, sir," replied Ralph.

"Ay, is it possible?" said the Postmaster taking a step towards the door, and then adding—"its strange how fast, among the initiated, transactions of importance travel, while the rest of the world, though ever so intelligent, I cast no reflections, young gentleman—it's from position, it's from position—remain in total ignorance. Mark my words, we'll have news of great matter soon," and the Postmaster, planting his cane firmly on the steps of the porch, to assist his descent, departed.

"Hearty, did Miss Ruth Lorman leave yesterday?" asked Ralph.

"By the Powers, yesterday! you just missed them—its a million of pities. They expected you, but you see Mr. Davidson got letters, and he was compelled. Never mind, drink your cocktail, and don't grieve at it. You're welcome to the Boon

House. You can stay, you see, three or four weeks in our town, till I show you everything, and make you acquainted, and then you can follow them, for I know they'll expect you."

"What did they say, Hearty?"

"Say! they didn't say anything, that I know of; but they left letters with young Mr. Bennington. By the Powers, you'll like him—now I tell you, Mr. Ralph, this is a whole soul place, you'll like the Kentuckians. By the Powers, do you remember the ride we took in the carryall, when we both got spilit by that chap—Master Henry, as Miss Murray always called him. I tell you, Mrs. Coil wonders she didn't take a younger man; she might have had the pick of all creation. But, you know, there's no accounting for taste. That puts me in mind of the cocktail. What do you think of it?"

"I like it, Hearty, very much," said Ralph; "Ruth, Miss Lorman was well?"

"Well! to be sure she was, and she was mighty glad to see Miss—Mrs. Davidson. He's a man that spends money like dirt, but, by the Powers, he is rather old."

"Where can I find Mr. Bennington, Hearty?"

"Why he lives up in the big house you saw to the right of this, as you came down. You'll see him, I tell you, Mr. Ralph, time enough. He always stops in at the Boon House as he goes to the post-office, and he goes there every morning just after breakfast. If you go after him, by the Powers, you might find

him gone, and if you stay here, you'll be sure to find himself."

"Hearty, I am a most unlucky fellow!"

"Well, Mr. Ralph, when I look at you, and then at myself, and find we're so far away from home, I somehow don't think we're from home at all. I never—"

"Where is my cousin Henry, Hearty?"

"Now I tell you, Mr. Ralph, if I was you I'd never call him cousin in all my born days, though he is your blood relation. You see he like to have run over you, and, by the Powers, he like to have done for me—I shall never get over it. You know, I fell right on my head down that gully, and ever since that time I never could stand the liquor I did before—my head must have got cracked in some way or other to let it in."

"Why, Hearty, you look very well."

"O! by Thunder! I feel so, and I look according; but, you see, since I can't stand the liquor,—so much of it—and Mrs. Coil being all the time about, she's so good a soul, and so given up to me, that most spare odds and ends she comes in and talks, and she has, seeing, you see, since that tumble that I can't stand so much, she has a kind of persuaded me, with sheer kindness and tender words, not to take so much."

Hearty's tongue might have run on till it was tired. Ralph scarcely paid any attention to him, but sat with his arms folded and head down, sad-

dened by the disappointment of not seeing Ruth. Hearty, however, was interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Cake, who greeted the landlord, saying:

"Good morning, Captain Coil. I say, how is the good landlady, this morning?"

"Very well, Doctor—how is it with yourself?"

"I feel a little aguish this morning: these chilly mornings, I say, predispose the constitution that way. I say, Captain, if you should feel chilly these mornings—I say, the least chilly—I have a prescription that—"

"O! I've felt chilly these two or three mornings, Doctor; but a little bitters—"

"Ay, I understand—I say, if any of the little ones, Captain—I mean—Mrs. Coil's well, you say? Good morning."

The Doctor proceeded to the porch, and awaiting a moment till he caught Coil's eye, he beckoned to him.

Hearty stepped to the side of the Doctor, when the disciple of Galen drew him to the end of the porch, and asked—

"Who is that gentleman in there, Captain? He's a fine-looking young man, I say."

"Yes; that's the gentleman—I've known him since he was so high"—holding out his hand about three feet from the floor. "That's Mr. Beckford, who is to marry Miss Ruth; and folks say, and, by the Powers, I believe, he might have got the other."

"What other, Captain?"

"Why, Mrs. Davidson to be sure."

"It a'n't possible! Why she was very rich, I say, wasn't she?"

"You may say that, Doctor Cake, and tell no lie."

"I say, Captain Coil," remarked the Doctor, "Miss Ruth is, doubtless, a very fine young lady, I say—a most superior woman, sir. That unfortunate affair between Mrs. Bongarden and Miss Judson, and the talk of that little lying Ferret, that Miss Lorman's brother fought, I say, that affair made some of the citizens think Miss Judson and myself had something to do in those contemptible reports. But, Captain Coil, I say—I assure you—I say, sir, on my honour, that I remember once, very distinctly, I was taking tea with Miss Judson, I say, before that most unfortunate misunderstanding between Mrs. Bongarden and her, and we both spoke in the—I say—most exalted terms of Miss Ruth. Ferret's boy she whipped most severely with her own hands for it. You've heard it said he left—I say—Judson's for a whipping he got. To be sure, I say, that a little slight circumstance happened—I say—between Miss Lorman and myself, when she first came here, that might afterwards have prevented any sociability between us; but I do think—though, I say—I have no claims upon Miss Lorman, yet I do say, that I think Miss Judson and myself might have been—I say—invited to her house when her eastern friends were here. It's a matter, I say,

of no consequence in the world, I say, Captain; for myself I care nothing—but, sir—I say—Captain Coil, my principles are such that this aristocracy, sir—Captain—is inconsistent with the principles of our government."

"By jingo, Doctor Cake, I pretend to be a politician; being once that they nearly made a sheriff of me; but what's government got to do with inviting people to your houses?"

"Well, well—I say—Captain, understand me; I make no complaint. I say, you tell me this gentleman might have got the other, hey? Well—I say—there's no accounting for taste."

"Your right Doctor—you are right, by the Powers, I said that myself this morning. Come in and try a cocktail of my invention; made of whisky and some other things. I'll put it for the fever and ague against your prescription."

"Ay—I say—Captain, has it medical qualities? then I'll try it."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE doctor entered the bar-room with Hearty; and while the latter was busily engaged in concocting the cocktail, the former, pretending to glance over the "Perryville Champion," that lay on the table, cast his eye furtively on Ralph, who had arisen from his seat, and was walking up and down the floor.

It occurred to the doctor, after he had entered the bar-room, that as Ralph was the lover of Ruth, perhaps, in her letters, she might have mentioned himself to him. Ralph's moody brow, and the doctor's own guilty conscience, led him to believe that if she had, it was not favourably. He, therefore, drank off the cocktail, certainly without making any wry faces at the nauseousness of its medicinal qualities; though he assured Hearty that he was under the impression it possessed them abundantly, and hurried out, as he asserted, to see a patient.

"Tell me, Hearty," said Ralph to the landlord, after the doctor had left, "what do you know of my cousin Henry—where is he?"

"Know of him!" said Hearty. Mr. Ralph, you see, though he is your blood relation, I'll say of him what I think—and if I was you I wouldn't call him cousin; for I tell you, that he wanted to abuse Miss

Ruth and you, here in this very town, just before he attempted my life the second time. And the thought, by Thunder, is just come into my head, that the chair he like to have murdered me with, did as much to make me weak-headed with respect to liquor, as the time he run against the carryall and nearly killt me by that chuck in the gully; besides the shame of the business. Mr. Ralph," continued Hearty, after some hesitancy, "you never heard the ladies speak very particular of that occasion, did you?"

"Never a word, Hearty, that was not to your credit."

"By Thunder, I am glad to hear it."

"Hearty, you were telling me about Henry."

"Yes, I was; and he's a fellow whose tricks will hardly bear telling. He cut from the Boon House earlier in the morning than you got here, after leaving me for dead on this floor. He put straight for the lower country, and he has turned out nothing; and what is worse, he's turned unto gambling, and the lowest kind of company. They say he stabbed a man down there, in a quarrel; and it cost him pretty much the last of his money to get out of the scrape."

"Is it possible!"

"Possible? by Thunder, you don't think he's too good to do it, do you? Yes, they tell me, he got into a quarrel with some fellow a-gaming, and dirked nim. That's pretty much all I heard about it; but I tell you, Mr. Ralph, saving he's your blood rela-

tion, I believe it. I have heard say—ay! here comes Mr. Bennington now."

As Hearty spoke, William Bennington entered the room. Hearty introduced the young men to each other.

William greeted Ralph cordially, and told him, that he had letters for him. "I have business," said he, "at my office, you must excuse me at present; I'll hurry there and send you your letters."

One of the letters was written jointly by Mr. Davidson and his lady. Mr. Davidson stated to Ralph, that imperative business had taken him to the southwest some weeks earlier than he expected. He regretted very much himself and lady would not be at Perryville to meet him; and concluded, by saying, that, as they were determined to have a visit from him, to secure to themselves that pleasure, they had stolen Ruth.—Mrs. Davidson said to him, that she could not get Ruth to go with her, until she had told her, that he had promised to visit them; and she remarked, she held him, both by duty bound and love, not to stop in Perryville, one moment, after reading the letter.

The other letter was from Ruth. She informed him that her father and uncle had gone south, to attend to a plantation which they had purchased, with Mr. Davidson's assistance, and which adjoined his. She said her father wished her to come with Mrs. Davidson, and see him, which, together with Helen's pressing invitation, had decided her. She hinted she

would have had no hesitancy whatever; it would have been all pleasure to go, if another she might name had only went with them. But knowing that the person alluded to was coming, would somewhat relieve the pain of leaving Perryville, where the only inducement for her now to remain, would be the pleasure of meeting him sooner.

"How much more cheerfully," said Ralph, pressing the letter to his lips, "Ruth writes, than formerly. Why there is an archness in the way she mentions my coming. Yes, bright prospects are opening upon her father—she is with Helen—and she feels happy! O! how I do long to see her! She must look better than when I last saw her—she was then pressed down with so many cares—so young too, and having to undergo so many bitter scenes. Ruth, dearest Ruth! I can scarcely believe that wayward fate has so much happiness in store for me, as to suffer me to call you mine!"

Ralph was interrupted in these reflections, by Mr. Bongarden, the postmaster, who bustled in with a letter in his hand, and advancing to Ralph, said:

"Ah, my young friend, here you are still, hey? Well, I'm glad to see you. What is your first name, if you please, young gentleman?"

"Ralph, sir—Ralph Beckford."

"Ay, Ralph Beckford. Well, Mr. Beckford, that was my impression. Our mails, sir, have not been very regular lately, and I regret, not only as a public officer—as the postmaster, sir—but I regret it as a

politician. These are stirring times in politics, sir. Great excitement prevails, sir. I wish you to mark my words—something of importance, political importance—I am exact in what I say, sir—something of political importance will turn up some of these days. Did I understand you to say that Ralph was your name, sir—Ralph Beckford?"

"Yes, sir," replied Ralph, "that is my name."

"Well, Mr. Beckford, knowing as I did that your last name was Beckford, I had the impression, my young friend, that your first name was Ralph. Upon my honour, if put upon my oath, I could not tell precisely why I thought so. But I did most certainly think so, and it appears that I was right. Yes, sir, here is a letter for you, I presume—it bears your name." The postmaster, with a most courteous bow, placed the letter in Ralph's hand, and continued:

"No thanks, express no thanks, my young friend, I am happy to oblige you. Our city, sir, is not quite large enough yet to have a penny post, but I hope to live to see it. Strangers, Mr. Ralph Beckford, in visiting a city like this, do not come to the post-office nearly as soon as they should. Some affair of consequence may have happened, political, mercantile, legal, mechanical, moral or natural, and they know nothing about it, all for want of calling at the post-office. And though they get no letters, they learn the news. I think I may say of myself, sir, without compliment, that I am not like most public officers; they, my young friend, hold their duties to be a task, I hold

mine to be a pleasure. It gives me delight, sir, to give a gentleman, a traveller, when he is so situated as not to be able to see the news-papers, and to hear what's going on in the world—it gives me delight, sir, real delight, to hold a half an hour's conversation with him, and give him the run of matters and things."

"I feel very much obliged to you indeed, sir," said Ralph, who had broken the seal of the letter, but who, from a sense of courtesy to the postmaster, had not opened it; "allow me to pay you the postage."

"That's it, sir,—twenty-five cents. Any thing over, ahem—the postage is marked on the letter, I believe —yes, twenty-five cents. My young friend, Mr. Ralph Beckford, you must call and see me."

Ralph assured him he would if he remained in town, and, with a foreboding of ill, he hastily opened the letter, as the postmaster departed, followed by Hearty, who said he wanted to have a word with him.

CHAPTER XX.

RALPH's letter was no proof of the truth of presentiments. He almost leaped for joy on reading it. It appeared that a rail road, about to go into operation, was to terminate directly by the property which he was soon to receive in right of his mother.

The letter was from a celebrated speculator, who had been a client of Ralph's uncle, and in that way Ralph slightly knew him. The speculator stated to Ralph, that on inquiry for him, of his aunt, he was informed he had departed westward but the day before. He said that he learned the place of his destination, and wrote to him instantly. As the property in question, he remarked, immediately joined a portion of his own, it would therefore be of more value to him than to any other person, and he would consequently give a correspondently higher price for it. He offered thirty thousand dollars for it, as soon as Ralph should obtain possession, so as to convey to him a good title.

"This is a God-send, indeed," said Ralph, as he paced the floor with a beaming countenance. "Mr. and Mrs. Davidson's good opinion of me will remove any ill impressions that Mr. Lorman may have against me. I can assist him with this sum, as well as my aunt. Ruth, dearest Ruth—"

Ralph was interrupted in his reflections, by the entrance of Sam, puffing and blowing, with his trunk.

"Master, here's your trunk," said Sam, "and it's tarnation heavy. The Captain said he thought you was a gwine down further with him; the first bell's rung."

"Then take the trunk right back, I'll go with him."

"You'd better be in a hurry, Master, she was puffing steam quick."

"Bring the trunk, then, where's Hearty? no matter, I can't wait; you must tell him I could not stay to bid him good-bye."

"Yes, Master, I will," said Sam, as he settled Ralph's trunk upon his shoulder with great alacrity at the thought of accumulated fees; "I'll tell him it was untirely onpossible."

Ralph leaped on board of the boat just as she was starting, and was soon out of sight of Perryville, which had not now the magic it once possessed for him. Nothing of consequence occurred to Ralph in the first two or three days, and as the boat was fully freighted, and only stopped to wood, or for a few minutes to take in a chance passenger, he had very little opportunity of observation either of the country or the people.

Ralph was impressed, however, with the view of the "meeting of the waters," where the Ohio pours its waste of waves into the deep and turbid bosom of the Mississippi. It rained, and heavy clouds were

driving athwart the heavens. Of course, therefore, Ralph did not see the confluence as beauty would be seen in her gala dress. The scene impresses one, not with the beautiful, but the grand. The Ohio here rolls a broad tide, as if it was proud of showing the wealth of waves it contributes to the father of waters. One could not here appropriately quote Moore's lines on the fall of Avoco, though the wild of waves and woods, doubtless, would strike him more than that scene. On entering the Mississippi, you have a State to your right and to your left, and a third before you, while thoughts of what the great west must be, crowd on your imagination like the innumerable hosts of heaven, when you attempt to count them.

As the boat on which Ralph was had made so far a very speedy trip, he had hopes it would overtake the party from Perryville, as they had only left that place the day before him.

The next day, towards night, they stopped as usual to wood, and Ralph went ashore to amuse himself the while. He had scarcely put his foot upon the bank, when some one greeted him in a tone of joyful surprise—

"Why, Ralph—Ralph Beckford!"

He turned, and beheld Mr. Lorman, who was advancing towards him with extended hands.

"My dear boy, I am glad to see you!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "I am as glad to see you as though you were my own son—and I hope you will soon be as one to me."

Ralph, as our readers may suppose, was overjoyed to see Mr. Lorman.

"Where is Ruth, Mr. Lorman?" he asked. "How is she?"

"Well, my dear boy, and in that boat which lays not twenty yards from us. I have been below this, where I expect to settle, and I was called this way on some business. Yesterday I was at ———, and on seeing that boat bound down the river, stop, I went aboard, in hopes of hearing from home, and so there I found Ruth with all my family, together with Mr. and Mrs. Davidson. Do you go on board. I'll step on to your boat and order your baggage to be taken to ours."

Ralph took Mr. Lorman at his word, and sprang with the speed of thought towards the other boat, which was also wooding. Our readers may be sure that warm welcomes greeted Ralph—but there was one who looked on with the feelings of a fiend baffled—with an intensity of hate and revenge that almost maddened him—that one was Henry Beckford.

He had entered the boat at a town above, but a few hours previously, with several of his dissolute associates, and the first objects that met his eye on looking into the ladies' cabin, were Mrs. Davidson and her lord, with Ruth, her father, and the rest of his family, forming a group of happy faces, and engaged in lively conversation. Fearful of being recognised, he hurried to a state-room next to the

ladies' cabin, which was unoccupied, and which he instantly took. Through the nearly closed door he watched, and listened to the talkers.

They hardly would have recognised Henry had they seen him. His features were bloated and blotched from intemperance—all traces of their former beauty had gone. His eye was blood-shot, his lip livid, and, instead of the easy careless air that formerly characterized him, he had a bullying swagger, as if he thought every one near had heard something against him which he determined to brave. Even his manner of dress was changed; instead of the neatness and taste which he formerly displayed he now exhibited a number of rings upon his fingers, an immense quantity of gold chain round his neck, and wore his vest open and affectedly careless, so as to display it.

Situated as he was, he could overhear every word that was uttered in the ladies' cabin, as well as observe the parties. After a pause in the conversation, Helen said:

"And so, you tell me, Ruth, that the last you heard of Henry Beckford was that he had stabbed a man, and with difficulty escaped the consequence?"

"So I have been told," said Ruth.

"He has not disappointed me in his destiny," said Helen, "but I am surprised to learn he had the courage to stab any one but a woman or a child."

"That is a severe remark, Helen," replied Ruth, "but I fear it is just."

Near the state-room in which Henry had placed himself, were several of his associates playing cards. The conversation was so loud that they could overhear it, and at the mention of Henry's name they all stopped to listen.

"Scissors!" said one of them, as Ruth concluded her remark, in a whisper to the rest, but which was so loud that Henry overheard it also; "that's our Mr. Beckford—our particular friend."

"Play ahead, Will,—losing one's character is like losing one's card, a bad business. I wonder who these women are. Egad, one of them——"

Here the hurried entrance of Ralph turned the current of the speaker's thoughts. He glanced at Ralph quickly, and then striking his hand with emphasis on the table, he said—

"That's a good looking fellow, and that's a good looking card. Play up."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE feelings of Henry Beckford on overhearing all this, and on the instant seeing his cousin enter, and the warm greeting they gave him, may be easier imagined than described. He closed his door, and tore his hair in an agony of revengeful despair. He snatched his dagger from his breast, and determined to rush into the ladies' cabin and deal death to all, but his purpose failed him. He then plunged the weapon deep into the side of the berth beside him, and vowed he would plunge it as deep into the heart of his cousin. The next moment he drew it out as if he would strike it into his own bosom, but he had not the nerve.

"No, no!" said he, unwilling to confess, even to himself, his cowardly purpose, "why strike myself? What! have them believe that—have my body stretched out here under a coroner's inquest—and have them believe that their happiness drove me to a suicidal revenge? No—the revenge shall fall upon them. I will not gratify Helen Murray by such a deed. She might think it was done for love of her—love of her, when I hate her even more than the miser's son. Yes, Murrel and Banks must join me in this revenge, and then I'll join them, but not till then."

Meanwhile night set in, and Henry still remained in his state-room. The sky above grew cloudy and dark, and threatened rain, if not a storm. Henry looked out upon it through the window with a congeniality of feeling, and whenever the sound of the happy voices reached his ear from the cabin, he would throw his eye that way with the glance of a demon.

At supper he heard one of his companions ask loudly "Where Beckford was," and he overheard Helen say to Ruth—for they sat at the head of the table, and near the state-rooms—

"Beckford! he can't mean Master Henry surely."

"I should not be surprised if he did," said Ruth.

"Well, if he is here," rejoined Helen, "I do not wonder at his not showing his face. He has good and sufficient reasons therefor, though he had as many faces as Janus, for each of us could put one of them to the blush. That's not a wise remark though, for if he were Janus-faced he could deceive us."

When the ladies entered their cabin from the supper table, with the gentlemen, they had the door of it closed. On observing it, Henry Beckford threw a cloak around him, in which to muffle his face, should Mr. Lorman, Davidson, or his cousin enter the gentleman's cabin, and entered it himself.

"Beckford," said one of his associates, "where have you been?"

"Asleep!" replied Henry, gruffly; and advancing

to a tall and rather slim man, with a striking, but bad countenance, he said, "Murrel, step here a moment, will you? I wish to say a word to you."

As Henry spoke, he lead the way to the guards behind the wheel-house, and the person whom he addressed as Murrel followed him.

"This is a chilly night," said Murrel, with an oath, as he closed the door leading to the guards after him. "What do you want with me?"

"Why, if you expect me to have anything to do in this scheme of yours, you must assist me in getting revenge out of persons on board this boat, who have done me the deepest injuries. You can manage it for me easily."

"Well, wait till I get my cloak, and we'll talk about it."

As Murrel entered the cabin to get his cloak, Henry walked along the guards to the door of the ladies' cabin, which opened on to them, for the purpose of looking at those against whom he meditated the most diabolical deeds. He saw them plainly. Ralph was seated by Ruth with Billy beside his knee; Mr. Davidson sat by his bride, and Mr. Lorman was playing with the children. Almost unconsciously Henry raised his clenched hand to the glass as he gazed through it. At this moment Ralph arose from his chair, and Henry started with the fear that his cousin had seen and recognised him. Henry stepped so suddenly back that his foot caught in his cloak, and he pitched against the guards so violently

as to lose his balance. As he fell overboard he gave a fearful cry for help; but the wind blew the cape of his cloak over his face, and amidst the noise of the wind and the steamer, and in the darkness, no one heard or saw him. The boat dashed on her way. Henry's hands became entangled in his cloak, so that he could not assist himself; and in a few moments the dark and rapid waters of the Mississippi rolled over the lifeless body of Henry Beckford.

Alike unconscious of the fearful revenge Henry meditated against them, and of his fate, the happy party were borne upon their way. They soon reached the place of their destination in safety. Mr. Lorman, assisted by Mr. Davidson, and with Ralph a joint purchaser, entered prosperously upon their plantation, where a few weeks afterwards, Ruth and Ralph were united.

Though Helen loved her lord, and he doted on her to idolatry, and threw in her lap princely wealth; perhaps there were times, as she beheld the deep and abiding love of Ralph and Ruth, so superior to all worldly considerations, when a cloud would for a moment pass over her lovely countenance, a vague regret may be o'er something of the past, which she herself could not clearly have defined. Helen was childless, and she sought in magnificent entertainments and display, for it suited her husband's habits, that enjoyment which Ruth found in her do-

mestic circle, which promised, like Hearty's, to be a large one. .

Not long after Ruth left Perryville, Dr. Julius Cake was bound in the silken bonds of Hymen to the amiable Miss Elizabeth Judson, formerly of ——, New Jersey, as the marriage-notice stated, which was published in the Perryville Champion. The morning after the bridal announcement, the bride sent "Wash-ing-ton" to the Champion-office for several of the papers containing it. Every one of these papers Mrs. Bongarden asserted were dropped into the post-office immediately, directed to ———, New Jersey.

"Yes," exclaimed Mrs. Bongarden, in speaking of it to Mrs. Moore, "one of the papers had come undone, there, I declare to you, Mrs. Moore, you could see the marriage-notice—stuck under that picture of a naked boy with an arrow, and marked all round and round with a pen. I suspect we shall have some more old maids trotting out here to get husbands. I wonder who could have writ this notice! a'n't it foolsome?—'silken bonds,' 'amiable Miss Judson'—I reckon the Doctor—what a fool he is—will wish he could break his 'silken bonds' some of these days."

Could there have been any of the spirit of prophecy in this last remark of Mrs. Bongarden? It is certain some weeks after his marriage Doctor Cake was frequently observed to quit his home very impulsively at different times, and he had been over-

heard asking William Bennington, though he evidently tried to put the question like one moved merely by an idle curiosity, upon what grounds divorces were granted in Kentucky—and whether an awful wilfulness of temper on the part of a woman, were good and sufficient reason to break the bonds. The Doctor said nothing of the texture or material of the bonds. He could not, of course, therefore, have alluded to the "silken bonds" that bound himself to the "amiable Miss Judson," though William Bennington was heard to observe, after a long conversation with the Doctor on this subject—"That he feared the Doctor's matrimonial *cake*, though not all dough, was, like pie-crust, made to be broken."

Helen and Ruth, with their lords and the Lormans, became daily more and more attached to their new homes. Their chivalrous and friendly neighbours had greeted them on their arrival with every courtesy, which ripened almost instantly into the interchange of the most friendly hospitality—a hospitality which the writer of these idle pages, though but a sojourner of a few brief days upon their shores, can bear testimony is as abundant and free as the waves of their own mighty river.

THE END.

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